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The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies
University of California, San Diego

**Uniting Two Cultures:
Latino Immigrants in the Wisconsin Dairy Industry**

By Brent Eric Valentine

Working Paper 121
September 2005

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Abstract

Latino immigrants are increasingly working in industries that have not traditionally employed immigrant labor. Wisconsin's dairy industry is a great example of this expansion in the employment of Latino immigrants. During the last decade dairy farmers have been turning to Latino immigrants to meet their labor demands. This research project looks at the relationship that is developing between Latino immigrants and Wisconsin's dairy industry. The project helps to bring to light some of the new challenges facing both employers and employees in this industry and region, while also highlighting several of the positive aspects of the relationship like employment stability, greater immigrant inclusion, and a sharing of cultures. Overall, the data collected demonstrates a tendency for long-term employment, which promotes greater rates of settlement among immigrants working in dairy. In return, immigrants working in dairy are increasingly bringing their spouses and children in order to take advantage of the year around employment provided by the dairy industry. By exploring themes related to immigrants' employment in dairy, their interaction with the immigrant and native communities, and the employers' perceptions of immigrant employees, this thesis demonstrates the long-term viability of Latino immigrants working on Wisconsin dairy farms.

Acknowledgements

This project has been a major personal challenge to complete and would have been impossible without help provided by many different people. First and foremost, I must recognize the help I received during the revision stage from my girlfriend, Jessa Lewis. Without her help this project could not have been brought to completion. I also must recognize the vast amount of help that all of my interviewees provided. I greatly appreciate their willingness to talk to me about this often-sensitive topic in such candor. Special thanks are due to Shaun Duvall, Carl Duley, Scott Gunderson, Tom Wall, Faye Malek, and Zen Miller for their help in making the right connections and providing me with important insights into the dairy industry and Latino community. I also must thank my thesis committee members, Wayne Cornelius, John Skrentny, and Gaku Tsuda, for their crucial guidance and feedback on this project.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Latino immigrants working in the dairy industry in the Midwest is a relatively new development. The dairy industry, just like landscaping, construction, manufacturing, meatpacking, and service industries in this region, are beginning to reap the benefits of an increased labor supply through immigration. But, questions abound: Where do they come from? How did they get here? Why do they choose this region over other more traditional immigrant destinations? Are they legal? Are they going to stay?

A primary objective of my research was to document Latino migration paths to the region. Are they coming directly, or are they moving from one part of the U.S. to another? The second objective was to find out if they are planning to stay in the area for an extended period of time. If so, will their stay be permanent or temporary? Third, I wanted to find out if Latino immigrants are being integrated into the local communities where they live. Lastly, I wanted to discover their general feelings about living in this area. How are they treated? Do they like it here? These are the general questions that guided the interviews/surveys with the immigrants.

To many people the idea of Latinos working in the great north comes as a major surprise. The past shows that there are valid reasons why Latino immigrants expand their migration paths and forego opportunities in regions closer to their native lands. Immigration to this region helps to shed light on why it is not so inconceivable that Latino immigrants are busy milking cows, building houses, constructing gardens or cutting meat somewhere other than the Southwestern United States.

Today, the Midwest is referred to as a nontraditional immigrant receiving area. In terms of volume of immigrants this term is accurate. The Midwest has not traditionally received nearly as many Latino immigrants as the Southwest. When reviewing the history it becomes apparent that there is indeed a rich tradition of immigration to the Midwest. European immigrants settled the land in the early 1800's and created the agriculture industries (dairy, meatpacking, fruits, and vegetables) that continue to exist. The lesser-known tradition of immigration is that of Latino immigrants, who have been immigrating to the Midwest since the 1920's. These pioneers helped set the stage for the immigration that we see today.

Immigration is a social process that evolves and expands over time. The history helps to bring together the sequential pieces, which create the current picture. The two most important periods of Latino immigration to the Midwest coincide with two distinct federal policies that facilitated their movement: The Bracero program (1942-1964), which provided temporary

workers for agricultural employment without extending permanent resident benefits, and the 1986 IRCA (Immigration and Reform and Control Act) program that extended permanent resident benefits to millions of undocumented immigrants. Both legislations proved to be very important for the expansion of immigrant networks and paths beyond the traditional Southwest.

Although the presence of Latino immigrants in the Midwest predates the inception of the Bracero program, this federal legislation enabled legal entry of greater numbers of migrants and helped facilitate the exit of European laborers from fields (Slesinger and Muirragui, 1981: 4). Much like the transition that occurred in California, European settlers increasingly bought land and started their own farms during the 1920's and 30's, which in turn created greater demand for Latino migrants. Initially, the Tejano (native born Latinos from Texas) migrants met that labor demand, but displeasure with their work ethic and their propensity to move created an opportunity for international migrants that arrived through the Bracero program. In addition to displeasure with the Tejano migrants, corporate recruitment at the border and the expansion of the production of fruits and vegetables generated a strong demand for Latino labor (Valdes, 1991: 28).

The Bracero program had widespread effects on the agriculture industry. This piece of timely government legislation provided growers with temporary Mexican workers to harvest their crops. However, the Bracero program did more than provide an ample labor supply; it solidified the relationship between growers and immigrant (Mexican) labor. The Bracero program was responsible for expanding labor dependence and retarding technological advances in the fruit and vegetable industries. During this period Midwestern growers (those who employed Braceros) were increasingly encouraging Bracero workers to settle in nearby communities in order to ensure that they had a consistent labor supply. This corporate recruitment and subsequent settlement formed strong ethnic enclaves throughout the Midwest in areas where previously there were no Latino residents.

Latino employment in Midwestern agriculture began to decline during the 1950's due to increased mechanization, increased federal regulation of migrant workers, and increased union activity within the agriculture industry. The combination of these forces encouraged producers to move towards greater use of machines and chemicals (Slesinger and Muirragui, 1981, Valdes and Nodin, 1991). Even though the employment of the Bracero and Tejano workers was on the decline, the foundation was set for future waves of immigrants through the encouraged settlement of Bracero migrants.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 built upon this foundation. The most immigrant friendly legislation passed to date, legalized 3 million immigrant applicants working in

the United States without documents (Martin 2003). With legal papers in hand, immigrants dispersed throughout the nation in search of better jobs and living conditions. The Midwest was no exception and the meatpacking industry led the way in employing this newfound source of labor. With family and friends already settled from the Bracero program days, increased corporate recruitment of immigrant workers, and a high demand for labor in the region, new migration paths started.

NON-TRADITIONAL DESTINATIONS

The term 'non-traditional destination' has been used frequently to describe the appearance of significant numbers of Latino immigrants in regions outside of the Southwestern states and other major receiving states like Florida or New York. Unlike traditional immigrant receiving areas, many of the communities in non-traditional regions that receive immigrants are ethnically homogenous and have not experienced a large in-migration since their ancestors arrived from Europe. In fact, many of these non-traditional destinations were experiencing depopulation until the arrival of Latino immigrants.

Many researchers have been busy looking at these new migration paths. Their research investigates the social and economic impacts of this new immigration upon receiving communities and the migrants themselves, and includes topics such as: availability of social services, educational needs of new arrivals, crime, context of reception for immigrants, housing, local reaction to new arrivals, integration into the larger community, economic prosperity of rural host communities, and wages and benefits of the employed immigrants (Cantu 1995, Durand et al 1999, 2000, Fennelly and Leitner 2002, Gouveia and Stull 1997, Grey and Woodrick 2002, Hernandez-Leon and Zuniga 2000, Zuniga and Hernandez-Leon 2005, Kandel and Parrado 2003, Kandel and Cromartie 2004, Kandel and Nueman 2004, Marin et al 1996, Rochin 1995, Rosenbaum 1997, Saenz and Cready 1997).

Without this important research, non-traditional destinations cannot learn from prior mistakes made in other immigrant receiving communities, and will maintain rather than destroy barriers to integration for new arrivals. The research being done today is essential for the successful integration of immigrants of any ethnic background into new receiving communities. There is an opportunity to create a model for integration that will provide receiving communities with the resources necessary to understand and successfully create a positive context of reception for newcomers.

THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

The dairy industry in Wisconsin and its immigrant workforce is the specific focus of this research paper. The recent transformation of Wisconsin's dairy industry from a relatively small family owned and operated industry to an industry that is dominated by larger dairies that require labor inputs has put a strain on local labor supplies. The construction of these large dairies can require anywhere from 10 to 30 employees. Finding a sufficient workforce in the rural areas where depopulation is occurring can be a difficult task. In fact, the traditional sources of labor such as high school students, retired farmers, and locals who choose to stay are becoming less interested in dairy employment, and seek out manufacturing or construction employment. Increasingly, Latino immigrants are being sought after by dairy employers to meet labor shortages. Without the Latino labor supply, industry officials believe that the move towards larger dairies (concentration of production) would not be possible. As one employer stated "*Latinos are the bread and butter of our company.*" This reliance upon Latino immigrants is only going to increase with time as Latino workers become more familiar with the different jobs on the dairy and begin to move out of entry-level positions, something that is already occurring on some farms.

The recent and rapid evolution in Wisconsin's dairy industry is incredible. Owners are growing production without the preoccupation about labor supply. They understand the nature of the social networks used by immigrants; if a job opens, they will have two people trying to fill it. These social networks that are developing have implications beyond the workplace. These Latino dairy workers are changing the face of rural communities that were previously homogenous ethnically. Their employment requires them to live in small rural towns, which normally don't receive newcomers, let alone foreigners. This sudden shift in ethnic diversity has various implications for rural receiving communities that will be explored in this paper.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND COLLECTION METHODS

I chose to study the dairy industry because of my intimate knowledge of the industry, personal interest, and because of the lack of documentation of this industry in the field of immigration. Additionally, the dairy industry represents a divergent path when compared to other traditional immigrant employers, like meatpacking or seasonal agriculture (vegetable or fruit). The dairy industry is comprised of small employers that have daily contact with workers, and in many cases the owners and employees work side by side on a daily basis. These special circumstances provide a new perspective on immigrant employment, integration, and settlement. Using surveys

that combine both qualitative and quantitative data I attempted to capture the opinions of immigrant employees, their employers, and community members.

There were several objectives that guided both the employee and the employer portions of my research. As mentioned earlier, the employee side focused on their migration, the dairy work they are involved in, and their plans for the future. My primary focus with the employers was on the current and future demand for immigrant labor within the industry, since without a continued demand there is no point in conducting the study. I also sought statistical information regarding pay rates, hours worked, and benefits of the workforce. In hopes of creating a local perspective on the influx of immigrant workers, I looked at how the employers felt their immigrant workers were being integrated into the communities, what impact the newcomers have had on the community, and if there have been any problems in the community or in the workplace.

Understanding that employers are going to have inherent biases regarding their immigrant employees, I additionally sought out church leaders, dairy agents, and other community members that have had contact with the Latino immigrant and local populations. The combination of the three interviewees offered a strong representation of the entire community and interactions between local and immigrant populations. The mix of local and immigrant perspectives helped to bring out some of the conflicts, concerns, and integrations that are occurring between both the immigrant and local populations. Input from dairy agents provided an industry perspective that was very useful for looking at current and future trends in the industry. The church leaders supplied valuable social information about the immigrant population such as: community and parish integration, settlement, community problems, issues facing the immigrant populations, and the immigrant community's perception of living there.

The data collection began in early July, 2004 and ended in the middle of August, 2004. I used various questions from a survey developed by Professor Wayne Cornelius to guide my employee survey. In order to achieve the numbers that I sought, a nonrandom snowball sampling method was used. Using the immigrant networks to provide new interviewees, I was able to interview fifty-four employees during the month and a half of data collection. Starting with dairy employees that I previously knew, I made contacts one interview at a time. After each interview I would ask for name and numbers of other immigrant dairy workers that would be interested in speaking with me. Since the immigrant networks were so dense, building up the sample was fairly simple. Using prior acquaintances for the bulk of my qualitative interviewing allowed me to keep interviews short with other immigrants who might not have been comfortable speaking at length about their experiences.

The collection method for the dairy employers was much the same. Three years ago I worked as an interpreter/trainer on dairy operations in the research region and these prior contacts proved to be very valuable. My greatest concern was doing this research during the summer, the busiest time of the year for dairy operators. Prior professional relationships with many of the employers interviewed helped to convince them to make time for me. As with the employees, I used a non-random sample with the employers and conducted twenty-eight interviews. I had a list that I had compiled based on previous experience and in several cases interviewees gave me contact information of other employers not on my list. Securing interviews with the employers proved to be much tougher than expected, and in some cases potential interviewees would not talk with me because of the sensitive nature of the subject.

Collecting data from community members was the last step in this stage of the research. Using my contacts I was able to target dairy agents and church leaders that work closely with both local and immigrant populations. These key informants were interviewed using a non-standard list of questions, either face to face or through email. If I was not able to meet with the person, I sent them a list of questions that they answered in a qualitative fashion. In most cases there was follow-up to clear up any uncertainties with the answers. The face-to-face interviews consisted of both audio recording and extensive note taking.

In all three cases the interviews/surveys were carried out either at the home of the employee's or at the workplace of the community members and employers. All interviews/surveys lasted between thirty minutes and three hours. The average interview lasted 45 minutes, depending on the time constraint and the interviewee's willingness to talk. Before each interview I presented an oral consent form that did not require any signatures in order to maintain that person's anonymity. All interviews/surveys have been coded with pseudonyms and kept out of the reach of the public.

THE STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

There are two distinct topics covered in the literature review, chapter two focuses on the motivation to immigrate to the U.S. and chapter three deals with the community impacts of immigrant arrival and the communities' response. This background will create the context for the case study of Latino immigrants employed in Wisconsin dairy that will be detailed in chapter four.

Throughout the entire nation immigrant employment (documented and undocumented) has grown rapidly. Several of the contributing factors to the motivation to migrate are: federal immigration policies that influence employers and immigrant employees, increased demand for immigrant labor, macro-economic determinants (wage differentials, world systems theory), and

the extensive social networks of migration. A review of these four drivers to migrate will lead into the next topic, which focuses on the impact that immigrants have upon the communities they live in.

A careful evaluation of community impacts by newly arrived immigrant populations is particularly important to this case study, since it focuses on communities without established immigrant populations. Often these communities are referred to as non-traditional destinations. The lack of a prior immigrant population can present many challenges and opportunities for both native and immigrant groups. Previous research from the Midwest on non-traditional destinations provides useful examples of settlement prospects and indicators, the context of reception for the immigrants, economic impacts of the new residents, integration between local and immigrant populations, and community responses to the new residents. Although much of this literature is based on non-dairy employment there are many lessons to be learned that can be applied to the dairy industry.

Chapter four of this paper introduces the Wisconsin dairy industry and the case study. This part of the research project offers a detailed look into industry changes that are taking place, and how these changes impact the use of immigrant labor within the industry. A brief review of industry literature will show that the employment of immigrants in the dairy industry will continue to grow into the future. Using this background information as the basis for my research I will move into the case study looking at immigrants working in the Wisconsin dairy industry. The main focus of this section of the paper will be on the interaction between dairy employment, immigrant integration into the rural community, and settlement prospects.

The conclusion will use a combination of prior policy suggestions and findings from this research in order to create a foundation for policy considerations for lawmakers that will address industries that employ immigrants on a year-around basis. The ultimate goal of any immigration policy should be to reduce the number of undocumented workers in the system. There are several reasons for this goal: first, any workers that are undocumented are not granted full rights even though they are contributing to the nation through their employment, and second, the current system encourages law-abiding employers to break the law. Even with these two arguments as justification for policy change, there is a powerful contingent that would rather leave the system as is. Solving this multifaceted problem requires new approaches and hard decisions.

CHAPTER 2

U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY AND THE DRIVERS OF MIGRATION

The current federal immigration policy places employers in a very difficult situation. Many employers, including dairy employers can no longer find the numbers and types of workers required domestically. Because of this numerous industries have become reliant upon a workforce that is largely comprised of undocumented immigrants. Understanding how the employers have arrived at this point requires a close look at the motivations of both the employers and immigrant employees and the policies that regulate them. Reviewing the federal immigration policies provides important background information on how the U.S. has created a growing reliance upon immigrant labor.

The basis of today's immigration policy relies on laws enacted by the 1986 IRCA (Immigration Reform and Control Act). This legislation was comprised of four provisions. The first provision entitled LAW, extended amnesty to long-term undocumented residents. The second provision formed a special legalization program for Seasonal Agricultural Workers (SAW) and Replacement Agriculture Workers (RAW). The third provision created employer sanctions for knowingly employing undocumented immigrants. The last provision provided the Border Patrol with more resources (money, people, and equipment) for increased enforcement along the U.S.-Mexico border (Durand et al 1999: 521).

The intent of this legislation was to provide a sufficiently large legal workforce to employers who needed workers, while reducing the stock of undocumented immigrants working and living in the country. This legislation provides an excellent example of the gap theory posited by Cornelius et al. (1994), which highlights the gap between the intent of government immigration policy and its actual outcomes. Tsuda and Cornelius (2003) apply this theory to their assessment of Japanese immigration policy, and more recently Cornelius and Rosenblum (2004) used this theory to explain gaps in immigration policies internationally. Through the use of the gap theory we can better see how 1986 IRCA legislation has produced numerous and very serious unintended consequences in the flow of immigrants to the United States.

The Legally Authorized Worker program (LAW) required short-term circular migrants seeking amnesty to stay in the United States in order to legalize their status¹. This program also

¹ Immigrants seeking legalization through this program could not leave the United States until their paperwork was completed. This may not seem like a big deal, but the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service), which handled this paperwork often, takes years to complete it. Essentially, this program converted temporary or circular immigrants into settlers waiting for their papers to be completed.

further shifted the emphasis from a circular migration pattern to one of settlement through the awarding of a green card. The shift towards more long-term settlement through the awarding of the amnesty logically encouraged the migration of family members of those legalized under IRCA. Although, most family members could not be legalized, they sought to reunite with household heads that had obtained green cards. In reality this provision, much like the SAW and RAW provisions discussed below created more undocumented immigration through family reunification (Durand et al 1999: 523; Phillips and Massey 1999: 235).

The reunification of families “was instrumental in transforming a predominantly rural, male, and seasonal flow of migrant workers into a feminized, urbanized, and permanent population of settled immigrants” (Durand et al 1999: 525). IRCA changed the way immigrants migrated. Entire family units were immigrating, making short-term migrations virtually impossible and more permanent settlement inevitable. The appearance of wives and children in migration streams meant that seasonal migrations were becoming less common.

The SAW program, much like LAW, provided documents to millions of previously undocumented immigrants working in the seasonal agriculture industry. The RAW program was created in order to fill the worker void that growers professed would result from the naturalization of their current workforce through the SAW program.² Millions applied and successfully obtained visas without fulfilling the requirements. A petitioning immigrant needed papers signed by their employers saying that they had worked the minimum amount of time, and the burden of proof was placed on the INS, not the immigrant. Requiring the INS to verify all claims essentially paved the way for massive fraud.³ INS approved 90 percent of the applications, many of which only included one sentence from the contractor or grower stating that the employee worked at least 90 days during the season. Petitions were accepted even if the particular crop season cited did not last 90 days (Martin 2003).

Another overarching unintended effect of the three legalization programs was the dispersion of immigrants across the nation to non-traditional destinations. Instead of concentrating in the border regions and the larger Southwest, immigrants with their green cards in hand began to

² Growers felt that if their workforce was legalized through the SAW program, they would leave the agriculture industry. This concern over the exodus of newly legalized workers was addressed through the RAW program. The RAW program was designed to secure legal replacements for the workers who were legalized under SAW (Martin 2003).

³ Growers had the responsibility of verifying that the employee had worked at least 90 days between 1985 and 1986 in order to petition for a visa under SAW or RAW. Authors of this program expected 1.3 million immigrants to apply under the RAW program and 300,000-400,000 immigrants to apply under the SAW program. When all visas applications were reviewed the actual numbers were 1.7 million applicants for the RAW and 1.3 million applicants for the SAW visa (Martin 2003).

search for better opportunities for employment and family life. Seeking to avoid strong competition for jobs and minimal pay, immigrants along with their families moved on to areas like the Great Plains States, the Southeast, and the Midwest (Durand 1998, Hernandez-Leon and Zuniga 2000, Kandel and Parrado 2003 Kandel and Cromartie 2004, Durand et al. 2000). To further expedite this dispersion of immigrants from the Southwest, employers in industries located in these non-traditional destinations, such as meat and poultry processing began advertising vacancies in Southwestern and border regions in order to attract immigrants (Gouveia and Stull 1997: 1).

The effects of the 1986 IRCA also reached areas like Wisconsin. In conversations with immigrants from traditional sending regions who are currently residing in Wisconsin, many can identify someone who legalized under the 1986 amnesty as a pioneer immigrant from their hometown. Without a pioneer immigrant wielding a green card, it would have been difficult for successive flows of immigrants to arrive in new areas (Portes 1995: 17). Although there had been small pockets of Latino immigrants in the state for many years, the passing of the IRCA led to the increase in numbers of Latinos that are present today.

The third provision created under the 1986 IRCA was employer sanctions, which aimed to punish employers who knowingly employed undocumented immigrants. The intent of the law was to require employers to verify that each potential employee demonstrated possession of the necessary work documents. But in fact, this legislation opened the door for the use of false documents. The lack of a standard form of acceptable identification allowed for the introduction of easily counterfeitable credentials, which made recognition of false papers very difficult (Lowell and Jing 1994: 442).

The law stated that an employer was required to fill out I-9 forms for all applicants, but they were not responsible for verifying the authenticity of the identification presented by the applicant. Because of the government's concern over civil rights, there was neither the creation of a national ID nor any computerized social security registry that employers could use to help verify authenticity of documents presented (Gimpel and Edwards 1999: 217). According to the 1986 IRCA, employers were not trained nor required to discern between fake and real documents. They were merely required to fill out the I-9, which proved that they saw the required documents (Calavita 1990: 1065).

Initially, employer sanctions promised to have a widespread impact on the hiring of undocumented immigrants. In fact, "advocates in Congress and within the INS maintained that most employers would voluntarily comply with the law" (Calavita 1990: 1049; Lowell and Jing 1994: 427). As Calavita (1990) further explains, the low risk associated with employing

undocumented immigrants created little incentive to comply with the new legislation. In her employer interviews before 1990, after the enactment of the IRCA, she found that over 80% of the interviewees had not changed their hiring practices. Congress and the INS grossly overestimated the voluntary compliance rates of employers. Compliance did not mean that the applicant possessed the proper documentation; it just meant that they presented documents that appeared reasonably authentic.

Considering the situation, who can blame the employers? They have reliable, hard-working employees, and the INS in 1998 only audited 20,000 employers out a potential seven million (Calavita 1990: 1053). Additionally, Lowell and Jing (1994) found that despite highly visible efforts by the INS to curb the hiring of undocumented workers in certain industries like meat and poultry processing, most employers did not perceive non-compliance as risky⁴. Without ‘big brother’ watching closely, the nation’s employers have literally gone unchecked in their hiring of undocumented immigrants⁵. As noted by Calavita, businesses respond to the balance sheet, and if non-compliance is considered low-risk and profitable, most will take that risk.

The last provision of the 1986 IRCA provided increased resources for the Border Patrol. The build-up of the border continues to be the most popular political solution to the undocumented immigration quandary. Discussion of the border build-up as part of the 1986 IRCA leads into some of the more recent federal programs attempting to fortify the border. A more detailed discussion about the effects of the border build-up will follow in the section pertaining to border enforcement.

Looking back at the consequences of the 1986 IRCA it would appear that it failed in achieving its goals. Although I would not argue with that position, there are valuable lessons to be learned from this piece of legislation. There are several potentially useful parts of the policy, such as: employer sanctions and amnesties that could be considered as parts of future policies, but more stringently enforced. The most disappointing aspect of this policy is the fact that

⁴ In 2001, the U.S. government had 124 immigration agents auditing the seven million employers and 9,500 agents patrolling the U.S.-Mexico border (Cornelius 2004: 13).

⁵ The number of Immigration and Customs Enforcement man-hours dedicated to workplace enforcement fell from 471,210 in 1999 to 177,975 in 2003. Since 1986, less than 25 employers have been fined over \$75,000 for hiring unauthorized workers. The DHS 2005 budget includes an additional \$5 million for work-site enforcement, indicating that priority remains on the border (Cornelius 2004).

government took the time to pass and enact such a policy and then failed to provide the institutions with the resources necessary to enforce the laws created, such as employer sanctions.⁶

Each form of federal policy discussed above has had widespread impacts on areas like the Midwest and industries like dairy. Looking back, it becomes clear that the amnesties and legalization programs provided means for immigrants to leave the Southwest and seek their fortunes in greener pastures⁷ (Durand et al 2000: 9). The employer sanctions produced a formula for effective control of the hiring of undocumented workers, but did not receive the resources necessary to induce any significant changes.

BORDER ENFORCEMENT

In the last ten years the government has devised new ways to attempt to control the border. Beginning in 1993, the Border Patrol decided to focus attention on major immigrant corridors.⁸ These targeted fortifications have had enormous effects upon the trip duration, routes, cost and safety of the immigrants crossing the border without documents. Unlike the outcomes of the 1986 IRCA, these policies are achieving their intended goals of raising the physical risk and increasing the financial cost (Cornelius 2001: 667). Both of the goals of the concentrated border effort have come to fruition, but the overarching goal of reducing the level of undocumented immigrants living in the United States has yet to be achieved. In the table below (2.1) we can see that apprehensions increased steadily until the year 2000 and then began to decline until this past year. This decline would suggest an adjustment in their crossing strategies, especially

⁶ Some immigration scholars believe that the creation of the employer sanctions portion of the legislation was purely symbolic in order to demonstrate to the public that the government was in fact doing something about the hiring of undocumented immigrants.

⁷ “The percentage of immigrants going to non-gateway (Southwestern or border states) states rises from 13% to 31%, a radical and unprecedented shift in the history of Mexico-U.S. migration. By the mid-1990s, nearly one-third of all Mexicans were settling somewhere other than gateway states” (Durand et al. 2000: 11).

⁸ “Thus was born the concentrated border enforcement strategy. The segments of the border that were to be fortified were those traditionally used by 70-80 percent of “illegals” entering from Mexico. First to be implemented was Operation Hold-the-Line in El Paso, Texas, in 1993, followed by Operation Gatekeeper in the San Diego area, in 1994, Operation Safeguard in central Arizona, launched in 1995, and Operation Rio Grande in south Texas, begun in 1997. The Arizona enforcement operation was beefed up in 2004 with a special, \$10 million allocation for more Border Patrol manpower and hardware, and renamed the Arizona Border Control Initiative” (Cornelius 2004: 4).

considering the estimated numbers of undocumented immigrants residing in the United States continues to consistently grow⁹.

Table 2.1
Border Apprehensions by year on the U.S./Mexico Border

Fiscal Year	Apprehensions	% Change
1994	979,101	
1995	1,217,390	29.9
1996	1,507,020	18.5
1997	1,368,707	-9.2
1998	1,516,680	10.8
1999	1,537,000	1.3
2000	1,643,679	6.9
2001	1,235,717	-24.8
2002	929,809	-24.8
2003	905,065	-2.7
2004	1,159,802	28.1

Source: Cornelius 2001: 665 and U.S. Customs and Immigration Services, <http://uscis.gov>

Many immigrants are increasing their stay and crossing less frequently, and more immigrants are hiring coyotes in order to minimize the risk of getting lost or caught. This adjustment in immigration strategies has had the biggest effect in the interior of the United States. No longer are we seeing temporary migrant workers who return home after short periods of work. The risk and cost of periodic crossings is too high. The consequence of this increased border enforcement was reflected in almost every conversation I had this past summer with immigrants. The majority of the immigrants I spoke with have no plan of returning home in the near future because crossing was so difficult and expensive¹⁰. Instead, many said that they would never try to cross again. The most commonly expressed plan was to stay and earn money as long as they have a job.

Much like the rest of the 1986 IRCA, border fortifications have helped to reinforce the trend to settle in place of circular migrations. This settlement trend has been confirmed through research done by Marcelli and Cornelius (2001), which looks at migration data from both sides of the border. This new trend has had a tremendous impact upon the industries that utilize immigrant labor. No longer are the employment ambitions for immigrants temporary, they are looking for jobs that they can work in permanently or semi-permanently. This is one fundamental

⁹ Passel et al. (2004) estimates that there are about 8 million undocumented immigrants in the United States, and that number grows by approximately 500,000 each year.

¹⁰ In 1999, a crossing in Douglas, Arizona ran US \$150, by the year 2001 that price jumped to US \$800-1300. The fortifications have pushed the crossers into the desert and more remote areas requiring longer more dangerous trips, thus warranting the higher prices (Cornelius, 2001: 668).

change that plays out nicely for year-around employers like the dairy, construction, manufacturing, service, and meat processing industries (Cornelius 1992: 176).

DRIVERS OF MIGRATION

Demand for immigrant labor in the United States has always been significant, but in recent years we have seen that demand expand and flourish. The biggest change we are seeing is the increase in the number of industries utilizing immigrant labor beyond the old stand-bys such as fruit and vegetable production, meatpacking, and informal employment markets. There are several theories that attempt to explain this trend, the first and most macro of the theories being the world systems theory. The world systems theory leads into discussion of labor shortages expressed by employers and amplified by the dual labor market theory. Moving from labor shortages and dual market theory this section will focus on employer recruiting practices, and finally will look at the resulting reliance upon immigrant employees and the employer satisfaction their work performance invokes.

World Systems Theory

World systems theory has been used to explain the increased interconnectedness of economic markets throughout the world. The theory is based on the idea that an economic decision in the United States will have impacts internationally. In “Workers Without Frontiers”, Peter Stalker describes the world systems theory as “a dramatic influence of the capitalism penetration of rich economies into poor, creating a total world system” (Stalker 2000: 132). The end result of this world system is the dismantling of traditional sources of employment, which creates greater unemployment and increased willingness to migrate in order to secure employment (Stalker 2000: 132).

The link between world systems theory and immigration is not a new development. In the book “Familia: Migration and Adaptation in Baja and Alta California, 1800-1975”, author Robert Alvarez documents the movement of immigrants from Baja California to California in reaction to “hemispheric conditions imposed by the then current political and economic trends” (Alvarez 1987: 162). The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) provides the perfect contemporary application of the world systems theory. NAFTA created substantial employment loss in agriculture, due to the opening of corn and other commodities in Mexico to world markets¹¹ (Cornelius 2002: 294). Coincidentally, the promise of NAFTA was to reduce

¹¹ The previously supported corn and commodity prices farmers were receiving from the Mexican government were reduced under the requirements of NAFTA. This reduction in price and subsequent

immigration between both nations once Mexico could stabilize their economy. The reality for many of the immigrants I interviewed was that stability is yet to arrive, and many of the people milking cows in Wisconsin, were once dairy or corn farmers in their native lands of Mexico or Central America.

Neoclassical Economics and “New Economics” Theories

The neoclassical economic theory of migration is based on wage differentials that exist between immigrant sending and receiving nations. The objective of the immigrant is to capitalize on his/her human capital and earn the most money possible (Stalker 2000: 131). The neoclassical theory is an excellent example of the deep financial motivation presented to families like the ones encountered in Wisconsin’s dairy industry that consider immigration. Focusing upon the financial aspects of immigration leaves out many crucial factors that are influential in the decision. If the decision to emigrate were purely financial, we would see changes in immigration volume when the wage differentials shift. But, the reality is that fluctuations in wage differentials often have little bearing on the volume of immigrants¹² (Massey et al. 1998: 9). If wage differentials were the most important determinant in immigration we would see the volume of immigrants mimic the changes in the wage differential.

The new economics theory of immigration points towards group decisions as motivation to migrate. Instead of the individual person deciding what is best for them, the welfare of the group (usually a family) is considered the most important. Massey et al. (1998) used this theory to explain the desire to minimize the financial risks or constraints presented to families. Funds produced through immigration are used to mitigate potential financial shortcomings such as; family sickness, loss of profitability in family business (often crops), or merely having enough money to buy consumables (Massey et al. 1998: 17). The resulting decision to migrate can often be a response to relative deprivation experienced in terms of what the neighbors have. It is not necessarily based on absolute need, but the perception that they need it because the neighbors have it (Stalker 2000: 131). Unfortunately, this theory is also limited to the economics of immigration and fails to explain the many other determinants in the migration decision such as: importance of social networks, financial cost of migrating, reception experienced by immigrants and the ability to find work in destination (Stalker 2000: 22). Without considering these additional factors in the decision to migrate, the immigration picture would not be complete.

flooding of the Mexican commodities market with heavily subsidized US products made agriculture unsustainable for millions of small Mexican farmers.

¹² Alvarez also found this to be true in the 1800 and 1900’s with immigrants migrating between Baja California and California. In this case immigrants were not trying to strike it rich. They were merely trying to recreate the employment and life-style they enjoyed in their hometowns (Alvarez 1987: 34).

Social Network Theory

Before further delving into theories of migration we must understand that migration is a decision that often is already made for the immigrants even if they are not interested in partaking. Leo Chavez wrote once that migration is something that is socially and culturally constructed, “not something that just happens.” The reality of this statement can be found in the numerous ‘corridos’ (songs) in Mexico that tell the stories of many immigrant journeys to the other side (Chavez 1998: 21). Because migration is culturally and socially meshed into the society of the sending and often the receiving communities, it becomes part of what the immigrants do and who they are. This deep penetration into society and culture makes immigration a social or societal trait that cannot be turned off with the flip of a switch.

Greater percentages of people in immigrant sending regions are using immigration as a means to support their kin. The cultural and social pressure of migrating is increasingly difficult to resist for those who would prefer to maintain their way of life without utilizing migration. This pressure is applied through social networks, which make migration a more viable option through the myriad of contacts, from coyotes ready to take you across the border to employers in industries like dairy who are seeking your help on the other side. Portes refers to these social networks as “social bridges across national frontiers” which further facilitate migration (Portes 1995: 22).

In order to build social bridges there needs to be a pioneer immigrant in order to start the networks and the accumulation of information.¹³ This pioneer immigrant has the responsibility of setting out in search of new opportunities for the immigrant group (Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 84). In order for social networks to survive they require an expansion in information in order to ensure that the network can grow and provide new opportunities for new immigrants. Without the new growth of information in the network contacts become strained and information becomes old. The benefit of being a member of a growing network is the fresh ties created with people outside of the network that might have new information pertaining to work, housing, or social services available (Hagan 1998: 65). These well-oiled social networks have played a major role in the expansion of immigrant employment in the dairy industry. Immigrants are increasingly being employed in an industry that almost exclusively relies on word of mouth as mode of labor recruitment.

¹³ In addition to the pioneer immigrant, the employer willing to hire the pioneer immigrant plays a major role in the construction of social networks. Without these non-immigrant players (employers and even coyotes) the effective nature of social networks would not be possible (Krissman2005).

Traces of the social network theory can be found at each and every step of the immigration process. From the procurement of a coyote to help cross the border to securing a job in the destination, social networks provide the necessary information to make the passage as easy as possible. ‘Parentesco’ and ‘compadrazgo’¹⁴ are two terms that have been used to help to classify the solidarity between immigrants and their families in order to help one another in succeeding in new regions. In “Familia” by Robert Alvarez these terms were used as a “mechanism for extending mutual help and reciprocity while solidifying the social relations” (Alvarez 1987: 96). In this case study many of the same relationships have helped to shape the migration streams. The use of social networks in hiring has had a major impact on the dairy industry during a period of expanding employment opportunities and declining local populations.

Dual Labor Market Theory

Meat and poultry processing, agriculture, and even dairy play an important role in the above discussed world systems theory due to their international labor recruitment and employment. However, without economic disruptions in places like Mexico, these industries would have a hard time finding the numbers and kinds of workers they require to operate. In each of the industries above there is a hierarchy of jobs, and looking at this hierarchy helps to explain the next component of the demand for immigrant labor: labor shortages. In “Birds of Passage” by Piore, labor shortages are labeled as a natural byproduct of a two tiered labor market, in which higher level, better paying jobs are taken by the local residents and lower level jobs are left for someone else (Piore 1979: 27).

The continued deskilling and erosion of confidence in domestic labor supplies has only increased employer appetites for immigrant labor to fill these secondary labor markets. In fact, the dual labor market theory in some cases has been tagged as the biggest obstacle to reducing our reliance upon immigrant labor. Peter Stalker in “Workers Without Frontiers” goes one step further, stating that the dual labor market and its associated migration are not temporary but rather permanent constructs of the contemporary economic system in place (Stalker 2000: 132). In effect, jobs are being placed into two categories: upper-tier and lower-tier jobs. The upper-tier jobs consists of management or unionized positions that are relatively well paid, and the lower-tiered jobs are the low-paid and deskilled jobs employers have such a hard time filling without immigrant labor (Cornelius 1989: 41).

¹⁴ “Parentesco became a method of creating reciprocity and kinship solidarity among incoming families.” “Parentesco, like compadrazgo and marriage, became a mechanism for extending mutual help and reciprocity while solidifying the social relations for community along the border” (Alvarez 1987: 95).

The dual labor market that has been created has an insatiable need for labor, which the United States cannot domestically supply. Without a burgeoning population, we must look outside of our borders to meet the demand. Industry's ability to recruit Latino immigrants has always been vital to many industries, even before the days of the Bracero Agreement¹⁵. The combination of years of recruitment and strong immigrant social networks has created a very efficient flow of potential employees for industries utilizing immigrant labor.

Unfortunately, this labor market segmentation creates shortages that are accentuated given that many of these lower level jobs are located in the countryside where there isn't a sufficient population to fill the vacancies. Meatpacking and dairy provide outstanding examples of the need for imported labor. The rural locations of processing plants and dairies require the industries to recruit both domestically and internationally for the labor (Fennelly and Lietner 2002: 2; Grey 1999: 17). In addition to the labor shortage, there are issues with the perceived quality of the local labor supplies. Research in the dairy industry in the Northeast has shown that many employers have lost faith in the local labor supply. The employers no longer believe that the local laborer can provide the quality work required or the work ethic necessary to get the work done (Maloney 1999: 5). James Engstrom also made this point in his research in the carpet industry in Dalton, Georgia. He found that employers constantly would complain that they could not find or retain the necessary workers, amplifying their strong belief in a labor shortage (Engstrom 2001: 47).

This efficient flow of immigrants is initiated by the direct recruitment of immigrants in places like the border of Mexico and the Southwestern United States. Without the recruitment process, employers in regions like the Midwest would have had a hard time attracting the quantity of employees needed to open meatpacking plants, milk cows or pick fruits and vegetables. Direct recruitment provides industries seeking immigrant labor with pioneer immigrants who can start creating the vital social networks that can more efficiently advertise available work.

Employer Preference for Referral Systems

Following initial recruitment, the efficient and swift pace of the social networks all but guarantees an inexhaustible supply of workers (Piore 1979: 16). Thus, over time the source of immigrant labor moves from active recruitment to a referral based system. The referral system often is so efficient that employers begin to remove themselves from the screening process and

¹⁵ At one time the border was left unprotected, which facilitated the free movement of migrants between the United States and Mexico. Formal immigration agreements were only needed once the border was closed in the early 1900's.

seasoned immigrant employees start bringing in potential applicants¹⁶ (Hagan 1998; Waldinger and Lichter 2003; Cornelius 1998). The driving force behind the success of the referral system is the enforceable trust created, which is another term for peer pressure. The immigrant community monitors the new workers' performance in order to make sure that they are doing their job correctly and not jeopardizing any potential opportunities for the entire group (Portes 1995: 17; Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 87).

Once the referral system is in place it can become a very powerful tool for employers. The key to the entire system is the settlement of several key workers. The settlement ensures that the employer has a reliable contact, a person the employer trusts completely for making referrals (Massey et al. 1987: 170). The fact that many immigrants have friends and family either in the area looking for work or somebody ready to emigrate provides employers with an efficient, low cost supply of workers (Stalker 2000: 105).

The ability of certain immigrant groups to cut off opportunities for qualified outsiders is one concern associated with the referral system. However, the tendency towards social closure¹⁷ can be perceived as having both positive and negative consequences upon small workplaces that use the referral system for hiring, such as dairy employers. This type of closure provides added control over the entire workforce, since the sponsor has a direct interest in the performance of all the people he or she has recommended. Therefore, not only is management monitoring the employee's performance, but also the sponsor who did the favor of getting that employee the job. This type of dual supervision can be very strong and in many cases the employers are willing to relinquish some of the hiring authority in order to achieve this extra supervision (Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 87).

In the research conducted by Waldinger and Lichter (2003) among Los Angeles employers, over half of the employers interviewed felt that the referral system provided the highest quality applicants. In San Diego County, Wayne Cornelius found that seventy percent of the employers interviewed cited referrals as their most important way to recruit employees (Cornelius 1998: 125-26). Both case studies provide strong evidence of employers' preference for referral systems regardless of the loss of authority in hiring. In fact, the eventual reliance on the referral system is

¹⁶ The successful performance of pioneer immigrants creates the trust needed for employers to step away from the hiring process. The trust that the employee receives does not come without cost. In most cases the trust is translated into a direct expectation for the person receiving the job to work hard.

¹⁷ Social closure occurs when the dominant group in the workplace exerts its control over the hiring process. This becomes critical when the dominant group exerts so much control that outsiders who may be better qualified for the job cannot compete for job openings. Thus, the same strong ties that can serve to include more members of a particular group is also capable of excluding other groups of outsiders (Portes and Landolt 1996: 20).

the trend in most industries. Once an established member of a group gains the trust of the employer, word of mouth recruitment becomes the preferred mode of finding applicants. Thomas Maloney found in his research among New York dairies that the longer employers had Latino immigrants the more likely they were to use referrals to bring in new employees (Maloney 1999: 7). A similar preference for the referral system was found to exist among the dairy employers interviewed in this paper's case study, to be detailed in chapter four.

INCREASING RELIANCE UPON IMMIGRANT LABOR

After reviewing the powerful nature of the referral method for recruitment, it's easy to see how industries employing Latino immigrants become increasingly reliant upon this labor source. For many industries like dairy, the majority of the jobs they provide are part of the secondary labor market and finding people to fill these jobs locally is very hard. Many of these industries feel comfortable with their reliance upon Latino immigrants because of the immense satisfaction that employers have with the work quality, greater employee stability (decreased turnover), and overall better work ethic.

Investigations conducted by Leo Chavez (1998) in San Diego County demonstrated the propensity of Latino immigrants to stay with employers regardless of advancement possibilities. The crucial component for creating a quality, stable workforce is the ability to foster a relationship with the workers. Once that relationship is developed, immigrant workers tend to be very loyal to their employers. The dairy industry benefits from the personal relationships created between employers and employees, which are facilitated through the daily contact that is unique to the dairy workplace. Often immigrant workers who are able to create a strong relationship with their employers are able to justify the bleak opportunities for advancement with successful attainment of job satisfaction (Chavez 1998: 142). This perception that immigrant workers are loyal and satisfied in their current position is one reason why they are so sought after.

The combination of increased employee loyalty, quality work, and ease in recruiting helps to develop a hiring queue based on ethnicity. A hiring queue is where each ethnic group is ranked according to its job performance and members of the top-ranked ethnic group are picked first when hiring decisions are made (Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 8). Although ethnic preferences may not be the employer's specific intent, realities like the workplace language often support and strengthen the hiring queue. If your best workers speak only Spanish and you want to hire more workers, it would be hard to hire anybody who did not speak the same language as existing workers. In fact, often management takes the initiative to learn the language of the immigrant employees, instead of the employees being required to learn the language of the business. This

propensity to learn the foreign language can help to reinforce the ethnic hiring queue (Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 68).

Looking back at the rationale for immigrant demand in the U.S. economy, it becomes easier to appreciate why immigrants are having such success at branching out into new regions and industries. While the world economic systems are busy creating the surplus labor supplies internationally, the dual labor market in the United States is driving the demand that soaks up the emigrating labor. The U.S. economy as a whole is becoming more and more dependent upon immigrant labor each passing day. As demand for immigrant labor continues to grow, the question that needs to be asked is, when will there be immigration reform? At what point will the nation stop and realize that this will not go away through the superficial changing of laws? Essentially, these are questions that need to be answered not only by the government, but also by the citizens that reap the benefits of immigrant labor. The conclusion of this paper will offer some policy considerations for immigrant reform that will more adequately address this growing demand.

CHAPTER 3

RECEIVING COMMUNITIES OF IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS

Although this case study focuses on Latino immigration in the dairy industry, it is important to understand the lives of immigrants beyond the workplace as this plays a crucial role in determining length and success of migration. In order to better understand immigrant lives and how immigrants impact receiving communities both economically and socially, this chapter looks at the several key areas that help to predict the success or failure of immigrants in receiving communities. There are three factors that will be outlined here: context of reception, immigrant settlement, and the integration of local and immigrant populations.

CONTEXT OF RECEPTION

The context of reception is not only a very important component to the success of the immigrant population, but also to the success of the entire community. In Rene Perez Rosenbaum's research in Adrian, Michigan a town with a long history of Latino migrant labor, he highlighted the importance of context of reception by stating "the ways new immigrants are welcomed into communities have long term implications for these migrants and the communities where they settle" (Rosenbaum 1997: 10). Communities that cannot provide a positive environment for the incorporation of immigrants tend to struggle socially and economically. There are many aspects that make up the context of reception and often these aspects spill over into dialogues regarding settlement and integration. Portes and Rumbaut use a three-part explanation to highlight the different components of context of reception. The first is governmental acceptance (programs, policies, and institutions), the second is ethnic community, and the third is economic viability (Portes and Rumbaut 1996). Using Portes and Rumbaut's description as the baseline for context of reception, this section will further explore the legal limitations facing many immigrants, immigrant-focused social organizations, and immigrant employers that help to determine the context in which immigrants encounter their new surroundings.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PERCEPTION FOR IMMIGRANT ACCEPTANCE

The social aspects of context of reception take on many different forms and are shaped by both the immigrant's and the local's perception of the circumstances. Perception is often the most important and influential factor in creating a positive environment for immigrants. Exploring the immigrant's perception of their new environment, we must consider that their previous social status at home may have subjected them to many abuses and disadvantages. This is especially true in the dairy industry where Latino immigrants generally come from rural areas

that are educationally limited. Once in receiving communities, they thus tend to be less critical of new circumstances and more accepting of their surroundings, and tend to see their situation as an opportunity as opposed to exploitation (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994: 183, Guthey 2001: 58). This contrast with the past provides them with a more positive outlook, even though it might not be ideal.

On the contrary, often the local populations become increasingly intolerant of the incoming populations especially if the immigrants are seen as undocumented. The stereotyping of immigrants can create barriers to integration into the community for the new arrivals ¹⁸(Chavez 1998: 19). The issue of documents and legality can be very tough to resolve because many immigrants are not eligible for the documents. The ineligibility intensifies the barriers to integration because often documents signify a form of social integration, while providing greater access to social services that can further increase integration (Massey et al. 1987: 259). The lack of legal documents can also limit the amount of actual contact immigrants have with the larger society.

Immigrant interviewees highlighted this subject several times, but their comments painted a different picture. Their undocumented status did not appear to as severely limit their integration or access to social services as the literature suggests. Several of the interviewees expressed greater comfort and freedom in the Wisconsin when compared to the traditional receiving areas of the Southwest.¹⁹ One interviewee stated “I like living here (Wisconsin) because I can live here peacefully without worry, I have a drivers license, a bank account, I rent an apartment for myself and my family, and there are better paying jobs.” The increased comfort has allowed immigrants to function more freely in society and has also helped to create a greater sense of inclusion into the greater community.

COMMUNITY AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

All across the nation community organizations (shelters, schools, libraries, civic organizations, health clinics and churches) are busy working with immigrant populations in order to provide needed services. Their work is vital to the success of immigrant communities and the

¹⁸ Chavez found that many immigrants were using the metaphor of confinement to explain their undocumented situation. This perceived and often real confinement prevents immigrants from participating in social and or governmental groups outside of work due to the fear of apprehension (Chavez 1998: 157)

¹⁹ For example, Wisconsin is one of 11 states that do not require social security numbers in order to obtain a driver’s license. This may seem to be minor but for someone who is undocumented having a U.S. driver’s license has many benefits. First and foremost, they have an identification that everyone recognizes and accepts in the United States. Secondly, having a license allows for easier access to bank accounts, social services, while granting them the privilege to drive. This benefit cannot be overlooked, considering that their places of employment are located in the countryside.

eventual settlement of immigrant populations in new regions. The Midwest provides a great example of how important these groups are when traditional social networks have yet to be established. The lack of immigrant networks shifts the emphasis to community groups to provide information on health care, education, legal issues, employment services, housing, and daily living requirements. These community groups help to create the initial link between immigrants and public services. Once that initial contact is made the immigrant network can then take hold and information can be passed on by word of mouth.

The work of these community groups never ends. Once they have successfully distributed vital information to the immigrant populations they next focus on creating greater diversity and positive interaction within the community. Many communities have successfully created ethnic festivals to display diversity as an important component to the make-up of the community and also to educate local populations (Bean and Bell-Rose 1999, p. 303). Community groups are busy organizing information fairs, consortia,²⁰ advisory boards to local government,²¹ and ethnic celebrations. Their work can help to positively shape the local community's perception of new immigrant groups.

Context of reception is a continual learning and educational process. Immigrant advocate groups must continue to find ways to invite immigrants into their communities and find social outlets that integrate both local and immigrant populations. One of the biggest challenges is creating a vibrant social environment beyond the regular outlet of drinking (Gouveia and Stull 1995: 96). Creating a greater range of social outlets will only help to increase the opportunities for immigrants to succeed in their respective communities.

This case study encountered community groups have done extremely vital work towards fostering a positive and inviting atmosphere for Latino immigrants working in dairy. One specific organization that has had extensive success with the Latino immigrant community is the church. The presence of an accepting church community to which Latino immigrants can turn to is extremely important. The church provides new Latino immigrants with a social venue where they can meet, while also fulfilling their spiritual desires (Grey and Woodrick 2002: 370, Whiting 2002: 8). The church has responded to those concerns by using faith as the unifying force in order to create a positive and safe environment for immigrants. Churches that had experienced declines in numbers have been opening their doors to immigrants and have found new life. In

²⁰ One county has created a consortium that has assembled a community partnership between business, social, immigrant, and cultural leaders of the community in order to foster greater integration and dissemination of information (Personal communication, Malek 2005).

²¹ This advisory council works with local government to create awareness of social, economic, and legal issues facing the immigrant population in order to better understand and serve them.

fact, many churches have gone beyond Spanish mass and started to create groups to address Latino needs in Spanish. It is not uncommon to find Sunday school, translation, and interpretation services provided through the church for immigrants (Heness 2002: 13). The emergence of the church has been a very important force in the creation of a positive context of reception. They have to a degree achieved integration between their traditional local worshippers and the new immigrants (Hongdagneu-Sotelo 1994: 181).

The action of non-governmental groups is busy trying to create a successful environment for immigrants, but there will always remain major obstacles. One of those obstacles is increased visibility of the immigrant population (Martin et al. 1996: 2). Increased visibility (see figure 3.1 next page) has a tendency to trigger negative reactions from local populations who may feel that immigrants are becoming commonplace, or that immigrants are getting special treatment. Increased visibility can also create movements against immigrants such as English as the official language legislation (Bean and Bell-Rose 1999: 303). Brown County (Green Bay), one of the four counties where I conducted my research, recently passed (2002) similar legislation despite all the great work being done by governmental and non-governmental organizations attempting to increase immigrant integration.²²

²²The county board constructed English as official language legislation despite the strong opposition by many of the organizations mentioned in this section and various business leaders. The reasoning behind the legislation was to “unite” the population under one official language, while the opposition felt this measure would not unite, but divide the population. The local newspaper ran an extensive campaign against the measure where they succinctly pointed out that a mere 2.2% of the county’s population did not speak English (Perry 2002).



Figure 3.1: Examples of the increasingly visible Latino immigrant community in Green Bay, WI. Source: Author photograph, 2004.

EMPLOYERS AND THEIR ROLE

Continual improvement in the context of reception is required in order to cultivate a positive environment for immigrants. The responsibility for cultivating this environment falls on squarely on the shoulders of the employers first and foremost. If they are going to reap the benefits of the toil of immigrant labor then they need to step up and provide a positive environment for the workers through increased cultural education and language training. Research in meatpacking demonstrates how this industry has failed to provide a positive context of reception for the workers whom they employ. Research has found that the employment instability in meatpacking has left newcomers in a state of flux. High turnover rates, dangerous work environment, lack of unions, and low pay in meatpacking employment were all cited as contributing to the negative context of reception (Fennelly and Leitner 2002: 8; Grey and Woodrick 2002: 369; Gouveia and Stull 1997: 15).

On the contrary the dairy industry is attempting to keep workers for longer periods of time, due to increased worker productivity over time. Additionally, turnover is very expensive and

regularly results in lost production and efficiency declines. As a result the dairy industry is experiencing a reduction in turnover, which also helps to promote a more stable and positive context of reception (Encina 1984: 26-28). The objective of the dairy owner is to create a stable, satisfied workforce, which plays to the benefit of both the employer and the employee (Reed 1994: 11). In Leo Chavez's research of Latino immigrants in San Diego County he found that immigrants prefer job stability to other employment factors. This finding indicates that the dairy industry is to a degree satisfying one of the main objectives of their immigrant workforce, while creating a stable and positive context of reception (Chavez 1988: 102).

SETTLEMENT

Settlement is one of the main focuses throughout this project because of the relative newness of the Latino populations in small communities throughout Wisconsin. Before delving into the topic of settlement I must first explain the terms settlement and settler. Over the years researchers have not had much success finding the exact definition of a settler in terms of length of stay. This summer's interviews confirmed this ambiguity and demonstrated the difficulty in defining this term. When asking interviewees if they had plans to stay permanently, most answered that they will stay as long as they have a job, while at the same time telling me that they are building a house in Mexico with the money they are earning.²³

The move away from circular migrations towards more long-term settlement started in the 1970's and has been accelerating ever since. Even though many Mexican migrants would like to consider themselves sojourners²⁴, the reality is that the U.S. economy is offering more year-around jobs and immigration social networks are thickening to the point where they can support the migration of entire families (Cornelius 1992: 175-76). Massey (1986) offers a three-step explanation to the process of transforming from a sojourner to settler. The first stage is the sojourner stage where the migrant maintains a direct focus towards their home country. They tend to share a living space with co-workers, are employed in unstable jobs, and have little interest in social activities outside of work. The next phase is the called the transition phase where the migrant begins to lengthen stays, may acquire legal residence and find better paying, more stable jobs. The last phase is the settler phase that is best characterized by living with the

²³ Chavez also defined migrants as people who come to the United States to work and return home, while settlers are immigrants who reside in the United States for years, or maybe even their entire life. But the difference between the two is often hard to find because often settlers also hold on to the idea of returning home someday (Chavez 1998: 4).

²⁴ A sojourner is someone who maintains their focus towards their home country and lives for the moment when they can return home to reunite with friends and family. They tend to stay in jobs that are temporary or seasonal in order to return home after short stints working abroad (Chavez 1994: 54).

wife and children, having extensive social contacts, and remitting smaller amounts of money (Massey 1986: 671).

Looking at today's immigration patterns, it appears that the steps towards becoming a settler have sped up due to several factors such as increased border enforcement, more family migrations, and more stable year-around employment. Even with the greater tendency towards settling, the ability to predict settlement remains very imprecise. The best manner in which to identify settlement is through the situation of the immigrant's family. Settlement is often described as when the family reunifies in a foreign country, with the ability to secure stable employment in order to support and maintain the entire family (Hogndagneu-Sotelo 1994: 17-18, 148). However, settlement is often not complete until the family is reestablished and is reoriented towards their new immigrant community. This shift in focus helps to create valuable links to the greater community through the use of social services and the education system, and increased socializing within and outside of the immigrant community. Chavez stressed the importance of this link to the larger community in order to draw the immigrants into realms and friendships outside of work, thus breaking down the sojourner focus (Chavez 1990: 259).

EARLY STAGES OF SETTLEMENT

Before immigrants can reach the reunification stage there are several changes that normally occur prior to the arrival of the family. Some of the early indicators that can signify a transition from sojourner to settler are: reduced focus on work (fewer hours working), increased consumer focus, reduction in the quantity of remittances sent home, greater emphasis on stable housing, and greater utilization of social services. Reduction in work hours and increased consumption appear to go hand in hand: the notion to work less is fueled by the increased desire to socialize more. The result is fewer hours working, which means more time to participate in social engagements outside of work.²⁵ The direct result of the shorter workweek is more interaction with the immigrant and host societies, which increases integration and provides important links to society. These changes lead to greater expenses and smaller savings, extending the amount of time required to reach financial objectives (Piore 1978: 62, Massey et al. 1987: 273, Tsuda 1999: 704, 706).

The reduction of work hours and the shift towards more socially rewarding experiences transforms the orientation of the immigrant from a remittance machine to someone who is part of a community. Case studies of immigrants show that over time remittances decrease and

²⁵ In the case of the dairy worker, this might mean reducing their hours from 65 hours per week to 55 hours per week. The reduction in work hours still provides the worker with sufficient income, while also providing them with more time to enjoy themselves outside of work.

consumption increases even though the immigrants often have experienced increases in pay. In research done by Chavez, he found that 80% of single migrants sent money home, whereas only 63% of U.S. based migrants in simple family households sent money home (Chavez 1994:101). Massey et al. called the reduction in remittances a “sure sign that settlement process was under way” (Massey et al. 1987: 271). Although it is hard to predict settlement solely based on the reduction of remittances, it is an integral part of the greater transformation of sojourner to settler in which an immigrant places greater emphasis on establishing his/her life in the United States.

Another important indicator of settlement is the move from transitory housing situations²⁶ to ones where family units become the focus of the housing decisions. This move towards single-family dwelling demonstrates the shift towards family stability and recreation in the United States. Researchers in Midwestern meatpacking are increasingly witnessing this move in the direction of more home ownership and family recreation. A case study in Lexington, Nebraska showed that homes being purchased by Latinos in this small meatpacking town increased by 11% between the years of 1992 and 1994²⁷ (Gouveia and Stull 1997: 13). Additionally, research in Southern California has found that Latino immigrants often exceed the rate of movement into homeownership than that of native populations within the same age brackets (Myers and Woo Lee 1998). The increased purchasing of homes also provides for further linkages to the host society due to the formalities (mortgages, increased consumer needs, and taxes) that home ownership brings.

The culmination of all these decisions occurs when the family reunites and is recreated in the United States. Even though the family may lack the proper documentation, the reunification often signals the intent to settle in the United States. As families appear in the migration paths, community connections begin to multiply. No longer are the immigrants living by themselves. Wives and children are present, helping to increase community contact. This is where immigration and gender meet to change the dynamics of the immigration trajectories. Women play an essential role in transforming the focus from sojourner to settler. Without their participation in immigration, settlement would not occur.

²⁶ Transitory housing situations can be best described as situations where immigrants share housing with co-workers and/or friends. These housing arrangements are often comprised of single migrants. In one study the percentage of immigrants living in transitory housing fell from 78% to 58% after only one year of residence in the United States, indicating a relatively quick shift from transitory to family oriented dwelling (Chavez 1994: 100).

²⁷ Percentage of homes purchased by Latinos in Lexington, Nebraska jumped from 5% in May of 1992 to 16% by May of 1994 (Gouveia and Stull 1997: 13).

THE FAMILY IS HERE, NOW WHAT? FROM SETTLEMENT TOWARDS INTEGRATION

As Hongdagneu-Sotelo found, immigrant women are more likely than men to aspire to settle permanently. In fact, she came across men who were previously eligible for an amnesty, but who passed on it because they still believed that their stay in the United States was temporary. The dream of returning home as a successful immigrant and restarting their lives in their hometown dies hard in males. Contrastingly, women feel that their children receive better education and nutrition in the United States and desire to stay for those reasons (Hongdagneu-Sotelo 1994: 100-102). This fundamental difference in perspective goes a long way in explaining the tendency to settle once children and wives begin participating in the migration streams.

Often in immigrant families traditional gender roles are applied in one form or another. The wife/mother will carry out many of the family responsibilities like enrolling the children in school, caring for family health, shopping, and taking care of the home, all while working at least a part-time job in order to help support the family. As Hongdagneu-Sotelo stated, “men are the community pioneers and the women are the community builders” (Hongdagneu-Sotelo 1994: 174). The carrying out of all these tasks create valuable links to the host society that otherwise would not have occurred without the presence of the children or wives (Gouveia and Stull 1995: 91, Gouveia and Stull 1997: 8, Grey 1995: 118, Hongdagneu-Sotelo 1994: 16, Dale 2001: 96, Zuniga and Hernandez-Leon 2001: 197, Massey et al. 1987: 163, Tsuda 1999: 708).

These links also increase the aforementioned visibility and familiarity of the immigrant group within the local community (Zuniga and Hernandez-Leon 2001: 133). The combination of increased familiarity and visibility can help to build a positive environment for settlement from both the local and immigrant perspectives²⁸. Visibility was earlier described as a potential negative because it produced only superficial knowledge of the presence of the immigrant community without any interaction (i.e. seeing a sign in Spanish). However, the form of visibility being discussed here is much deeper and more personal due to the interaction of immigrants in schools, churches, and community organizations, which helps to build a familiarity between both immigrant and local groups. The emergence of the family unit led by the women creates greater immigrant visibility and exposure, and stronger social links between the immigrant and local community.

While the presence of immigrant families helps to draw the immigrant group into the community, its existence also fuels growth in immigrant businesses focused on serving that

²⁸ Increased visibility and exposure helps to build more familiarity and understanding of the immigrant community, while the community links provide valuable opportunities for interaction between both immigrant and local populations.

flourishing community. The emergence of immigrant businesses helps to meet the increased demand for ethnic products that immigrants seek. The existence of immigrant owned and oriented businesses are a very important component of communities with immigrant populations. The ability to purchase ethnic products is vital to immigrants and also creates an opportunity for local community members to explore the immigrants' culture. Not only do these businesses provide social benefits, but also economic benefits. Immigrant-run businesses provide employment and often exist and thrive in downtown areas that have experienced an exodus of commerce (Gouveia and Stull 1997: 13, Hernandez-Leon and Zuniga 2000: 55).

The presence of immigrant run businesses also creates incentive for immigrants to increasingly participate in the economy of the United States. These stores provide products that are known to the immigrant population in the language with which they are comfortable. Both immigrant-run and supported businesses play an important role in the settlement process. Often immigrants have to utilize credit systems in order to buy bigger ticket items like cars, homes, or even health care. The ability to secure and use credit demonstrates employment stability, a commitment to longer-term residence and societal and economic integration (Hongdagneu-Sotelo 1994: 168-169). Some of the best examples of this transformation are immigrant-supported businesses like car dealerships, banks, and real estate agencies offering their services in Spanish in order to cater to Latino immigrant populations.

ESTABLISHING COMMUNITIES

All of the factors that contribute to settlement that have been outlined above can be put together to create a larger picture of belonging to an imagined community. Interviews of Mexican and Central American immigrants in San Diego County by Leo Chavez discovered that immigrants who imagined themselves as part of a community were five times more likely to intend to stay permanently as those who did not (Chavez 1994: 67). Securing stable employment, being surrounded by your family, being able to recreate their Latino lifestyles and participating in social gatherings outside of work (church, sports leagues, dances, picnics) are all important contributing factors to the perceived and often real community. If saving money and work were the only important objectives of an immigrant's existence then we would not see the Mexican bailes or rodeos, parks in immigrant neighborhoods would not be full of people, and entire families would not take the risks involved in order to cross the border. Creating a socially appealing environment to balance out work is essential for the continuance of immigrant communities and a sense of being integrated within that community is a crucial part of an immigrant's tendency to settle.

When talking about settlement, especially Latino immigrants in industries like meatpacking, agriculture, and dairy, we must remember that many do not have the legal documents necessary to work and live here. They appreciate what they have, but predicting where they will be in the future is difficult for researchers and even more difficult for the immigrants. Until federal immigration laws evolve, settlement will remain a precarious term used to describe the unknown futures of immigrants living in the United States.

CHAPTER 4

IMMIGRANT'S JOURNEY AND THEIR NEW COMMUNITY

This case study was carried out in four counties. Three of the counties (Brown, Kewaunee, and Manitowoc) are located in Northeastern Wisconsin along the shores of Lake Michigan and the fourth (Buffalo) is located in Western Wisconsin along the Mississippi River (Figure 4.1 on page 44). The population density varies considerably, from Brown County, which has 429- persons/square mile, to Buffalo County, which has 20-persons/square (See table 4.1). These demographic variations provide an excellent opportunity for making comparisons between large, more urban areas and rural areas with respect to important factors that influence length of employment, context of reception, opportunities for community integration, and prospects for settlement.

Table 4.1
Population Density by county

County	Persons/square mile	Total Population
Brown	429	233,888
Buffalo	20	13,814
Kewaunne	59	20,455
Manitowoc	140	82,065

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The ethnic make-up of each county is primarily white. In fact, Brown County is the only county which is less than 90% white (See table 4.2 on page 45). Prior to the arrival of Asian Hmong and Latino immigrants, ethnic diversity consisted of descendents of ancestors mainly from different countries in Central and Northern Europe. This strong European heritage is reflected in the many rural towns that are named after European countries and cities. In some respects this strong orientation and connection to ancestral European roots has helped to create a more accepting environment for the new immigrants, since many understand that their ancestors were also immigrants at one time.

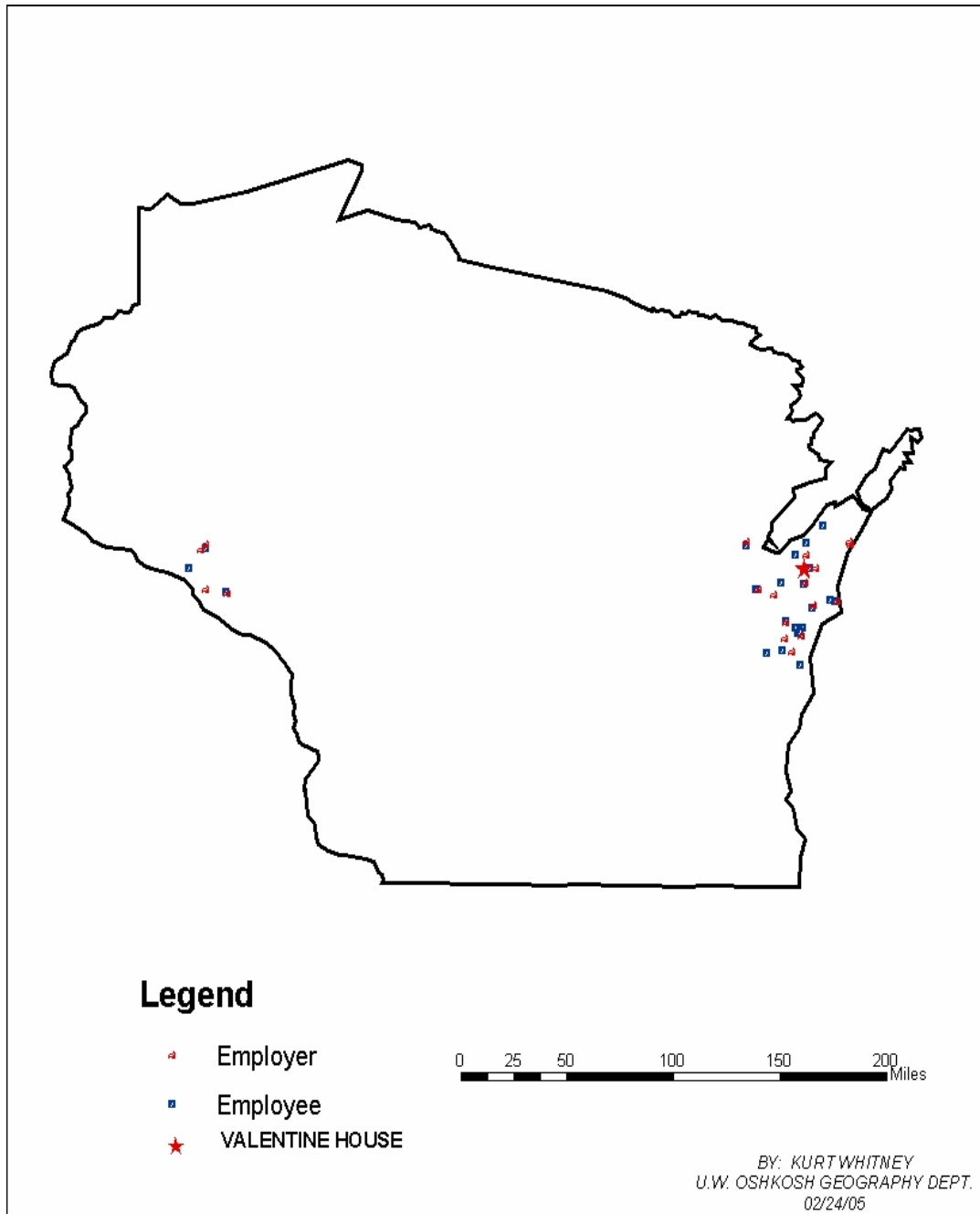


Figure 4.1 Research Sites for Employers and Employees

Unfortunately, not everyone recognizes the symmetry between their own family history and the current immigration situation, which can lead to resistance of the arrival of immigrants.

Table 4.2
Ethnic Breakdown by county

County	% Hispanic	% Asian	% White
Brown	3.8	2.2	89.6
Buffalo	0.6	0.3	98.2
Kewaunee	0.8	0.1	98.2
Manitowoc	1.6	2.0	95.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The research sites were divided into two regions. The Eastern region contains the adjacent counties of Brown, Manitowoc, and Kewaunee, and the Western region includes Buffalo County. The Eastern region has been utilizing Latino immigrants in dairy for over ten years and has a developed, functioning immigrant community replete with ethnic stores and concentrations of immigrant populations. On the contrary, the Western region began employing Latinos in dairy more recently, and lacks the Latino establishments present in the Eastern region. These contrasting characteristics help to create valuable comparisons between the regions, while providing snap shots of two areas at different stages in immigrant incorporation. Looking at the past development of the Eastern region provides insight into how the Western region’s immigrant community might develop in the future.

Table 4.3
Interviews Per County

County	Number of Immigrants Interviewed	Number of Employers Interviewed
Brown	14	4
Buffalo	18	3
Kewaunee	11	10
Manitowoc	11	11
Total	54	28

Source: Author’s Interviews, 2004

WISCONSIN’S DAIRY INDUSTRY: EXPANDING RAPIDLY

Wisconsin, the “dairy state” has always had a diversified economy, but the dairy industry has always been at the center of the rural economy. The state’s dairy industry currently represents about 5% of the state’s economy and provides approximately 174,000 jobs, which represents

5.1% of total employment (Deller 2002: 2). Dairy in Wisconsin much like the national dairy industry has gone through many crucial transformations during the last decade. In 1940, 99.1% of the dairy operations in the United States had fewer than 29 cows per farm. By the year 2000 that percentage had dropped all the way to 29%, decreasing one and a half percentage points each year for the last twenty years (Blaney 2002: 8).

The move towards larger dairies has also unfortunately hit Wisconsin, a state with a long tradition of small family farms.²⁹ Similar to the meatpacking industry, concentration of production has been and will continue to be the trend Wisconsin dairies will follow (Jones 2002: 3).

As dairies increase in size and production, their reliance upon non-family labor increases (Bewley 2001: 717). In Buffalo County, one of the counties researched for this study, the herd size in 2002 was 150 cows and it is projected jump to around 400 cows by the year 2007. With a labor requirement of one full-time worker per 40 cows, this signifies a sharp increase in labor inputs that rural populations are expected to supply (Duley 2003). The 2002 Dairy Producer Opinion Survey of Wisconsin producers corroborated this labor shortage: 67% of dairy producers interviewed agreed to the statement, “good hired labor is hard to find in my area of the state” (WASS 2002). Below is a chart that demonstrates the changes that the industry is expected continue to go through, driving the growing need for imported labor.

Table 4.4
Wisconsin Dairy Herds
by Herd Size

Milk cow herd size	2004 herds	2009 herds (projected) 1/	Change 2009/2004
	Number		Percent
1-29	2,200	1,150	-48
30-49	3,900	2,300	-41
50-99	6,500	4,700	-28
100-199	1,900	1,930	+2
200-499	700	890	+27
500+	200	330	+65
Total	15,400	11,300	-27

1/The 2009 projection is based on farmers' responses between September and November 2004, with the assumption that milk prices for the next five years will be at the same level as the past five years.

Source: WASS, USDA 2004

²⁹ As dairies increase production and output they create more profit per dollar of investment, which drives their per unit cost of production to lower levels. These cost reductions are desirable because they increase the dairy's ability to weather inconsistencies in the milk market (Jones 1997: 1).

The reliance upon immigrant employees has steadily risen along with dairy (herd) sizes. Without a significant local labor supply to pull from, these growing dairies inevitably turn to the immigrants that have strong social networks and a coveted work ethic. The growth in dairy sizes is being driven by the need to compete with major producers throughout the nation. For example, the average herd in the Great Lakes region averages around 60 cows, while the average in the Western United States is 425 (Blaney 2002: 16). Focusing on this disparity in numbers, it becomes obvious what midwestern producers must do in order to stay competitive, and if they want to stay competitive that means increasing dairy sizes, which in turn means greater numbers of immigrant workers.

Extensive research on the interaction between the dairy industry and Latino immigrants does not exist. There have been two studies done in New York (Maloney 1999 and Maloney and Grusenmeyer 2005). The first study interviewed approximately twenty dairy operators about employing Latino immigrants. Maloney's study focused on the changes that dairy employers have gone through since hiring Latino immigrants. This study keyed on issues such as: workplace language, cultural differences in the workplace, pay, recruiting methods, and labor shortages within the native population. This study attempts to further add to the information documenting the employers' point of view, along with creating new documentation on immigrant workers in dairy. The second study, which is referred to in the case study section, interviewed 111 Latino immigrants working in New York. This research focused on the working relationship that is developing between dairy employment and Latino immigrants. The lack of extensive information about dairy and its immigrant workforce provides an excellent opportunity to expand the knowledge on employing immigrants in industries like dairy, which provide some very unique employment circumstances.

When looking at traditional immigrant employers such as meatpacking, fruit and vegetable production, or the garment industry it becomes apparent that dairy offers a divergent perspective. The most apparent difference between traditional immigrant employers and the dairy industry is the personal relationships that employers and employees often forge in the workplace. Another important difference between traditional immigrant employers and the Wisconsin dairy industry is the lack of extensive history that dairy has with non-family employees, let alone immigrant employees. This relative newness provides a unique opportunity to take a snapshot in time of the relationship that is evolving and developing between employers, immigrant employees and the community.

Over the last five years as both a researcher and industry consultant I have witnessed this relationship evolve. Starting from a development stage that was characterized by higher turnover, it has progressed to a stage of greater employment stability, one that fosters and promotes longer average employment periods. This increased stability has also helped to further the integration of immigrants into the larger community. The employment stability that dairy offers provides a great opportunity to look at receiving communities and their interaction with the immigrant populations and what role stable employment plays in settlement and integration.

THE IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR JOURNEY: ISN'T WINTER TOO COLD?

Understanding the migration paths of Latino immigrants to Wisconsin was one of the initial objectives of this research project. By focusing on the migration paths, the cost of the journey, how long it took, if they had any problems during the migration, and when they migrated last allows for better understanding of the use of social networks in disseminating information related to migrations. Additionally, these points of interests highlight the impacts of federal immigration policies on the border and the immigrants who cross into the United States.

Crossing the border was a topic that most interviewees did not talk about easily. In certain instances entire groups of workers declined to interview because some of the first questions dealt with crossing the border. Understandably so. This is a very sensitive topic, one not discussed with just anybody. Fortunately, several immigrants shared their detailed stories about crossing and the hardships involved. In total 91% of the people interviewed crossed the border without papers. Crossing strategies have changed drastically over the years in reaction to the increased border fortification. One man who arrived from Mexico with his wife two days before our conversation told his story of hardship and close calls with the Border Patrol:

“We walked for three days in the desert until we were within a half an hour of Tucson, Arizona. When we left we were 40, but only 8 arrived without problems. When we encountered the migra, we had to break up into groups in order to get past them. Several times during the journey we were almost left behind because my wife had problems keeping up. I feel that we were very lucky to not get caught. This experience has convinced me that we will never attempt to cross the border again”.-Paco, immigrant who crossed the Sonoran Desert, 2004

Paco's story of crossing the border is typical of others interviewed. But unlike Paco, not everyone's story ends in success, 28% who crossed without papers were caught by Border Patrol, with an average of 1.43 crossing attempts per interviewee. Nearly everyone (98%) has arrived since the border fortification started during the mid 1990's, and 89% last crossed between January of 2000 and the time of the interview. This recent crossing experience provided each immigrant with an intimate familiarity with the dangers of crossing. Knowledge of these

potentially dangerous experiences associated with crossing has had a drastic effect on the migration patterns of immigrants. Aware of the difficulties of entering the United States, many are unwilling to return home after short periods of work.

Crossing the border without papers is also becoming increasingly more expensive as the routes become more difficult and less predictable. The average cost of crossing for interviewees was US\$1765 and two thirds of the coyote rates fell between US\$1000 and US\$2000. (See table 4.5) The most expensive crossing involved a wife and her two children who together paid US\$6000. Because the children were too young to walk in the desert, they were smuggled in a car through a legal port of entry. Another immigrant from Central America spent US\$5000 for his journey from Honduras.

The high cost of crossing the border is having an impact on migration patterns because it takes longer to pay back the money loaned to cross the border. Often immigrants receive loans from family members already in Wisconsin. In certain instances dairy employers have also loaned money without interest to workers so that a family member can emigrate. Even though the cost of crossing is high, there are many funding sources available for potential immigrants, especially those with strong social contacts in the United States.

Table 4.5
Coyote Prices paid by immigrants in U.S Dollars

Price Groupings	Percent of total
0-1000\$	14.00%
1001-2000\$	67.40%
2001-3000\$	14.00%
3000 and up	4.70%

N=43

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

The strategy used by the Border Patrol to push the immigrants into non-urban areas where crossing is more difficult was evident in the routes chosen. Below table 4.6 classifies the crossing locations used by twenty-seven immigrants who were willing to speak at length about their crossing.³⁰

³⁰This question was added during the data collection process and for that reason the total number of responses was considerably lower.

Table 4.6
States Where Crossings Took Place

Crossing Location	Percent of total
Sonora-Arizona	63%
Mexicali-California	15%
Tamauplias-Texas	15%
Chihuahua-Texas	7%
Total	100%

N=27

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

The fact that nearly two thirds of the respondents used the Sonoran Desert in Arizona as their crossing preference indicates the strong Border Patrol presence at many of the other crossing locations in California and Texas. Surprisingly, the immigrants interviewed reported few instances of serious problems during the crossing. One reason for the potential under-reporting of difficulties in crossing could be due to an unwillingness to talk about their experiences. Another reason could be that immigrants understand the inherent risks, and thus see them more as obstacles rather than problems. In other words it is generally understood that hardship must be endured in order to get to the United States. Overall, three out of 27 indicated that they had been robbed during their journey, and 15% felt that the trip lasted more days than originally planned. Even with these modest numbers, many interviewees expressed concern over the increasing difficulty in crossing and have no desire to do it again.

The use of information provided through social networks appears to be influencing the final destinations of immigrants in recent years. Instead of immigrating to traditional areas that have experienced a saturation of immigrants, more and more immigrants are choosing to immigrate directly to the Midwest where work prospects are better and social networks have been established. This trend is represented in the following table (4.7), where over half of the interviewees came directly to Wisconsin.

Table 4.7
Final Destinations by State

Destination	Percent of total
Wisconsin	52.8
California	30.2
Texas	3.8
Minnesota	3.8
South Carolina	3.8
Missouri	1.9
Iowa	1.9
Oregon	1.9

N=53

Source: Author 's Interviews, 2004

For recent undocumented immigrants Wisconsin appeared to be much more attractive (see table 4.7) because of the bleak economic opportunities in places like California. The next page displays a detailed map (Figure 4.2) of the routes taken by interviewees. The following quotations emphasize the disadvantage many recent immigrants faced in California.

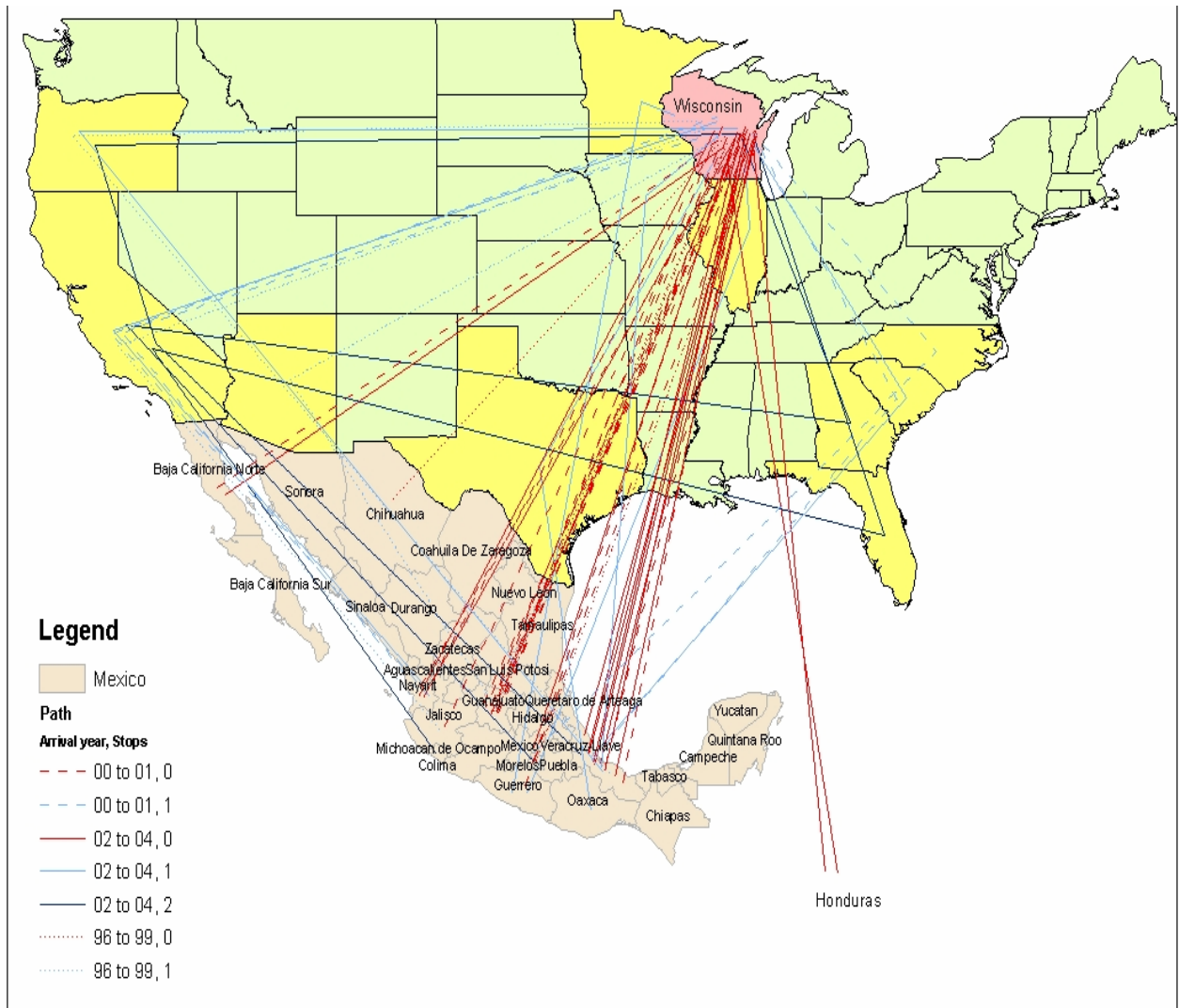


Figure 4.2 Latino Migration to Wisconsin

“Working in the fields competing with workers with papers for low wages was too difficult. After one year we decided to come to Wisconsin in order to earn better wages.”-Francisco, Coming from the Central Valley, California

“I realized that while working in the grape fields I wasn’t getting ahead. Some family members told me about the good opportunities in Wisconsin, so I left.”-Ruben, Coming from the Central Valley, California

Through family and friends already in Wisconsin, immigrants learned of better economic opportunities. These same networks helped ease the transition and also aided in finding work. Regardless of where they were going originally, all but one immigrant used some form of social network in order to arrive in Wisconsin. The one exception migrated every year from Day City,

Florida to Wisconsin to work in the cabbage fields during the summer. One cabbage season he decided to stay and to get a job in Green Bay. After three years of living and working in Green Bay, he is still the only immigrant from the state of Colima that he knows.

Regardless of whether they came directly to Wisconsin or were first in another state most have endured a very long and difficult road, beginning with their border crossing. This increasingly difficult journey has convinced many to never cross again. This is a major shift in perspective. In the past, circular migrations were very common. Today, that approach has changed for recent immigrants, and their border experiences are fresh in their heads (Refer to page 55 for a map (Figure 4.3) with the locations of border crossings). In fact, 74% of the immigrants have only crossed the border once. This propensity to stay in the U.S. works in favor of the dairy industry that seeks a stable workforce, while placing all of the risk of crossing the border squarely on the backs of the immigrants. The increased stability provides dairy employers with the ability to continually enhance the skills of their workforce through continuous training and job promotion.

THE DAIRY INDUSTRY AND LATINO IMMIGRANTS: BUILDING CULTURAL BRIDGES

“I’d be six feet under without them (Latino immigrants)”-Roger, employer

Interviews with dairy employers provided descriptive, as well as quantitative information on the industry and its increasing reliance upon Latino immigrants. The first part of this section will introduce some background information on the dairy industry. The next part will more closely examine the need for immigrant labor and how this labor is faring in the industry. The last section will look at the mutual dependency that is developing between employees and employers.

Dairy is an industry that has deep roots in familial ownership and operation. Today, the landscape is changing towards a corporate approach, but most if not all of the employers that I interviewed were raised in that family setting. The nature of the industry has forced these traditional dairy farmers to become business managers. The data sample represents this changing trend change in many ways: the dairies are bigger, produce more milk, require greater investments, and have significant labor inputs. Looking table 4.8 on page 57 provides some insight into the amount of annual sales the operations achieve where interviews were conducted.³¹ Barring market collapse, the gross sales numbers are going to increase if future projects come to fruition. 68% of all employers interviewed have plans of future expansion.

Table 4.8
Groupings for Gross Sales

Gross Sales	Percent of Total
500,000-1,000,000	15%
1,000,000-3,000,000	69%
3,000,000-5,000,000	12%
5,000,000-7,000,000	4%
Total	100%

N=26

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

The average weekly earnings of foreign-born workers interviewed was US\$371/week, which was earned by working an averaging 50 hours per week in shifts lasting on average 10 hours. These are two reasons why immigrants in dairy areas seek farm work. The pay is competitive, the average entry wage among dairy employers interviewed was US\$7.82 per hour and there are always enough hours to go around.³² Although hours and wages are competitive, there is strong labor market segmentation in terms of job description between foreign-born and native. Natives in dairy are concentrated in management and supervisory positions, and the majority of the foreign-born fall into the secondary job market. (See table 4.9 on page 58) The position of milker

³¹ Many of the dairies in the sample sell more than milk. Some examples of other income generators are harvesting services, cash crops, and livestock sales.

³² A recent research report on dairy in the state of New York found that the entry wage for immigrant dairy workers was U.S.\$6.87, with the workers working an average of 62 hours per week (Maloney and Grusenmeyer 2005).

is an entry-level position, one that is dominated by Latino immigrants in the counties where the research was conducted.³³ The next step on the way up the hierarchy ladder is feeder. This person is responsible for feeding the animals, and requires greater knowledge of the operation, more training, and the ability to work independently. Supervisor is an entry-level management position that is second only to the owner/head manager. Although only one of the immigrant interviewees has reached this position, in the future there will be greater percentages of Latino supervisors and managers on Wisconsin dairies.

Table 4.9
Positions Held by Latino Immigrants

Position	Percent of Total
Milker	81%
Feeder	17%
Supervisor	2%
Total	100%

N=54

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

LACK OF HELP: MILKERS WANTED

The concentration of production in the dairy industry has presented many challenges that have had to be overcome in order to remain profitable. One of the biggest challenges is finding a labor supply. Unfortunately, rural communities lack the required labor pools to run large dairies. This inherent shortage is exacerbated by the loss of the traditional dairy laborer: the high school student. Looking at table 4.10 indicates just how scarce local labor has become.

³³ The concentration of Latino immigrants in entry-level positions such as milking is further supported by the research by Maloney and Grusenmeyer, who found that 79% of the 111 immigrants interviewed perform milking as their primary job on the dairy (Maloney and Grusenmeyer 2005).

Table 4.10
Do you ever have local applicants for job openings?

Response options	Percent of Total
Yes, but only rarely	37%
Yes, from time to time	28%
No, never	27%
Yes, frequently	8%
Total	100%

N=28

Source: Author data, 2004

Increasingly, employers are looking away from the high school student for many reasons. The biggest reasons are lack of reliability and work ethic. One employer went as far as to attempt to hire the local high school football team temporarily (for a relatively easy job-picking stones) in order for the players/students to earn money, while raising money for the athletic program. The owner planned on paying US\$8/hour, US\$6 to the players/students and US\$2 to the athletic program as a type of fundraiser, but only two out of 50 people showed up. This story demonstrates the continued disappointment dairy employers have had with local labor supplies. This disappointment has convinced producers to stop advertising open positions publicly.

“I would have to hire 11/2 US born workers to replace one of my immigrant employees.”- Jack, employer,

“US born want the money but not the work.”-Jeff, employer,

“We no longer advertise job openings. It’s not worth the time.”-Neil, employer,

“They are not punctual and work slow.”-Pat, employer,

“We no longer pay attention to native applications, it’s not worth it.”-Joe, employer

The inability of the local labor supply to work the hours required of the job, sacrifice weekends off, and provide reliable, quality work has pushed many operators to immigrant workers. The comments from employers ring loud with criticism of local labor. These comments do not leave much to the imagination. They have lost faith in the native worker. This loss in faith is a product of several factors, not just the inadequacy of the local labor supply. It must be noted that this changing attitude towards local labor is also the product of readily

available supply of immigrants. Latino immigrants have raised the bar for all employees. Immigrant employees are willing to cover extra shifts, work extra hours after their shift, provide better work quality, and have the right temperament for working with the animals. As one immigrant interviewee boosted, “*no American can work a 12 hour shift like me, the work is too hard for them.*” The combination of both the unwillingness of local, native-born labor supply to meet the expectations of employers and the increased satisfaction with immigrant employees has made hiring locals obsolete. Dairy employers have essentially locked themselves into a situation where Latino immigrants could potentially dominate this labor market permanently because they have stopped publicly advertising vacancies.

FINDING NEW HELP: MY COWS ONLY LISTEN TO MUSICA RANCHERA

To the delight of the dairy industry, Latino immigrants have proven to be the answer to their swears. Not only has the Latino workforce stepped in, they have excelled in place of local workers. Through the use of immigrant social networks, employers are experiencing something totally new: labor surplus. Between the years 1999 and 2001, dairies had to consistently turn away Latino immigrants looking for work. Some employers would have as many as four to ten people a week come looking for work during the summer months. Today, the pace has slowed to an average of two per week, even though most employers do not utilize the drive-up applicant. They prefer to use employee referrals. Out of the twenty-eight employers interviewed, all but one uses referrals of current workers to find new workers. Correspondingly, 93% of immigrant employees interviewed cited obtaining their job through a referral by family member or friend.

The referral system is extremely effective. Employers have current workers bring in new workers that they know and are willing to work with. This system costs nothing to the employer, and even more importantly the turn around is quick; one day an employee leaves and the next day somebody is ready to take his or her place. Additionally, this new system of attracting employees has benefited other areas of the dairy.

“They have had a positive effect because the time spent finding new employees has diminished. More managers are spending time training their employees”

-Duley, County Dairy Agent-Personal Communication, 2004

Below table 4.11 shows just how big of an impact Latino immigrants have had on the labor supply situation of the dairy industry.

Table 4.11
Securing Labor

Question: How easy is it to find the numbers and kinds of workers sought?	
Response	Percent of total
Rather easy, not very difficult	47%
Quite easy	39%
Somewhat difficult	14%

N=28

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

Latino immigrants have transformed a labor shortage into a labor surplus. The utilization of referrals can often vary between larger dairy employers (ten or more immigrant workers) and smaller dairy employers (less than 10). Larger employers expressed reluctance to use one social network or one employee for all the referrals. They preferred to use several different networks or employees for referrals in order to employ some control over the referral process. The fear is that one network will get too strong and severely limit management's power, and that by hiring from several groups the power is maintained by management.

The majority of dairies interviewed, however have too few employees to utilize various social networks simultaneously. In order to ensure successful referrals, smaller dairies must use daily contact and personal relationships with key employees who refer fellow immigrants. An immigration counselor with the Diocese of Green Bay recognized this close relationship when they stated that: "Dairymen are true pioneers of cultural relations. They have a small employee base. They work alongside their employees" (Oncken, 2003). The ability to frequently monitor and work alongside of Latino employees creates extensive rapport and trust between the two parties. This rapport is then used when making referrals. An employee who has respect for and a personal relationship with his or her employer is not going to refer a potentially bad worker, and likewise, an employer is not going to allow a bad employee to make referrals. Table 4.12 demonstrates clearly how important these personal relationships can be, especially on dairies with six or fewer workers.

Table 4.12
Number of foreign-born workers/dairy

# of Workers	% of total
1 to 3 workers	18.5
4 to 6 workers	44.4
7to 10 workers	22.2
11 or more	14.8

N=28

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

In both the large and smaller dairies this referral strategy may be used. However, because of the small number of workers in smaller dairies, it is crucial to make sure that the workforce does not unite against management. Larger dairies can mitigate this potential risk by choosing from several networks, creating several different groups of workers. Smaller dairies do not have this luxury. They tend to pull from the same immigrant networks. This hiring reality tends to open them up to becoming too reliant upon one network, thus jeopardizing the management's power. By creating close relationships with the worker doing the referrals smaller employers can reduce the risk of workforce defiance. Understanding the realities of social closure and using this technique to enhance the workforce is one area where dairy employers are constantly improving, and the result is longer employment periods of Latino workers.

KEEPING THE NEW HELP: COMMUNICATION FOSTERS UNDERSTANDING

Due to the continued success of Latino immigrants in dairy, employers are now able to expand production without concerns over labor supply. This transition to a Latino workforce has not been easy for the dairy industry. Learning how to work with a new a culture and language has presented its share of problems. Language is the biggest barrier to overcome. Creating multiple channels of communication has been essential in order to minimize communication lapses. Many dairies chose to utilize a combination of outside bilingual consultants, bilingual manuals and signs, and bilingual staff or crew leaders. Table 4.13 displays the different approaches used on the dairy for meeting language constraints.

Table 4.13
Channels of Communication on the Dairy

Communication tool used	Percent of Total
Both Interpreters and Bilingual Staff	54%
Only Interpreters	29%
Only Bilingual Staff	13%
Neither Interpreters nor Bilingual Staff	4%
Total	100%

N=28

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

The dairies interviewed all have their own approaches to solving the communication gaps that exist, but most agree that outside help is necessary in order to ensure that everyone's opinion and thoughts are heard. The need to bridge the communication gap that exists is highlighted by the perceived drawbacks of employing Latino immigrants expressed by the employers, displayed in table 4.14 on page 64.

Table 4.14
Expressed Drawbacks of Employing Latino Immigrants

Drawback	Percent of total
Communication	71%
Legality Issues	11%
Teamwork	7%
Transportation	4%
Turnover	4%
No drawback	3%
Total	100%

N=28

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

The use of interpreters in addition to bilingual staff ensures that there is not an over-reliance upon bilingual staff, while providing the Spanish-speaking employees with an opportunity to voice their opinions through someone other than their bilingual co-worker. The low percentage of employers using bilingual staff reflects the reluctance to put so much control of the operation in the hands of one person. Many of the dairy employers have had negative experiences in the

past with exclusive reliance on bilingual staff.³⁴ The combination of both interpreters and bilingual staff appears to be the preferred choice, because not only does it assure that day-to-day communication can be effective, but it also reduces the need for non-English speaking employees to communicate through their bilingual peers. Bringing an interpreter in once every two weeks or once a month ensures that everyone has a chance to voice his or her opinion in an unbiased setting.

Another approach to reducing the language barrier is through Spanish language training for management. This is becoming more and more popular as dairy workforces become increasingly Spanish speaking. Three out of four employers interviewed have had at least 25% of their management team take Spanish classes. This is a very positive first step, one that does not go unnoticed by the immigrant workers. Attempting to learn their language signifies commitment to employing Latinos and also demonstrates a high level of satisfaction with their work. In many ways, the employers are also trying to regain some lost control of the workplace due to language. They want to better understand the daily communication that takes place. Solving the communication puzzle will continue to be one of the biggest challenges for dairy employers. Even with the existence of communication barriers, every employer stated without hesitation that having Latino immigrants is worth the extra effort.

Another crucial component to the success of Latino immigrants in the dairy industry is sufficient training. Employers estimated the training period for a fully trained worker to be two and a half weeks.³⁵ Understanding how to operate equipment, drive tractors, handle the animals, and maintain a sanitary working environment takes time. This extended training period for an entry-level job is warranted because most of the Latino employees are completely new to this work. Only 19.2% had prior experience working in dairy. Even those with experience are normally required to learn a new system. Each dairy has unique equipment and procedures that must be learned. In past conversations with dairy employers have expressed preference for someone without dairy experience, so that they would not have to break the bad habits of an experienced worker. In either case, the training period is vital to the continued success of new workers. They need time to learn the ropes under the supervision of management and fellow employees. For this reason training is an important step in creating successful, long-term employees.

³⁴ Many employers expressed their reluctance to solely utilize bilingual employees. Problems with correct interpretations and work delegation were the two most commonly cited difficulties with bilingual staff.

³⁵ Employee response averaged 9.25 days, much shorter than the 17 days stated by the employers.

The best indicator of the success of training and employee retention is turnover rate. When Latino immigrant labor was new in dairy, the industry struggled with instability and turnover. Not only was the industry coping with a labor supply they could not clearly communicate with, employers were also attempting to transition into larger operation sizes with greater production. These two simultaneous changes created major headaches for employers, but with the introduction of Latino immigrants turnover was on its way down.

Today, employers have years of experience employing Latino immigrants, there are extensive resources in the industry for managing labor,³⁶ and immigrants are beginning to establish themselves in dairy communities. Currently, employers are experiencing lower turnover rates and greater stability, which has been crucial to the bottom line given that employers estimate the cost of turnover to average near US\$1,339 per lost employee. As one county dairy agent put it:

“Turnover is not a problem. Most of the Mexican (Latino) employees stay on one dairy farm longer than the local labor”³⁷ -Dairy Agent, Personal Communication, 2004

Tables 4.15 on page 66 compares the turnover rates of U.S.-born employees, foreign-born employees, and the optimal turnover rate expressed by the employer for foreign-born employees. As shown by the table, the employers interviewed have more work to do in creating greater stability in order to achieve their expressed turnover goals with regard to foreign-born employees.

Table 4.15
Percent Turnover for U.S and Foreign-born Dairy Workers

Percent Turnover	Percent of U.S.-born Turnover	Percent of Foreign-born Turnover	Optimal Percent of Foreign-born Turnover
0-20%	93%	41%	67%
21-40%	0%	30%	33%
41-60%	4%	25%	0%
61-80%	0%	0%	0%
81-100%	3%	4%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

N=28

N=27

N=27

Source: Author’s Interviews, 2004

³⁶ Interpretation and translation services are equipped to work with and address the specific needs of the dairy industry. Industry vendors like Monsanto provide bilingual staff and training videos often free of charge, local governmental agriculture offices are better prepared to aid dairies with immigrant labor, and local social services and community groups are increasing their interaction and support of immigrant groups.

³⁷ It must be noted that the dairy agent was referring to native workers in entry-level positions, such as milker. Most of the native workers in the dairy industry today work in supervisory or management roles.

As the charts show, the annual U.S.-born turnover rate is much lower than the foreign-born turnover rate, with almost all dairies showing 20% or less.³⁸ Employers understand the inherent instability with their immigrant employees, but they would still like to see a reduction in foreign-born turnover in order to achieve greater continuity and teamwork among their workforce.

The improving workforce stability provided by Latino immigrants has had a positive effect on the industry as a whole. 93% of the employer interviewees felt that Latino immigrants have had a positive effect on their profitability, while only 7% felt that there was no effect. Latino immigrants have done so well in dairy that it has become common for employers to offer incentives to key employees in order to stay. The loss of key employees results in work disruptions, breakdown of established teamwork, time and financial expense of training new employees, and lost productivity. Avoiding employee loss is a big challenge to dairy employers, and they must be creative and open to different means of retaining workers in order to avoid the pitfalls of employee loss. Having small workforces allows them the needed flexibility to offer extra incentives to stay working. Table 4.16 on the next page is a summary of the incentives most frequently utilized in the dairy industry to retain immigrant workers.

Table 4.16
Incentives That Have Been Provided by Employers to Retain Workers

Incentive Provided	Percent of Total
Raised Wages	69%
More Hours	54%
Unpaid Leaves of Absence	54%
Jobs Offered to Relatives and Friends	40%
Housing	39%
English Training	31%
Transportation to Work	19%
Meals During Work	12%

N=28

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

One of the most important incentives used to retain immigrant workers is the granting of an extended leave of absence. The provision by employers of extended leaves of absence demonstrates the industry's increasing consciousness of the immigrant's situation. In some cases, employers have held jobs for up to six months while a coveted worker takes a leave of absence.

³⁸ Native turnover is low because many of the native workers are either part of the family that owns the dairy or are management level employees. Historically the positions that exhibited the most turnover were the ones that the Latino immigrants now occupy.

Several of the workers interviewed used this strategy to return home to Mexico for a short period of time to see their families, something that can be very difficult in a year-around job. Having the ability to utilize these techniques to convince workers to stay gives the dairy industry a leg up on other industries. However, incentives like leaves of absence must be used with caution in order to avoid abuse. No employer wants to get into the situation where they have to provide incentives constantly to keep workers around. A delicate balance must be found.

The interviews with the employees also supported this trend of greater stability in dairy employment. The average length of time that Latino employees had in their current job was 22 months. The table 4.17 and 4.18 on the following page demonstrate the tendency for immigrant employees to stay in their dairy jobs. Almost one third (31%) of immigrant employees interviewed have between 25 and 48 months at the same job.³⁹ This propensity to stay with one employer is further highlighted in table 4.18, where 37% of the immigrants responded that they planned on staying on for a certain amount of time. The average length of time expressed was an additional 20 months.⁴⁰

Table 4.17
Current Number of Months on the Job

Months On the Job	Percent of Total
0-11 Months	33%
12-24Months	29%
25-48 Months	31%
49 or More Months	7%

N=52

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

³⁹ In comparison, a study conducted by Maloney and Grusenmeyer (2005) in New York's dairy industry found that 44% of their 111 immigrant interviewees have less than one year, 29% had between 12-24 months, 20% had 25 to 48 months, and 7% had over four years working in their current job. This comparison helps to demonstrate the longer employment periods and greater stability that immigrants are enjoying in Wisconsin's dairy industry (Maloney and Grusenmeyer 2005).

⁴⁰ The difference between immigrants long-term work prospects in dairy in Wisconsin and New York is further highlighted by the expressed future intentions. In New York 67% of the workers intend to work a certain amount of time and then return home (Maloney and Grusenmeyer 2005). Whereas, in Wisconsin only 37% have a time limit for future dairy work and 44% would prefer to continue working as long as they have a job. This comparison continues to demonstrate the more stable, long-term approach that Wisconsin immigrant dairy employees have adopted.

Table 4.18
Expectations for Future Employment

Amount of Time Employees Expect to Stay in Their Current Job	Percent of Total
As long as I have a job	44%
Certain amount of time (ave=20 months)	37%
Don't know	15%
Until I save a certain amount of money	4%
Total	100%

N=54

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

This serious commitment to the dairy industry by many workers has played an important role in opening new doors for Latino immigrant workers. Several employees interviewed have over five years service with the same employer. This extended period of employment has allowed the employer to continually retrain and promote workers. Without this permanence, employers would not spend the time or effort to promote and train existing workers for positions with greater responsibility.

“Through constant training I can now perform almost any task on the dairy, and I make more money.”-Jose

“The daily functions of the dairy have become dependent upon the work that Jose does.”-Jose's employer

By opening previously closed doors, Latino immigrants are making themselves more valuable to their employers, something traditional employees like native high school students could not do because of the constant turnover. The expanding role of Latinos in the dairy industry is due to immigrants like Jose. Without them it would be impossible to expand job responsibilities and descriptions, which allow immigrants to move vertically in the dairy industry.

“Without the Latino employee, the dairy industry would eventually shut down.”
-Dan, dairy employer

This quotation explains it all. The dairy industry has become reliant upon the work that Latino immigrants provide. Dairy employers have traditionally dealt with younger, less committed employees such as high school students. Employers cherish the good work ethic, the increased flexibility in scheduling, willingness to work extra hours on

short notice, the better work quality, and the reliability of Latino immigrants. The fact that Latino immigrants have many of the traits that employers in dairy seek makes them the preferred choice when hiring. Table 4.19 on the next page exhibits these most desired characteristics as cited by the employers interviewed in this project. As the table indicates, employers are overwhelmingly interested in the finding employees who are hard working and responsible.

Table 4.19
Most Important Characteristics Dairy Employers Look for When Hiring

Most Important Characteristic	Percent of Total Respondents
Reliable and Responsible	36%
Hard Working	32%
Honesty	14%
Cooperative Attitude	7%
Other (Intelligent, Common Sense)	7%
Long-term Stability	4%
Total	100%

N=28

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

Waldinger and Lichtner (2003) called this preference in hiring the 'hiring queue'. In this queue, Latinos are definitely at the front of the line. The hiring queue is reinforced through the use of the aforementioned referral system and further enhanced by the quality of work performed by Latino immigrants. In many respects this hiring queue is effectively closing the door to those who do not fit into the Latino immigrant category. This point was the focus of one conversation with a local, white man. During his search for employment in the dairy industry he was repeatedly turned away because he did not have the qualities employers were looking for. Employers stated that they have enough Latino applicants for any possible open positions and the easiest way to get a foot in the door was through the ability to speak Spanish (Whitney 2005). In a sense this screening process amplifies dairy's dependence upon Latino immigrants. However, the fact that the employers are consciously reinforcing the dependence through their hiring practices indicates that they are comfortable with the situation. Only 14% of the employers interviewed have explored methods to reduce their reliance upon Latino immigrants.

The dependence also extends to the other side of the employment equation. Latino immigrants are using dairy employment to realize their financial and familial aspirations in Mexico and Central America. Through the use of remittances money is filtering to home communities for various purposes. Of those who are remitting money, 47.7 % are sending fifty percent or more of their paychecks to their place of origin. Additionally, of those remitting money, 88% are sending money home in order to construct or renovate a home. The remittances average forty percent of their paychecks. Without a job that provides consistently long hours and a livable wage, immigrants would not be able to send such a large percentage of their checks home. The dairy industry is providing good jobs to immigrants who are willing to do the work in order to achieve their personal and familial goals in their homelands, or to reestablish themselves and/or their families in the United States. In this sense, it can be said that this dependence is mutually beneficial for both the employers and employees.

CHAPTER 5

SETTLEMENT: BREAKING NEW GROUND AND BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

This chapter will explore five aspects of the settlement process among immigrants working in Wisconsin's dairy industry. First, we will explore the many facets of the context of reception in Wisconsin and what it means for the immigrant community. Second, it will discuss the formation of Latino communities in three locations (Green Bay, Manitowoc, and Luxemburg) within the counties researched, explaining what purpose these concentrations of Latinos serve in determining the settlement prospects of immigrant families. An extremely important factor in settlement is the role that women play in family recreation in the United States. The third topic explored in this section is this relationship between the presence of women and settlement, which helps to explain the greater stability in the Latino community in Wisconsin. The fourth topic that helps to determine settlement is financial remittances sent to home communities. The remittance discussion will look at the role this money is playing in settlement, and how the amount remitted has been changing for immigrant dairy workers. The last topic covered is the issue of discrimination. Discrimination is closely related to the ability to form an immigrant community and is something that is confronted by immigrants everyday. The combination of these five topics will provide a clearer picture of the possible settlement outcomes of immigrant dairy workers in Wisconsin.

CONTEXT OF RECEPTION: WORK IN PROGRESS

There are three areas of focus under context of reception. First, is the response of the native community to new immigrant populations, the second is the employers response to their immigrant workers, and the last is the successful formation of an immigrant community. The native community plays a major role in the successful integration of immigrant populations. The recognition by native populations that immigrants need help in adjusting to new surroundings can benefit to the entire community. This is especially true in states like Wisconsin, where local populations cannot supply the labor needed to sustain the economic growth that is occurring. The successful integration of immigrant populations is vital to the continued economic success of the industries employing these immigrants. Creating a positive context of reception at the community level is a crucial component to the successful integration of immigrant populations.

Social organizations focused on Latino immigrant issues have excelled in creating a positive context of reception by providing immigrants with needed social, economic, and cultural

information. The Hispanic Consortium of Manitowoc County and the Hispanic Advisory Council to the Mayor (Green Bay) are two of the most active groups in the area. They are focused on issues (education, health care, availability of social and government services, and employment) related to Latinos, while concentrating on unifying parties with different backgrounds but a common interest. The creation of dialogue and integration between health care officials, police, education leaders, dairy employers, local industry, utility providers, housing officials, and the immigrant community helps to draw out the immigrant community's needs, and how these groups can help to address them. Both the consortium and advisory council have arranged informational sessions for the immigrant community in order to better educate immigrants about the many government and private business services that are available to them.

Beyond the programs created, these organizations act as a unifying force in each of their respective counties (Brown and Manitowoc). They bring together all the important players who have influence over policies and programs over both the native and Latino community.⁴¹ Because of this unified front, government agencies and businesses can work together under the Consortium or Advisory Council in order to bring important programs like health education or legal advice to immigrants in the workplace. One member of the consortium, cited social services and the Consortium as leading the way for immigrant integration and community formation because they are providing the necessary information for living in the county (Personal Communication Peterson, 2004).

Another important function of both organizations is the education of many community leaders from the native population about the Latino community and culture. This knowledge is then applied to all levels of these leaders' organizations allowing for the dissemination of vital information about a new culture to people that otherwise might not have been exposed to it. One great example of this sharing of knowledge is the annual Information Fair that is assembled by the Hispanic Advisory Council each summer in Green Bay. This event brings together the business community and the Latino community, not only from Brown County, but also from Kewaunee, Manitowoc, and other surrounding counties. The fair functions both as a trade show and a venue for information exchange, displaying the services, jobs, and products available to the Latino community. This past summer the fair attracted nearly 6,000 Latinos for an afternoon of learning about local services and businesses, some good food, and 'musica ranchera' (Green Bay

⁴¹ The Consortium also has a rather significant Latino membership (29%), which allows for valuable insights into the immigrant community. The Advisory Council to the Mayor is even more diverse; many of their key members are themselves part of the Latino community.

Press Gazette, 2004). These types of events bring the Latino population into the community and can provide a formal introduction between the local and immigrant populations.



Figure 5.1: Enjoying the music from a distance at the Information Fair, 2004

The church in Wisconsin is becoming another important player in the reception of immigrants. Through interviews with local church figures, it became apparent that the church is committed to helping immigrants adjust and integrate into their new surroundings. The church plays a huge role in uniting the immigrant community through weekend masses and other programs that they provide. One church in Green Bay understands the wide range of topics about which immigrants either lack information or cannot find this information in Spanish. As a response, they have organized groups in Spanish for Alcoholics Anonymous, English as a Second Language classes, classes to explain health insurance, youth groups, boy and girl scout troops, care groups, and networks to address healthcare issues. All of these groups provide crucial insights into the native culture and community in the immigrant's native language. Often the church's role in acclimating immigrants to their new surroundings is overlooked because it is a faith-based group. However, the fact remains that the church has been extremely active. In 2000 there were three churches in Brown County offering Spanish masses, whereas today there are ten (Green Bay Press Gazette, 2004).⁴² This explosion in the availability of Spanish masses signifies the timely response of the church to the needs of the Latino immigrant community. The importance of the church will be revisited in the next section that addresses the immigrant community.

⁴² The Catholic Diocese of Green Bay has made it mandatory that all seminary students learn Spanish during their education in order to better serve the Latino community (Green Bay Press Gazette, 2004).

CONTEXT OF RECEPTION PROVIDED BY DAIRY EMPLOYERS

Although the local community plays an integral role in the context of reception, it can be argued that the employer plays an even larger role. Fostering a positive context of reception can often be an unexpected burden for employers of immigrant workers. Often the additional needs of immigrant employees can perplex and surprise employers. The fact remains that employers are benefiting from the presence of immigrants and it is in their best interest to ensure successful adjustment of new immigrants. However, there are both positives and negatives that can result from providing immigrants with help outside of the workplace. In order for employers to minimize these potential negatives, they must establish and follow a threshold or limit of what they are willing to do. Without an enforced limit, immigrants, much like anybody else, will push for more and more.

In interviewing both employers and employees, it was revealed that all but one of the 28 employers interviewed has offered help to their immigrant workers in adjusting to new surroundings. In the past employers were often overextending themselves in order to help their immigrant workers, recently employers have been scaling back the amount of help they are willing to offer. Even so, the amount of support provided to workers today varies greatly between employers. Some employers have purchased their workers clothes and provided meals during the shift, while others have gone a bit further through providing English classes, car loans, aid in finding a place to live, and help in getting a driver's license. Table 5.1 provides a more detailed look at some the different kinds of assistance employers say they have offered to their immigrant workers.

Table 5.1
Types of Help Provided by Employers

Form of Help Provided	Percent Yes
Help Finding Housing	77%
Information on Social Services	69%
Help with Transportation	62%
Other*	46%

* Driver License help, ride for shopping and doctor visits, purchased work clothes, car loans, and meals

N=26

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

Another role that the employer can play in the context of reception is through providing jobs to relatives who are planning on coming to the U.S. This strategy is being used quite effectively in the Western side of the state, where employee networks provide a rotating supply of workers from the state of Veracruz. Nearly two-thirds (72%) of the employees in the Western region have had their job set-up before arrival to Wisconsin, whereas only one-third in the Eastern region utilized this method. This form of labor recruitment is very important in regions where there are limited work opportunities outside of dairy for immigrants. The Western region's job market for immigrants is much more limited than the Eastern region's. Arriving without a job would be a difficult obstacle to overcome in the Western region. This method of recruiting workers also signifies a fundamental difference between the extensiveness of the immigrant communities in the two regions. The employers in the Eastern region have the benefit of large immigrant communities from which they can draw workers, but the Western region is relatively new at employing Latinos and the immigrant communities have not materialized to the degree they have in the Eastern region.

Because of the relatively small immigrant community in Buffalo County, the employers, the county dairy agent, and their local interpreter/cultural trainer, must work harder to provide the necessary information and help for successful adjustment to Wisconsin. In many regards the combination of the bilingual dairy consultant, the county dairy agent, and the dairy employers in the Western region take the place of the social organizations that are present in the Eastern region. Without a large population of Latino immigrants, the need for organizations like the Consortium is not as great, but needs remains nonetheless. Both employers and Latino employees in Buffalo County are extremely lucky to have a bilingual consultant (dedicated and capable).⁴³ The work being done by all three parties is extremely important in the absence of immigrant social networks.⁴⁴ In many ways the employers in the Western region have to be more sensitive to the needs of their workers because the workers have a much smaller social network to rely upon. The leaders of this dairy community must provide a positive context of reception

⁴³ During interviews, immigrant employees often referred to the cultural trainer/interpreter as a bilingual angel, because of all the great work she does with the workers. She helps them get drivers licenses, go to the doctor, enroll children in school, and helps in any capacity possible.

⁴⁴ The lack of extensive social networks in the Western region as compared to the Eastern region was supported by data pertaining to the number of contacts the immigrants interviewed have from their home communities in Wisconsin. Nearly three quarters (72%) of the Western immigrants interviewed knew 30 or fewer people from their home community, whereas only 44% of the Eastern immigrants knew 30 or fewer people from their home community. This smaller percentage indicates that the social networks in the Eastern region are larger and further developed, which in turn can provide more information to the members of the network.

through readily available employment, while also providing vital information for new arrivals to the region.

CONTEXT OF RECEPTION PROVIDED BY THE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

The reliance upon social networks for information on jobs, social services, and cultural training is increasing as the immigrant communities become bigger. Looking at the year of arrival of the immigrants interviewed, displays how employers have over time reduced the amount of help they are providing to their immigrant workforce. Almost three out of four (73%) immigrants interviewed who arrived before the year 2001 reported receiving help from their employers. In contrast, only 38% of immigrants who arrived after 2001 reported receiving help from their employers. There are several possible scenarios that can explain this change: some employers have felt they have been taken advantage of and have stopped helping, or maybe employees are looking more to their social connections for help, reducing the need for help in adjusting to new surroundings from employers. Regardless of the reason for the change, the reality is that workers are getting less help from their employers, which applies more pressure to the social networks and organizations to provide help in adjusting to the immigrant's new surroundings.

One of the most important functions of the immigrant social network is the provision of information in the immigrant's native tongue. Having a group to rely on upon arrival is crucial for securing housing, work, and cultural information about their new home. The importance of this source of information cannot be underestimated, but it also must be understood that these networks rely on organizations like the Hispanic Consortium or the Advisory Council for help.

The combination of immigrant networks, employers, and community organizations is the best scenario for success in creating a positive context of reception because it includes a wide range of players that stretch across government, private business, and community members interested in helping. This balance allows for effective introduction of immigrants to their new homes, while also exposing locals to the immigrant's culture.

FORMATION OF THE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY: RECREATING HOME

Although the immigrant communities in all four counties are growing and expanding rapidly, each county exhibits an immigrant community that functions in a unique manner based on the characteristics of the county. In Buffalo County the immigrants get together to play basketball at the local playground or go to La Crosse, the closest urban area (approximately one hour), to go shopping at Wal-Mart. Formal gathering among this group of immigrants is hard to come by because the community is small. In Kewaunee County most Latino immigrants interviewed live

in or near Luxemburg, a small town of about 2,000 people just 10 minutes from Green Bay. The majority of the immigrant community in Luxemburg works in the numerous dairies in the surrounding countryside. They have the benefit of living in a small community while being close enough to Green Bay to remain in contact with the larger immigrant community and more formal networks that exist there. In Manitowoc and Brown County there is a mixture of dairy workers living in the countryside near work and dairy workers who live in the cities within the immigrant communities and commute to work.

An important component in the formation of an immigrant community is participation in social organizations. In the Western region participation was only 25%, whereas in the Eastern region participation in social organizations was reported by 71% of the respondents. The formation of an immigrant community is a vital component of the potential for representation of settlement. In this case study the community is not “imagined” as suggested by Chavez (1994), but is real and tangible. The signs are everywhere when you drive through cities like Green Bay or Manitowoc where ethnic stores abound. Even a quick stop at the local gas station in Luxemburg will provide an inside look into how prevalent the Latino immigrants have become in the area. In response to the demographics of the area, the gas station owner has hired a bilingual attendant to help serve the Latino population. These are changes that would not have been witnessed 5 to 10 years ago. At that time the Latino community was present but not as visible. Today, you cannot drive across Green Bay without noticing the presence of the immigrant owned stores, or businesses that cater to Latinos.

The variation in the extensiveness of the Latino community can be seen by looking at interviewee responses of immigrants coming from the two different regions. When Western immigrants were asked if they felt a part of a community, 50% responded yes, whereas in the Eastern region 78% felt this way. Table 5.2 on the following page demonstrates the differences that exist with respect to perceptions about community.

Table 5.2
Community Formation: Eastern Region versus the Western Region

Question asked	Eastern Region	Western Region
	Percent-Yes	Percent-Yes
Do you feel that you are part of a community?	78%	50%
Do you participate in social organizations?	71%	25%
Do you plan on staying permanently?	44%	13%

N=51

Source: Author’s Interviews, 2004

Looking at participation in social organizations and sense of community together through the use of a cross tabulation helps to establish a relationship between these two variables. Social organization participation has a strong impact upon feeling a part of a community. Of the immigrants who participated in social organizations, 76% felt that they were part of a community. In comparison only 54% of the interviewees who did not participate in social organizations felt they were part of a community. This difference demonstrates the importance of participating in some form of social organization in order to create a sense of belonging. Table 5.2 above shows the different participation rates of immigrants in social organizations based on which region they live in. In the Eastern region immigrants have a list of options to choose from, whereas in the Western region they are more limited.⁴⁵ Table 5.3 on the next page lists some of the different social organizations that immigrants are participating in. Over half (57%) of all interviewees said that they participate in social organizations; of those who participate, over half (52%) take part in church.

Table 5.3
Immigrant Participation In Social Organizations

Social Organization	Participation Rates
Church	52%
Soccer League	28%
Education System	24%
Hometown Organization	24%
Dances	10%
Softball League	7%

N=51

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

Another determinant of feeling a part of a community is length of time spent in the United States. In this study length of time has positively affected the sense of community experienced by the immigrants interviewed. Of those immigrants who have spent four or more years in the United States, 83% felt that they were part of a community. When the immigrants have three or less experience in the United States this drops to 59%. This shows that over time immigrants adjust to their surroundings and often become more active in the communities where they live. This participation in the community is what is vital to the creation of the feeling of togetherness and unity, the basis for all communities.

⁴⁵ The Eastern region boasts of soccer leagues, softball leagues, church groups, Latino dances, bars, hometown organizations, and cultural events and groups. At this point the Western region is limited to church involvement, English classes, and informal recreational gatherings.

One of the more tangible or visible signs of the immigrant community is the increasing variety of Latino stores in the urban centers of Green Bay and Manitowoc. Even local convenience stores are getting in on the action, offering a limited selection of Latino foods for their local immigrant populations. The photo below (Figure 5.2) was taken in a gas station in a neighboring village near Luxemburg. The ability for immigrants to get the foods and products they are accustomed to helps them to recreate their lifestyles from Mexico and Central America. In fact, 96% of the immigrant interviewees agreed that there are enough restaurants and stores where they can buy products from their country of origin. Green Bay has the largest concentration of Latinos within the research area. Here one can find businesses geared toward the Latino immigrant such as butchers, car dealerships, clothing stores, legal services, and bars. Having these services available in Spanish, by people they are comfortable interacting with is contributing greatly to the cohesiveness of the Latino community.



Figure 5.2: The selection of Latino food at local convenience store

Another testament to the strength and extensiveness of the immigrant community is the presence of local newspapers in Spanish. The newspaper provides time sensitive information about news in the areas affecting both native and immigrant populations, it provides notices of important meetings, and it highlights the important issues facing the Latino community in the area. Green Bay and the surrounding area (including Manitowoc and Kewaunee Counties) are fortunate to have a newspaper ('El Hispano') that circulates bimonthly. The paper is free of charge and is available in racks in the entries of both native and Latino businesses. This newspaper provides an opportunity for newcomers to be up to date on the events in the area and state. In many regards this is the only local news source in Spanish.

The development of Latino communities in the four different counties is by no means equal. The sheer number of Latino immigrants present in each county skews the development of the

community. First, there needs to be a significant population. Secondly, there needs to be a concerted effort by both immigrant and native populations to create a positive context of reception. Third, there needs to be a semblance of ethnic stores that offers products that immigrants are seeking in order to recreate their culture. Then there needs to be institutions like a newspaper or a local radio station that helps to unite the immigrant community and supply information pertaining to their immediate surroundings.

THE ARRIVAL OF WOMEN: BUILDING THE COMMUNITY ONE FAMILY AT A TIME

The last and most important factor in immigrant community development is the presence of women in the immigrant community. Hongdagneu-Sotelo (1994) stated it best “men are the community pioneers, it is women who are the community builders” (Hongdagneu-Sotelo 1994: 174). Looking at gender provides a clearer indication of the true long-term settlement intentions of Latino immigrants in the dairy industry. Returning to the dairy industry after being away for several years provided me with the opportunity to immediately notice overall changes in the employment of Latino immigrants. One of the most noticeable changes was the increased number of women working in dairy. In the sample of immigrant workers, 19% were women.⁴⁶ Looking at experience broken down by gender supports this observed change. Only 25% of the females in this sample versus 48% of the men have been in the U.S. four or more years. Over the years immigrant women have been breaking down the stereotype that women cannot perform as well as men in dairy and they have had to work hard to do it as they face more obstacles. Statistics on whether or not immigrants had their job set-up before arrival paints a vivid picture of the uphill battle women face entering the dairy labor market. Only 22% of the women interviewed had their job set-up before arrival, whereas 54% of the males interviewed had this luxury. Women have had to prove that they cannot only perform the job correctly, but also that they can do it as well, if not better than men.

This increased inclusion of women in the dairy industry has transformed the trajectories of the entire migration stream. Instead of single males coming to Wisconsin to milk cows for a certain period of time and then return home to be with family, immigrants are looking to take advantage of steady work in the U.S. and reestablish their families in Wisconsin. The data collected shows

⁴⁶ Out of the 111 immigrant dairy workers interviewed in New York state by Maloney and Grusenmeyer only 2% were women (Maloney and Grusenmeyer 2005). The relatively small number of women working in the New York dairy industry helps to further highlight the afore mentioned rotational or short-term outlook of the male dominated dairy industry in New York when compared to Wisconsin. The higher percentage of women in Wisconsin’s dairy industry provides the immigrants with a stronger family setting, one that encourages long-term settlement.

that this is the case especially when a female is present. Seven out of ten females have children in Wisconsin, whereas only 20% of the males have children present.⁴⁷ The children often are coming with the mothers to the U.S. after the household head has been established in Wisconsin. Sorting through the comments made by immigrants interviewed about the living in Wisconsin, it becomes apparent that immigrant parents feel comfortable raising their kids in the Midwest. One of the biggest factors is the perceived benefit of the educational system in the United States. All parents with children in Wisconsin expressed the desire for their children to finish school in Wisconsin.

“Living and working here (Wisconsin) has allowed me to provide for my family, and my children have been able to get the education that we hoped for.”-Gustavo, Immigrant dairy worker in Brown County

“We would like to see our four year old finish school here.” -Onelia and Jose, Immigrant dairy workers in Manitowoc County

“Here we both (his wife and himself) have stable jobs and our son likes school. Besides, what would we do if we returned to Mexico?” -Sammi, Immigrant dairy worker in Manitowoc County

“My daughter has done so well in school here, she plays on the volleyball team and has many friends. These good experiences have convinced me that I would like my younger children to complete their educations here also.” -Epifanio, Immigrant dairy worker in Manitowoc County

The presence of families in the migration stream has brought the immigrants out of the shadows and into the community. As shown in table 5.3, participation in the education system was the third most common response to immigrant participation in social organizations, following church and soccer leagues. Taking an active role in their children’s education requires parents to be in contact with people in the education system that are outside of the immigrant community. The presence of children in school also has a stabilizing effect on the family. All thirteen parents who have children currently in school hope that they finish school in Wisconsin. In many ways the existence of the family is an important step in creating links that span the divide between native and immigrant populations.

⁴⁷ Overall 27% of the interviewees live with immediate family (spouse and children).

Women and children in the migration stream have also impacted immigrant-housing decisions. Often, when we think of immigrant housing, we picture 6 people living in a three-bedroom home. This research project supports this picture, but it also includes many homes inhabited by single families attempting to recreate their life in Latin America in the U.S. Women and children have begun to formalize many living situations. Six out of the ten females in the sample are living exclusively in family housing, whereas 40% of the men are living exclusively in family housing. This difference in percentage demonstrates how the presence of an entire family unit shifts the housings requirement from “cram them in” to “sorry, but I’m raising a family here.”

Looking further at the data shows that the housing trend among dairy workers is fairly stable, irrespective of gender. Nearly half (48%) of all the immigrants interviewed reported having never changed homes since arriving in Wisconsin. The sample also strongly tended to live with their family, where 44% of the respondents reported living with family; instead of co-workers. The table 5.4 on the following page also corroborates the demonstrated stability in the home. Although 44% of immigrants interviewed reported living in their current residence eight or fewer months, there also is a significant percentage (27%) that reported living in their homes for over two years. The fact that over one quarter of the immigrants interviewed have spent at least 25 months at their current residence shows a strong tendency towards a stable living environment. The combination of these different statistics helps to build a case for increased stability in the homes of immigrants, much of which can be attributed to the presence of women and children in the migration stream.

Table 5.4
Number of Months at Current Residence

Number of Months	Percent of Total
0-8 Months	44%
9-16 Months	24%
17-24 Months	5%
25 or more Months	27%
Total	100%

N=45

Source: Author’s Interviews, 2004

The increased presence of immigrant women and children in the immigrant also means that demand for ethnic products will increase. Earlier, this topic was touched upon in the community formation section of the case study. The increased presence of ethnic stores and local businesses

offering their services in Spanish can be partially attributed to there being more immigrant women and children in the community. Without immigrant women and children present, the demand for ethnic products, bank accounts, and social services would not be as high. The presence of children alone increases the need for not only consumables, but also social services such as education and increased health care. The introduction of women and their children to the immigrant stream has pulled the immigrant community into the local established community much more than could a male-dominated immigrant community. The presence of women and their children is facilitating the construction of a functioning immigrant community in America's Dairyland.

Conversations with male immigrants indicated that the presence of women in the immigration stream is also proving to be valuable in another aspect settlement: companionship. Single male immigrants would comment on the lack of diversion for them outside of work, or how the only thing they lack in the U.S. is their family. In several cases family reunification has played a major role in the decision to stay in the United States.

“Everything has changed for me now that my wife is here. I have someone to spend time with besides my co-workers. I am much more content here in Wisconsin now that she is here.”-Rafael, immigrant dairy worker

“I lack nothing here in the U.S. except for my family. If crossing (border) was not so hard I would love the opportunity to raise my family here, but it is not possible.”-Lencho

“I feel that there needs to be more to do beyond work and going out. I don't have my family here and all I have is the people that I work with. It would be good to have more options for my time outside of work.”-Tomas

Companionship can also help to explain why 60% of the immigrant respondents that live with family have plans of living in Wisconsin permanently, whereas only 14% of the immigrants living with co-workers indicated having plans of staying permanently in Wisconsin. This difference underlines the importance that wives and children can make in the decision to settle or not.

REMITTANCES: AN INDICATOR OF SETTLEMENT?

The topic of remittances was touched upon briefly in this research project. There are a couple of points of interest with respect to remittances: the first is the amount that is being sent home and how it has changed over time, and the second is how the money is being used. Examining these two points can provide key insights into an immigrant's settlement intentions.

Comparing the current percentage of paycheck that immigrants commit to remittances with the initial percentage that they committed to remittances when they began working in the United States helps to show changes over time. While 62% of immigrants interviewed reported sending half or more of their paycheck home when they first started working in the United States, only 48% are still sending home that proportion. Although this reduction in the percentage of pay that is being remitted is modest (14% reduction), shows that immigrants are spending more money on their lives in the United States and less on remittances. It is reasonable to believe that remittances will continue to decline as more immigrants settle and recreate their lifestyles in Wisconsin.

In order to further examine remittances and how they might indicate settlement in the U.S., immigrants were asked if they were using any part of their current remittances for the construction or renovation of a home in their home country. The results are difficult to interpret because they present a contradictory picture with regards to settlement. Throughout this case study I have presented data supporting the increased settlement of immigrants working in dairy. However, the responses to this question raise some red flags. The uncertainty about immigrant settlement has been well documented in much of the literature reviewed. Earlier quotations from immigrants like Epifanio and Onelia and Jose (quoted earlier) indicate that immigrants want their young children to finish school in the United States, indicating an intention to settle. Interestingly, all three of these respondents said that part of their remittances is being used to construct or improve their homes in their homeland. This highlights the unpredictable nature of settlement for immigrants. Immigrants are establishing themselves in the U.S. while often at the same time maintaining a long-term perspective fixed on returning to their hometowns and cities. As a result, 88% of the immigrants indicated that they are using part of their remittances for investment in a home in Mexico or Central America.⁴⁸

Looking at patterns in remittances can effectively show how an immigrant's focus can change over time. The reduction in the percentage of paycheck being sent home indicates an increase in the amount of money spent in the U.S. This increased consumption is important because through

⁴⁸ This percentage was created from a sample of 40 respondents. The smaller number of respondents is due to adding this question after the interview process was started.

increased purchasing immigrants acclimate themselves to U.S. culture, while also shifting their focus from their home countries to the United States. In the medium-term this shows their commitment to living in the U.S. However, the fact that most of the immigrants interviewed use some of their remittances for home investment in their native lands demonstrates their long-term goal of returning home to live out at a minimum their later years of life. It is difficult to say if these intentions will come to fruition, but the intent is well documented. Only time will tell where these immigrants will find themselves in the future.

DISCRIMINATION

When one thinks of Wisconsin, ethnic diversity is not the first image that comes to mind. The increasing number of Latino immigrants calling Wisconsin home has raised some issues with regard to their equal treatment and acceptance. The issue of discrimination needs to be addressed in order to better understand many of the barriers that immigrants face in new receiving regions like Wisconsin, which may influence their ability and or desire to stay.

There are several factors that play a part in the amount of discrimination that is experienced by minority groups. The first and most important is discrimination as perceived by the immigrants. Earlier in the literature review, Hongdagneu-Sotelo (1994) was cited in explaining that the immigrant's perception of discrimination could often be very different from what natives perceive as discrimination. Immigrants' exposure to mistreatment and discrimination in their homelands, for example, might provide them with a less critical view of their situation in the United States. Sixty percent of the immigrants interviewed reported experiencing discrimination. That number could be much higher, if not for the immigrant's ability to turn a blind eye to discriminatory remarks or mistreatment. Several immigrants said that they have encountered some racist natives, but in general they felt that most of the natives have treated them quite well.

This overall positive perception of their treatment by natives could be influenced by the interactions that immigrants have with native individuals who work or volunteer with social services and organizations that serve immigrant populations. As a result of these positive experiences, immigrant interviewees in general might have a more positive attitude towards the entire native population. This is not to say that there are not problems; many exist and discrimination is still present. What these examples do show is that there is a positive foundation that both immigrant and native populations can build upon to further improve relations and diminish discrimination in the future.

The level of mistreatment in the workplace also influences perception of discrimination by immigrants. Overall, 10% of the immigrants interviewed felt discriminated against in the

workplace because they were foreign-born. Although this percentage is too high, it is much lower than the 60 percent that have experienced discrimination in general. This variation demonstrates a certain level of comfort working in dairy. Of course it must be considered that both dairy employers and the immigrants need a mutually healthy relationship in order to succeed, which helps explain the difference. The dairy industry must be commended for being more accepting, but at the same time they must continue to work hard to reduce the number of workers experiencing discrimination in order to ensure a continued positive relationship between employees and management.

While a tight job market is a positive for the employers, it exposes immigrant workers to a greater degree of vulnerability. As one immigrant commented, the jobs are getting harder to find because of the increased number of immigrants in the area. Due to this employment shortage, immigrants are willing to put up with increasing amounts of mistreatment in order to get and maintain their jobs. One interviewee described how several of his neighbors had worked two weeks in what was considered “training”, for which the dairy would not pay them. Just because only 10% of interviewees reported discrimination in the workplace does not mean that all is well. The observations cited by the interviewee above should create some concern over the treatment of immigrant workers, especially if the labor market continues to tighten.

Another factor in discrimination is the perception of immigrants held by the native population. This perception is often shaped by the amount of contact they have with immigrant populations. Given that Latino immigrants come from a different culture and race, overcoming discrimination and misperceptions takes time. There needs to be greater exposure by natives to the Latino culture and community to begin to understand the realities of their lives, and also to understand that they strive for many of the same goals as native populations.

Discrimination comes in many forms, from both native populations and immigrant populations themselves. Table 5.5 on the next page lists the most prominent form of discrimination experienced by immigrants in the case study sample. It shows that one-quarter of immigrant respondents cited discrimination between fellow Latinos as the most notable form of discrimination experienced. This is a clear demonstration of how difficult it can be for immigrants; not only do native populations often mistreat them, so do a percentage of their own cohort. The fierce competition that exists for scarce job opportunities leads to discrimination between competing immigrant networks.

Immigrants do not only experience discrimination by fellow Latinos. One-third of respondents cited verbal abuse by native populations as the most prominent form of discrimination, and one-quarter of immigrants reported being treated horribly in stores where they

spend hundred of dollars per visit. In one extreme case, an immigrant told me how the clerk refused to check him out. This type of treatment carries over to other public establishments also. A bar owner in a small town where there is a significant Latino population working in dairy told me how several of the town's bars do not allow Latinos in their establishment. This is partly a product of pure racism, but it is also partly a result of the fear of the unknown. These bar owners have not taken the time to get to know any of the new residents because they are not originally from the community. These examples demonstrate how widespread discrimination can be for immigrants, and why it is important that receiving communities strive for greater education of all residents in order to create a more respectful environment for all inhabitants.

Table 5.5
Forms of Discrimination Experienced by Immigrants

Form of Racism	Percent of Total
Verbal Abuse	34%
Mistreatment by Store Employees	25%
Discrimination Between Fellow Latinos	25%
Discrimination by Employers	4%
General Mistreatment in Community	4%
Discrimination by Landlord	4%
Stares in Public	4%
Total	100%

N=47

Source: Author's Interviews, 2004

Attempting to gauge the perception about immigrants by the local population, I occasionally made random stops in the countryside near dairies where I conducted interviews. During conversations with neighbors it came out that there is a certain amount of understanding regarding the predicament of the dairy farmer and the need to fill the labor void with immigrants. One man in his 80's stopped working in his garden for a moment to share his thoughts. Instead of detesting the presence of Latino immigrants, he explained his feelings in these words: *"They are hard workers, and the farmers need them."* Although the man had one bad experience with an immigrant in a driving incident, he maintained a positive attitude toward the group in general. This level of understanding is not at all that uncommon, since most rural residents know how hard it is to find dairy labor. Another elderly lady who rents apartments to Mexican dairy workers commented: *"I'm happy to welcome them (Latinos) into our community. They are very clean, quiet, respectful renters, who pay the rent on time. I also respect them for their ability to*

come here and work.” Breaking down barriers to integration like discrimination will require more of these types of attitudes by local residents.

Despite this surprising level of understanding by many rural resident, many natives mentioned the feeling of “being invaded” by immigrant populations. They have noticed, for example, that the number of Latino immigrants has grown substantially in recent years. Table 5.6 on the following page exhibits county school enrollments, showing how Latino enrollments are increasing significantly while total enrollment growth is near zero and in some counties negative. Although Latinos’ increased presence in schools may provoke negative reactions by native parents and thus foster discrimination, having local and immigrant children in school together also increases contact between both populations, which hopefully will increase the understanding of each population’s cultures and create a mutually beneficial relationship between the two. In many ways the native population needs Latino immigrants to help to maintain school enrollments and provide needed labor for local economies, while also supplying cultural diversity to regions with predominantly Caucasian populations. The increasing enrollment of Latino children could play a major role in breaking down many of the barriers that exist today between immigrant and native populations.

Table 5.6
Education Enrollment Numbers for Counties Researched and State

County Numbers	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	% Change
Brown C. Latino Enrollment	789	966	1,085	1,305	1,776	2,164	2,476	214%
Brown C. Total Enrollment	36,524	37,162	37,303	37,592	38,463	39,116	39,608	8%
Buffalo C. Latino Enrollment	22	25	21	18	25	28	24	9%
Buffalo C. Total Enrollment	2,480	2,501	2,598	2,515	2,561	2,512	2,510	1%
Kewaunee C. Latino Enrollment	15	14	17	30	33	38	52	247%
Kewaunee C. Total Enrollment	3,684	3,694	3,675	3,718	3,713	3,745	3,672	0%
Manitowoc C. Latino Enrollment	143	158	197	197	223	270	292	104%
Manitowoc C. Total Enrollment	12,414	12,508	12,539	12,483	12,361	12,171	11,953	-4%
Wisconsin's Latino Enrollment	30,806	32,069	33,729	36,082	39,958	43,621	47,393	54%
Wisconsin's Total Enrollment	898,259	881,780	879,542	877,753	879,476	879,361	881,231	2%

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics (nces.ed.gov), 2005

Latinos are of a different ethnicity and culture than the majority of Wisconsin's population, and they are coming in increasingly larger numbers. The cultural differences are great, but they are surmountable with time and increased integration. Discrimination is a major obstacle to the integration of immigrant and native populations, but this discrimination can be reduced through positive, ethnically integrated environments like the workplace, schools, and social events (information fairs and cultural celebrations). Without the opportunity to learn about each other's culture, barriers will continue to exist. There is hope that today's children, who are being educated in schools with an increasing number of Latino children, will develop the understanding necessary to bridge the culture gap that inhibits much of the current adult population. Through children, we stand to learn valuable lessons of acceptance and unity, which in the future can hopefully provide for a much more stable environment for immigrants and natives of the same community.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY

Dairy, just like other industries utilizing immigrant labor hold the key to immigration reform. Through their leadership a foundation for change in immigration policy can be laid that could satisfy the needs of both the employers and employees involved. Dairy is an industry without a long history of employing immigrants. In fact, the majority (79%) of the employers interviewed started hiring Latino immigrants since 1998, and one-third of these employers had only started since 2001. In this relatively short period of time, employers and immigrant employees have forged some very strong relationships that extend beyond the workplace. Unlike employers in huge corporations, dairy owners know the personal struggles that their workers go through everyday in the U.S. and the struggles that they endured to arrive in Wisconsin.

This personal knowledge by employers of immigrants' struggles needs to be transformed into action. Large dairies carry a certain amount of political weight in Wisconsin, especially when they are united. Dairy employers have shown a strong commitment to and confidence in their Latino employees. More than two-thirds (68%) of the employers interviewed have plans to expand, while only 14% of have explored methods to reduce their reliance upon immigrant labor. The immigrant employees interviewed expressed the same commitment to their dairy jobs. Almost half (44%) of the interviewees said they would continue working in their current job as long as possible. Unless dairy employers make a concentrated effort to hire native employees only, they need to further explore how they can best lobby for immigration reform in order to meet both their employees' needs and their own needs as well.

One of the best ways for employers to ensure the future success and stability of Latino employment in dairy would be through the legalization of their workers. Having a legal workforce helps to create stability, while also increasing flexibility in managing the workforce.⁴⁹ The industry could benefit from the creation of an alliance with other industries that have the same immigration needs in order to push their agenda. Over the years it has become very obvious that the powerful fruit and vegetable industries have had a lot of influence over immigration matters, and other expanding industries like meatpacking and dairy need to start getting involved. Without a proactive approach, industries like fruits and vegetables will continue to push for programs to provide seasonal work visas for their workers, something that is virtually useless for industries like meatpacking and dairy that seek year around employees.

⁴⁹ Having a legal workforce makes providing benefits like profit sharing and health insurance much easier to all employees.

That strong agriculture influence in U.S. immigration politics continues today in the form of Agjobs, a current proposal to create a seasonal visa for agricultural workers. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? Currently in place is the H-2A visa that does essentially the same thing. Creating a seasonal visa program for the agriculture industry will not solve the issues for an increasing demand for year-around immigrant labor. In fact, the agriculture industry is transitioning into an industry with increasing year-around labor demands. Any potentially beneficial immigration program must include proposals that address year-around labor. Ignoring the needs of the year-around employer will only encourage non-compliance, a problem that already exists today.

An increasing number of employers throughout the United States, not just those in dairy, are turning to immigrants to provide the labor that is often in short supply through domestic channels. Each day the need for immigration reform grows as more immigrants arrive with the willingness and ability to work but without the proper documentation. The current system leaves most Mexican immigrants with no other option than to break the law. The longer the nation waits to fix its inadequate immigration policy, the larger the number of immigrants who will be trained to skirt the law.

Based on previous immigration policy analysis and on the findings from this study, the final paragraphs of this paper will outline the steps that need to be taken in order to push immigration reform in the right direction. The need for reform is obvious: there simply are not enough U.S. citizens willing to enter the workforce. Given their vested interest in the matter, employers hold the key for immigration reform, and they are the ones that need to lead the way in bringing about the changes needed in order to ensure the dignity and respect of *all* people working in the United States, not just U.S. citizens.

Prior research has offered suggestions for the improvement of federal immigration policies. In order for positive change to happen, immigration researchers must attempt to translate their findings into action by providing such policy suggestions. During my interviews I made a point to find out how much experience dairy operators have had with the DHS (Department of Homeland Security, formally the Immigration and Naturalization Service), while also exploring their needs and hopes for future immigration policies. Outlining suggestions that researchers have made to date that match the needs of the dairy industry creates a potential template for an immigration policy that could better serve the dairy industry and other industries that employ immigrants on a year-around basis. Finding a policy that meets the needs of *all* industries is not the objective here, but creating some suggestions that could potentially fit a multitude of industries with similar labor needs would be a step in the right direction.

One of the central problems with the immigration debate in the United States is the unilateral tone that it inevitably takes. A good example of this unilateral bent is this quotation from Texas representative Lamar Smith, who is one of the more outspoken members of Congress on the subject of immigration: “Immigration should further the national policy aims of the United States. We should always ask how immigration is contributing to America’s national interest” (Gimpel and Edwards 1999: 213). Agreed. We need to ask what immigration means for the United States, but we must also look at the entire picture in order to understand the motivations driving immigration. Immigration is an international process that involves two or more countries, and policy dialogue needs to include international objectives, not just U.S. political aims. We want an integrated economy with countries like Mexico through pacts like NAFTA, yet we cannot accept the movement of laborers that often is the result of an integrated economy. As Massey stated, “we wish to create an integrated, continent-wide economy characterized by the free movement of all factors of production except one” (Massey 2003: 26).

One of the best ways to lessen immigration pressure is to work to reverse the “culture of out-migration” that develops over time in many sending communities. The culture of out migration is related to the perceived and most often real economic opportunities that face immigrant-sending areas.⁵⁰ As mentioned earlier, the act of emigrating is something that is learned and develops its own culture. In order to stop or reverse the culture of out-migration there needs to be a concerted effort between sending and receiving countries to curtail this movement of people. Considering the pervasiveness of the negative perception of economic opportunities in sending communities, how could this culture of emigration be reversed? The easiest answer is to create jobs that employ potential immigrants, but history has shown that there needs to be more than just jobs. The industries created need to be able to withstand market shifts and other challenges in order to retain the confidence of the local workforce.

Through the help of government and non-governmental agencies, small-scale businesses could become a viable option, provided they are supplied with the necessary tools to succeed. Helping small businesses with the availability of credit and formation of cooperatives can go a long way in creating a more positive environment for success (Cornelius 1991: 33). Although these options are not guarantees to stopping emigration, they must be attempted if we are serious about slowing the culture of out-migration. Disregarding solutions that address the problem internationally only makes the U.S.’s task of slowing undocumented immigration harder, maybe

⁵⁰ A study conducted by a team of researchers lead by Wayne Cornelius found that 76% of residents in a West-Central traditional Mexican sending community felt that they needed to emigrate in order to get ahead in life (Cornelius 1991: 24).

even impossible. Why not divert a fraction of the billions of dollars spent on border fortification to development efforts in the countries where immigrants are coming from?

Looking inside our borders, we must ask how immigration policies could better serve the industries that employ immigrants, while satisfying the voters of the country (a very difficult question!). Before delving into the different policy suggestions, we therefore must first look at several key factors that would influence or at least should ideally influence any policy formation. Past legislation has proven that often there are several key factors ignored by policymakers, rendering immigration policies ineffective. The first and most important factor is the business interests of the employers. Their lobby efforts have their fingerprints all over prior legislation and there are no signs of that changing. Any potential policy must appease the business interests first, especially when you consider the strong preferences that employers have developed for immigrant labor. Ignoring the desires of the business world will inevitably render any policy suggestions as good as dead. Another major factor to consider in the immigration policy debate is the ties that current immigrants have to both sides of the border. The shift to more year-around employment has increased the long-term ties that immigrants have to the United States, and these long-term immigrants are contributing, tax-paying members of the economy, culture, and society of the United States. Requiring immigrants to sever those ties is becoming increasingly difficult as more and more immigrants decide to settle here.

Any immigration policy must consider the needs of the business world, the public, and the immigrants involved. Finding a balanced immigration policy that satisfies all parties is very difficult considering the diverse interests of each group. Currently the hottest potential immigration policy reform being considered by the Bush administration is a temporary worker visa. Temporary visa programs have received a lot of attention over the years, some positive and some negative. There is a strong contingent of researchers who believe that temporary worker visas cannot alleviate issues of undocumented immigration, since it makes hiring immigrants more difficult for employers. Questions abound regarding the potential immigration reform, and the loudest inquiries come from the business community. Expecting the business community to agree to legislation that increases the difficulty in hiring immigrants is a pipe dream. The strong lobby that business holds in Washington provides a formidable opposition to any reform.

The fact that currently there is in place a temporary work visa that most agricultural employers choose to ignore should send a message to Washington. The H-2A visa has issued around 15,000 visas yearly to agricultural employers looking for seasonal workers. The fact that the demand for seasonal agricultural workers is much higher than current use rates of this visa indicates that employers would rather sidestep the visa program and hire undocumented workers

(Cornelius 2004: 17). Any policy that is put forth must be user friendly and large enough to convince both large and small employers to participate. Considering estimates of undocumented workers in each of the industries in table 6.1 on the next page, any temporary visa program put forth would have to include approximately five million visas in order to appease the business lobby in Washington. Furthermore, any temporary work visa must be followed up by stringent workplace enforcement, ensuring that employers comply with the potential temporary visas. Without the enforcement part of the equation nothing will change because there is no incentive for employers to go through the process to obtain the work visas (Cornelius 2004: 15).

Table 6.1
Estimated number of Undocumented in U.S. industries (2001)

Industry	Industry Total Undocumented
Construction	620,000
Manufacturing	1,190,000
Durable Goods	580,000
Non-durable Goods	610,000
Wholesale and Retail Trade	1,410,000
Restaurants	700,000
Others	720,000
Services	1,320,000
Business	390,000
Private Household	250,000
Other	690,000
Other Industries	350,000
Total Undocumented Workers	5,300,000

Source: Lowell and Suro 2002

In theory the idea of a temporary visa should work. It provides target-earning immigrants with employment and the ability to return home frequently and freely, without losing close ties to their homeland (Orreniou 2001, Piore 1979). The problem with this form of immigration control is often workers are not willing to return home when their visas expire. Any form of temporary visa would need several crucial components: extensive workplace enforcement, a sufficient supply of visas in order to satisfy the needs of employers, user friendliness in order not to deter employers from using it, and some system for ensuring the return of immigrants once their visas have expired.

With particular relevance to this study on immigrants in Wisconsin dairy, a critical issue that must be addressed with any new visa program is the distinction between seasonal and year-around employment. In the past, visas programs have been successfully created to supply seasonal agricultural employment, but changes to the economy now require any new visa to

create an option for year-around employment. Without this consideration employers in industries like dairy will not consider participating because it requires them to rotate workers temporarily through permanent jobs (Cornelius 2004: 17).

The pattern has been established. Immigrants are now focusing more on long-term US sojourns, and employers have come to rely upon immigrants for year-around positions. Reversing this trend that has entrenched itself in the U.S. economy is impossible, and making the situation better is going to take some monumental changes and some very tough decisions. Given the immensity of the task, it is obvious why the federal government and the business community have dragged their feet for as long as it has. The potential pitfalls of temporary work visas are many, and without the proper safeguards a new policy will likely not change the face of immigration in the United States. Utilizing the safeguards and considerations mentioned above could help to create greater public comfort with existing immigrant populations, while also achieving more equal treatment of immigrants.

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