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Articles

Some spaces of occupation. The agro-industry-Protestant relationship in the formation of a border region between Mexico and the United States

Ciertos espacios de ocupación. La relación agroindustria-protestantismo en la formación de una región fronteriza entre México y Estados Unidos

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Abstract

This paper proposes to analyse the interrelation of two dynamics of territorial occupation based on American expansionism in an agroindustrial region of northwestern Mexico. The paper will analyze, from a longitudinal perspective, the colonization processes through economic development and the establishment of a Protestant religious model in the productive model and in the regional settlement of one of the most important agro-exporting zones of the northwest of Mexico. Despite limitations in the method, the work excels in connecting complex dynamics of globalization that are usually analyzed separately. The work shows the development of a colonial sense in the dynamics of territorial occupation of companies linked to agro-industry and the development of a Protestant religious field in the borders; at the same time, it identifies the dispute over the possession of a regional identity that has not remained untouched by conflicts between the local settlers.

Keywords: occupation, economy, Protestantism, settlement, region, border.

Resumen

En este documento se propone analizar la interrelación de dos dinámicas de ocupación territorial basada en el expansionismo estadounidense en una región agroindustrial del noroeste de México. Por medio de una perspectiva longitudinal este documento plantea cómo han actuado los procesos de colonización a través del desarrollo económico y la instauración de un modelo religioso de tipo protestante en el modelo productivo y en el poblamiento regional de una de las zonas agroexportadoras más importantes del noroeste del país. A pesar de limitaciones en el método, el trabajo sobresale al vincular dinámicas complejas

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de la globalización que usualmente son analizadas por separado. El trabajo muestra el desarrollo de un sentido colonial en la dinámica de ocupación territorial de empresas vinculadas a la agroindustria y al desarrollo de un campo religioso protestante en este territorio fronterizo; al mismo tiempo se identifica la disputa por la tenencia de una identidad regional que no ha estado exenta de conflictos entre los pobladores.

Palabras clave: ocupación, economía, protestantismo, poblamiento, región, frontera.

Introduction

Historically, the development of Mexico-U.S. border relations has been linked to economic dependence and uneven regional integration. In the agricultural exporting region of the San Quintin Valley, located in the border state of Baja California, this process can be observed both in the dynamics of production and in the history of the region's settlement. Both have been driven by a United States expansionist policy fueled by the development of a colonial imaginary that has promoted the idea of a vacant territory ready to be occupied.

Since the 19th century, territorial expansion has been one of the most prominent features of the historical development of the U.S. This (colonial) activity by the U.S. was established as a statement of ideological hegemony throughout expansive territories that were annexed into that nation because of their geographical proximity and that gradually progressed toward colonial rule (Spurr, 2014).[1] To this end, processes of assimilation and domestication of the territories and their inhabitants were developed through disciplinary mechanisms that involved the territory as a physical space, the land as a commercial entity, and its inhabitants as fundamental pieces for the organization of a particular production model. Scholars tend to agree that this expansionist activity made commercial sense as the U.S. searched for new markets to sell its products and to extract raw materials, which led to the acquisition of colonies and expansion to other continents. Additionally, it had an ideological purpose that raised the flag of a civilizing mission through which that nation had to fulfill a role among races considered inferior. Thus, Christianity's expansion was, above all, a divine mandate.

In the border region of northwestern Mexico, as an area dedicated to producing fresh foods for global markets, this imaginary has materialized in a process of unequal regional integration that involves both countries and that can be clearly seen in the economic sphere. Nevertheless, we contend that along with the expansion of capital in this border region, there was an expansion of a Protestant ideology, which historically has been the purview of missionaries. Our hypothesis is that both components—productive dynamics and Protestant religious ideology—shaped the development of a cross-border complex where hierarchies were established that focused on producing global structures in specific territories that are visible at the local level.

[1] The reader should recall the territorial expansion toward the southwest after the founding of the thirteen English colonies, for example, the annexation and fight for Oregon (1819), the loss of more than half of Mexico's territory (1848), and the purchase of Alaska (1867). Thus, contrary to what had been a U.S. tradition of incorporating neighboring territories, new territories were becoming colonies of the U.S., such as Hawaii (1893) and Puerto Rico (1898).

Starting from the ideas that religious affiliations produce regional religious profiles (Marroquín, 2007) and that these are determined by historical processes of a local nature, our goal is to establish the relationship between the religious realm of Protestantism and its values that are associated with the economic structures that dominate the dynamics of agricultural production for export. This is an example of the geopolitical structuring of the components of contemporary globalization that can establish themselves in a particular region. Concurrently, revealing the step-by-step process of the region's settlement through the dynamics of productive structures and the presence of Protestant missionary groups enables the identification of the various forms of cross-border regional integration and its effects on the productive structure and the development of a contested regional identity.

How have the two spheres of production and Protestantism functioned in shaping this cross-border region? In this process of regional integration, how did a missionary territory with multiple international religious groups evolve? How have these two spheres participated in the development of one of the country's most economically dynamic and ethnically diverse regions?

This study presents a longitudinal analysis and draws from a broader research study (Camargo, 2015) that analyzed the intersection between the development of this agro-exporting enclave and the internationalization of a religious model in the process of shaping a community formed by an indigenous group that settled in this border region. The sociohistorical data presented here are based on a systematic series of interviews with residents of the San Quintin Valley and pastors and members of local churches conducted during intermittent periods of field work between 2005 and 2010 and between 2012 and 2014. It is also based on a review of documents that describe the processes of industrialization along the border, a historical review of the missionary models that exist in the peninsula, and a review of the regional migration routes and patterns—in general, the dynamics of border region settlement.

This paper is divided into two sections. The first section describes the development of this agro-exporting enclave, emphasizing the dynamics of regional settlement. In the second section, the missionary presence in this border region is discussed, and two missionary models applied in the region that have shaped the profile of its inhabitants are defined. The paper concludes with a series of general reflections.

Development of an Agro-exporting Enclave

A No-Man's Land that Everybody Wants

The history of the settlement of the San Quintin Valley is a regional example of the broader demographic process that has occurred in the Baja California peninsula; this process has been closely linked to the mission system of the colonial period and the establishment of cross-border relationships resulting from capitalist expansion in the southwestern U.S. (Canales, 1995). In the case of the San Quintin Valley, these two elements have determined the nature of the regional settlement.

Historical documents indicate that the first attempts at colonization in the area were made by Dominican clergy, who, continuing previous evangelization efforts by Jesuits and

Franciscans, built eight missions in the northern part of the Baja California peninsula. In the San Quintin region, the Dominicans founded the Santo Domingo de la Frontera mission (located in the current Vicente Guerrero municipal district), which functioned from 1775 to 1839 (Velasco, Zlolnisky & Coubes, 2014). The Dominican presence in San Quintin represents the first attempt at religious colonization in the area.[2]

> At the end of the 17th century, these same missions faced a process of crisis and disintegration that gained momentum and showed visible manifestations due to Mexico's independence, when the regional economy began an even faster process of integration and subordination to U.S. capitalism, without much connection to the economy in the country's center (Canales, 1995, p. 8).

The impression of the peninsula as a no-man's land, distant, empty, and inhospitable, had already been formed.

While religious settlement was based on a process of Catholic missionary expansion, civilian settlement occurred through economic expansionism in addition to the territorial expansionism. During Porfirio Diaz's regime at the end of the 19th century, the region saw the nature of its modern settlement form. However, there has been a constant element in this process—institutional neglect. From this neglect (political, economic, and religious) of the peninsula sprang the historical notion of a virgin landscape ripe for colonization, because the combination of geographic isolation and demographic fragility contributed to creating an image of the Baja California peninsula as an uninhabited and wild land, ready for occupation. The notion of a 'no-man's land' was forged under a colonialist mantle, which has been evident in the way it has historically been populated and in the dynamics of mission-driven colonization by multiple religious groups over time.

San Quintin as an Occupied Land

The first colonization law to populate the area with foreign and Mexican families through the sale of Baja California land to foreign companies was enacted by President Juarez in 1864. It was titled the 'Law for unoccupied Baja California land grants'; it was revoked in 1871. Note that the Mexican government promoted the idea of a useless, abandoned land by calling the peninsular territory unoccupied—a wasteland. Shortly after, during the Porfirio Diaz regime, the new colonization law (1883) was supported by the government to attract settlers. However, the colonization of the peninsula was envisioned as the result of the presence and establishment of private enterprise (Heath, 2011; Piñera, cited in Velasco et al., 2014). From that point forward, regional settlement policy was based on a system of concessions designed to advance the economic development and settlement of the territory. Thus, companies such as the International Company of Mexico, which had at its disposal practically the entire area of the current state of Baja California, were able to exploit the peninsula's seas

[2] The Dominican order was its largest during the expansion of Catholicism in America, Africa, and Asia during the 16th through 18th centuries. Friar Bartolome de las Casas, Friar Antonio de Montesinos, and Friar Pedro de Cordova are among the order's most notable representatives.

and lands unopposed. In reality, this concessional fervor served the private interests of foreigners in the framework of 19th century U.S. expansionism, putting the country in danger of further territorial loss from attempts by filibusters to seize the territory (Taylor, 2000).[3]

When the Mexican government withdrew the concession, it was transferred to the *Compañía Inglesa*, which was in charge of building up Ensenada and developing San Quintin Bay. With the arrival of this company, the region's first map was created, some key facilities were built (such as the company's offices, a hotel, and a mill), the telegraph was installed, and a peninsular railroad was planned that would cross the peninsula from San Quintin to the Sea of Cortez and then connect to the Sonoran railroad. This process ended in 1917, when the land grant was revoked by President Venustiano Carranza.

As some have observed, the foreign companies' imaginary of the Californias was based on a brief assessment of the peninsular territory because it was historically seen as a virgin territory, lacking in institutions and traditional productive relationships, and with a decimated population. Within this vision, relationships resulting from its geographical proximity to the U.S. developed and expanded with practically no restrictions other than those imposed by the natural and geographical conditions particular to the region (Canales, 1995, p. 15). An interest in economic, territorial, and spiritual expansion led governments, companies, settlers, and religious groups from the north to take a forthright look at this area. From then on, perhaps the phrase heard in the U.S. Senate during the third term of President Roosevelt (who governed from 1933 to 1945) best synthesizes the strategic vision of the area's geopolitical importance: "Baja California is only a luxury for Mexico, but for us (the United States) it is a necessity" (cited in Jordán, 1997, p. 126). Geographical proximity promoted the expansionist dynamic and a natural connection with the U.S. For obvious reasons, the greatest impact was felt by the border regions of northern Mexico (Figure 1).

The First Inhabitants. The Notion of an Entrepreneurial Migrant

The concession policies of the late 19th century intended to attract new settlers, so the Baja California Development Company (Compañía para el Desarrollo de Baja California)[4] was given the task of attracting 1 000 settlers who would work on the

[3] In the 18th century, the adventurers (pirates) who, without any government mandate, invaded the lands of others by armed force, were called filibusters. In Mexico, William Walker was the most well-known of the so-called 19th century filibusters, as he unsuccessfully tried to conquer the regions of Sonora and Baja California.

[4] According to Taylor (2000, p. 54):

> During the period of political consolidation in the Northern District led by Colonel Esteban Cantu Jimenez and the post-revolutionary governments of the 1920s, certain foundations were laid in the region to promote its general development, as well as to strengthen its ties to the rest of the Republic. Cantu, who had been appointed governor and military commander of the district by the revolutionary convention in January 1915, adopted various measures to encourage the development of the District and its settlers during the period that he governed. He persuaded Carranza to declare the expiration of the concessions granted by Porfirio Diaz's government to the Mexican Land and Colonization Company and to the Lower California Development Company (Compañía para el Desarrollo de Baja California).

construction of a flour mill, build railroad tracks from San Quentin to Ensenada, and establish a postal service to San Diego, California. However, by 1885, only 200 people had settled in the area (Moyano, cited in Moreno, 2008). With the land reform of the early 20th century, families who had been repatriated from the U.S. or who had stayed in the border regions, as well as men and women from various interior states such as Michoacan, Jalisco, and other regions who had been displaced by the land reform of the Cardenas administration, were the first pioneers to settle in the San Quintin "lands of labor". Since then, the pioneering spirit of the first settlers who came to this land of labor forged a nativist notion of effort and work as essential qualities of the area's entrepreneurial spirit, as extolled by Protestant values. Nativism, according to Higham (1983, p. 4), "is understood as the intense opposition to a foreign minority whose presence, in the opinion of those who discriminate, in some way threatens the identity or security of the majority". Thus, the first settlers rested on an exaggerated image of an enterprising migrant who, as a result of his or her efforts, was considered a pioneer-settler with usufruct *rights* over the land.

Figure 1. Location of the San Quintin Valley

Source: Created by the author.

While the development of a colonization policy based on concessions describes all of the region's population dynamics at that time (19th century), a second wave of San Quintin settlement occurred due to the pioneering drive of the region's first settlers during the first part of the 20th century.[5] By the mid-1930s:

> The Mexican government decided to distribute the lands that they had recovered from the concessions given to the Americans and the English. At that time, 500 families were repatriated from the United States and sent to the Valley of Hope (Valle de Esperanza), as the San Quintin Valley was also called (Jordán, 1997, p. 127).[6]

Despite these efforts, geographic isolation (no roads existed at the time) continued to overshadow the area, so the region's settlement dynamics continued to be based on individual effort. From this perspective, institutional abandonment such as that by religious groups, kept the area hidden under the veil of an imaginary of an untapped territory.

By 1947, the gravel highway from Tijuana extended 300 kilometers, which slightly reduced travel time from the city. However, this road was soon damaged and travelers reverted to using the old roads (Ramírez, 2008, p. 53). By 1950, the presence of the first migrants who started listless commercial agriculture was noted. In the 1960s, the San Quintin region continued to be a very sparsely populated area, with a few pioneer ranches and less than 4 000 inhabitants throughout the entire region from Punta Colonet to San Quintin (Velasco et al., 2014). However, the image of the entrepreneurial settler persisted—a modern cowboy subject to the opportunistic impulses of his or her unyielding effort. This image was the ideal of a self-sacrificing man or woman from the lands of Upper California—the United States—who crossed the border with an urge to inhabit an empty land. Added to this entrepreneurial image was another from western Mexico, of people who came to build, populate, and "lift up" an entire region. Thus, people from Michoacan, Jalisco, and Guanajuato first began to permanently reside in the area and develop a (still) incipient commercial agriculture.

This profile of a regional actor began with those first immigrant ranchers who became local entrepreneurs over time and upon whom a regional identity began to emerge, defined by an attachment to the land that excluded subsequent waves of migrants. This process has been observed in studies of migration and identity, where earlier immigrants position themselves as natives and successive waves come to represent outsiders. In this situation, the newly arrived attack the "establishment" and a type of racial differentiation begins to have an effect, especially if the new arrivals come from places considered less prosperous, less "developed", or less "civilized" (Guarnizo, 2010, p. 48). As mentioned above, this process is called nativization and is understood as the

[5] Although records exist for the railroad construction project from Tijuana to Bahia de Los Angeles (with San Quintin Bay as a central hub) indicate that "just over 175 men were hired, 90 of them Mexicans from the south (with indigenous Yaquis among them), and the rest were foreigners, including Chinese" (Heath, 2011, p. 211).

[6] The idea of "hope" closely accompanied the impetuous creation of the entrepreneurial nature of nativism in this part of the peninsula.

gradual rooting of a populace, which implies a territorial attachment with a feeling of ownership that excludes newcomers (Ngai, cited in Velasco, 2011, p. 48). Consider that the groups that followed the first wave of migrants—mestizo pioneers—were the indigenous groups from the country's large and impoverished southern regions. Thus, a racial component has remained a defining element of the region's socioeconomic dynamics.

This nativism of the entrepreneurial migrant persists to this day and is part of the story that defines the regional identity, where local producers or regional actors involved in commerce and services position themselves as the "authentic" founders of a region that, due to their efforts and work, has improved.[7] An example of this is Rancho Los Pinos,[8] which belongs to the Rodríguez brothers, who extoll this entrepreneurial spirit embodied in the figure of their father, known as "the great pioneer". According to family legend, the Rodríguez Hernández family arrived in the area from the state of Michoacan in the early 1950s. The father was a poor, peasant immigrant, who was able to build one of the most successful companies in the area through individual effort and work. The manifestation of this nativism can be seen in the family cemetery, where a statue of the father—the founder—stands. It is the figure of a man with markedly peasant features, wearing a woven palm hat and who, with hoe in hand, is ready to till the earth. Similarly, in one of the area's largest agricultural camps, there is a mural of this same man from a peasant background, working the land and sowing tomatoes in the prosperous fields of the valley that he had forged. Since then, the regional identity has been shaped by the social distinctions—both class and ethnic—that we witness today.

The Indigenous Presence and the Idea of a Temporary Migrant

The start of the 20th century produced a distinctive style in the border relationships that developed between Mexico and the U.S., which had an impact on the dynamics of regional settlement and migration patterns (Zlolniski, 2011). A specific imaginary was formed based on the profile of actors that have defined the region's development. As previously mentioned, beginning in the 1950s, some families initiated an export-focused agriculture, but it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that there was a real boom in that activity. Especially since the 1970s, very large horticultural companies have been established in the country's northwest, often with collaboration and investment from foreign companies. This development came as a result of commercial integration processes and its geographical proximity to the U.S. As such:

> Due to their strategic position, the northwestern states have maintained commercial relationships with the United States, which is why this area received

[7] This notion of the fragmented identity of the San Quintin people permeated the struggle to establish the San Quintin Valley as the sixth municipality of the state.

[8] Productora Industrial del Noroeste (Pinos) is one of the area's largest companies, contributing a large part of the region's production.

> significant private and public investments, both domestic and foreign, within the country's process to restructure its productive capacity, which had already begun (Velasco et al., 2014, p. 31).

This productive orientation changed the profile of the type of migrant that would arrive in the area. On the Mexican side, beginning in the 1970s, the intrepid pioneer-settler who came to till the land and develop a promising future from it gave way to the indigenous migrant—the temporary, *avecindado*[9] workers—who arrive fleeing the harsh poverty in their native states such as Guerrero and Oaxaca (Zabin, 1992). The entrepreneurial nature of the first, nativist ranchers from the 1930s to the 1960s ended with dependent workers embodied by the agricultural and indigenous day laborer who burst onto the scene in the 1970s, and who continued arriving in the region for two more decades (1980s and 1990s).[10] Since then, the regional identity contested by businessmen-ranchers and day laborers-migrants has defined an ongoing debate among the regional actors.

On the U.S. side, agribusiness opened the door for the capitalist entrepreneur, the U.S. rancher who, also a foreigner, took advantage of the weakness of regional institutions and who demanded an increasing supply of labor for an expanding food industry. In this context, the ethnic composition of the workforce in highly competitive labor markets has been defined by its ability to add a mobile workforce to the labor supply that is adaptable to variable market demands and that constitutes a significant portion of its competitive capacity (González, 2009).

A retrospective analysis confirms that, according to Velasco et al. (2014, p. 71), the San Quintin Valley's entry into the international marketplace occurred in phases. The initial phase (all of the 1970s and the early 1980s) is defined by infrastructure development that connected the region to the border, because soon after the completion of the transpeninsular highway in 1973, the first entrepreneurs began producing tomatoes for the U.S. market. The second phase is one of expansion (from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s) and is defined by the expansion of large-scale agriculture, the regional economy's integration with the U.S., and the installation of large companies that initiated a process of production and technological modernization. The last phase is one of production restructuring (starting in the mid-1990s and continuing today) and is characterized by companies moving from high-volume production to quality production based on technological innovation (e.g., introduction of greenhouses and drip-irrigation systems), crop diversification, and extended crop cycles.[11] These changes explain the historical adaptation of a region to an international fresh food market.

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[9] The *avecindados* are those individuals or families who come to live in established communities and become part of community life, but with a different position and status. They are permanently imbued with a sense of alienation.

[10] This indigenous population of migrant origin consisted mainly of Mixtecs, Zapotecs, and Triquis from Oaxaca, but there were also some Mixtecs and Nahuas from Guerrero, Nahuas from Veracruz, Purepechas from Michoacan, Huicholes from Nayarit, and various Mayan groups from the state of Chiapas, among others. Consequently, San Quintin is one of the most multiethnic regions in the country.

[11] Since 2002, total greenhouse production has grown to approximately 100 000 tons, which corresponds to 35% of total production in 2008. Greenhouse production is particularly prominent during the spring-summer cycle, when it contributes 44% of total production (Gallardo, 2010).

In addition to the growing influx of foreign capital in the area, there was an increasing level of activity by church groups, also foreigners, who saw in the region an opportunity for Protestant religious proselytizing based on missionary work, which contributed to the tales of individual effort that defined the first stage of regional settlement. In fact, we can note that the dynamics of the San Quintin region's population also included periods of religious expansionism, tied to missionary groups from North American churches (Camargo, 2011). Thus, the development and strengthening of the San Quintin region has a historical patina that comes from regional economic integration and the missionary dynamic that has endowed it with border region qualities.

The Protestant Missionary Presence in San Quintin

U.S. Protestantism has usually been a progressive vehicle of the political-religious ideology of Manifest Destiny, which is a doctrine that expresses the belief that the U.S. is meant to expand because of a divine destiny. Thus, it is believed that expansion is not only just but also apparent (because it is manifest) and unerring (because it fulfills a destiny).

> [It] therefore propagates the conviction that the mission that God gave to the people of the United States was to explore and conquer new lands, in order to bring the light of democracy, freedom and civilization to all corners of the world.[12] This ideology has justified interventionism in the politics of other countries, as well as territorial expansion through war (Marín, 1982, p. 125).

It is of interest here to explain Protestant expansionism in the lower parts of Baja California, just as was done for its economics or religion.

The Dawn of Agriculture in the Region and the First Missionary Model

After the debacle of the Catholic Dominican missions in the San Quintin region at the end of the 17th century, various missionary groups sporadically emerged in the area. This first stage of missionary activity developed between the 17th and 18th centuries through the implementation of a colonial proselytization model to establish the historical missions of colonial Catholicism and the Protestant groups that participated in the regional expansion of Christian proselytism. This first missionary model continued until the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when other Protestant religious groups

[12] Marín (1982, p. 120) provides a brief look at Manifest Destiny:

> The fulfillment of our manifest destiny is to spread throughout the continent, which has been reserved for us by Providence to undertake the great experiment of freedom and self-government. It is a right like that of the tree that has to use air or land to fully achieve the growth that is our destiny.

were permanently established in the region due to its geographical proximity to the U.S. Records indicate that the Mormons were one of the early religious settlements established in the area. In 1909, families from the Church of the Firstborn of the Fulness of Times settled in the San Quintin Valley, where they founded the Zarahemla agricultural settlement, located in the Vicente Guerrero municipal district. According to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), they were expelled from the Mormon Church for defending the practice of polygamy (Hernández, 1999).[13]

The missionary approach of that time was to propagate a Protestant religious orientation among the mestizo settlers (from western Mexico) who had recently arrived in the region. We previously noted that:

> The main communities of the San Quintin Valley were settled in late 1950s due to the land distribution conducted by the federal government. The first Mexican immigrant families arriving in the Valley came from Guanajuato, Michoacan, and Jalisco.[14] Settling in the San Quintin Valley was a major challenge for the first immigrants as there were no schools or any type of health care. Goods such as food, clothing, and household items were purchased at exorbitant prices. Accessing that area meant crossing a section of the San Pedro Martir mountain range and traveling nearly 200 kilometers on a narrow dirt road.
>
> San Quintin's isolation resulted in a region poorly served by the Catholic Church (Hernández & O'Connor, 2013, p. 13).

The region was similarly neglected by government institutions (Hernández, 2000).[15] The Catholic priests who visited the Valley came from Ensenada, and their trips were sporadic. Thus, because the Catholic Church had not been able to firmly institutionalize itself in the area since the colonial period due mainly to its sparse population and paltry economic development, it is not surprising that it became more open and accessible to Protestants and churches from the U.S. (Jaimes, 2009). The idea of a "new land south of the border" motivated individuals, independent groups, and religious organizations from the U.S. to make regular visits to establish the concept of a missionary territory in the flat lands of Baja California.

Thus, unlike the Catholic Church's neglect, as of the mid-1950s, several Protestant missionary organizations from the U.S. undertook the tireless task of "serving" the region's inhabitants. The first group to establish itself was the Baptists, and their main effort was the construction of a clinic/hospital to care for low-income individuals. They were followed by the Foundation for His Ministry (*Cristo por su Mundo*) missionaries, an evangelical organization that established an ambitious project to assist

[13] Currently, this community is known throughout the region for its Mormon population, which speaks to this religious group's survival ability.

[14] According to data from Canales (1995), between 1930 and 1960, one of the state's fastest growth periods, more than 50% of its residents came from other Mexican states.

[15] The perception of Baja California as an uninhabited land, isolated and susceptible to colonization, persisted through the entire 19th century. It only began to change with the U.S. capitalist expansion, the urban growth of San Diego, and after the Mexican-American War and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo spurred the formation of population centers in the northern part of the peninsula (Moyano, cited in Jaimes, 2009).

homeless children and that has had a significant impact in caring for orphans, single mothers, seniors, and people with disabilities and addiction problems (Zlolniski, 2011). Offshoots of independent Protestant missionary groups from other parts of the state and connected to U.S. religious groups began to appear with the mission of proselytizing to a still sparse population. In this manner, the story of the nativist entrepreneur was reinforced by the arrival of Protestant Christian faith in the area, which would spawn another storyline of "prosperity" as a salient feature of border region business dynamics.

The emergence of what can be called a religious economy was expressed as market-oriented production, where the discourse focused no longer on producing a truth but on ensuring success. This process implied the creation of a narrative based on success, as seen in the language of the first inhabitants who gradually became local entrepreneurs.

As such, the challenge of the first missionary model in the area was the building of a long-term evangelization effort that would enable conversion of the new settlers, mostly devout Catholics from central/western Mexico with an active populist tradition. Don José Hernández was one of the first people converted by Baptist missionaries. Originally from Yuriria, Guanajuato, this communal land shareholder overcame his alcohol addiction to embrace the evangelical faith and later became one of the first Mexican pastors in the southern part of the Ensenada municipality (Hernández, 1999).

The Expansion of Agro-industry in the Region and the Second Missionary Model

It is important to note that unlike studies of religious change in indigenous societies that describe how these religious groups moved to an area to propagate the new faith, the process presented here does not describe a unidirectional mechanism in which groups spread the Christian faith to places where none existed. We observed a distinctive and thereby relevant process in San Quintin, in which international religious groups succeeded in establishing a Protestant environment in a border region. Various indigenous groups had to adapt to this environment, which caused a series of adjustments in their normative systems.

Beginning in the 1970s, with a rapidly expanding agricultural labor market, the proselytizing activities of these religious groups had to be reoriented and adapted to the characteristics of the population that had flooded the area—indigenous migrant workers. We are thus faced with one of the Protestant structures that Lalive (1970) had already identified as resulting from the great transatlantic migrations—diaspora churches that, at their core, combine the three fundamental dimensions of the immigrant of nationality, religion, and ethnicity. According to this author, due to their exodus, people have uprooted and have become ethnic minorities in their new locations, thus creating a sense of nativism that facilitates colonial practices.

Therefore, we contend that the second stage of the missionary model in the region was based on applying an ethnic approach to religious proselytism resulting from the presence of the indigenous migrant population in the area. Upon their arrival in the San Quintin Valley camps, the indigenous groups that came to work in the fields were attended to by evangelical missionaries, whose main strategy for approaching them was to provide material aid to their missionary activities.

> Groups of volunteers belonging to evangelical organizations included doctors, dentists, nurses, teachers, students and housewives, and year after year established temporary camps to preach the word of God in San Quintin. Caravans of vehicles from the United States and Canada visited the day laborers' camps to offer them food and used clothes, provide medical care, show them Christian films, and deliver the message of salvation (Hernández & O'Connor, 2013, p. 13).

For many day laborers, this was their first contact with evangelical doctrine.

If the first missionary model was based on using verbal communications to approach the first settlers, the second missionary model was based on a type of proselytism that was distinctly aid-driven and that used technological resources to successfully propagate this new faith. In doing so, these groups encountered several obstacles in trying to convert this mass of migrant workers. According to Hernández & O'Connor (2013, p. 13) "some missionaries who worked in the region have remarked about how difficult it was for them to 'win souls among the natives'". The first groups of workers to arrive in the area were the Mixtecs of Oaxaca. The anecdotes indicate that this group represented one of the main obstacles for the missionary work:

> They came to receive donations, watch films, and receive medical care, but they were very reserved regarding their religious practices. The other significant barrier was language. The missions did not have pastors who knew any of the indigenous languages, and only a few day laborers knew how to speak and read Spanish (Hernández & O'Connor, 2013, p. 13).

Therefore, these missionary groups had to develop different strategies to "reach" this population.

Going forward, there was persistent and methodical missionary work that included the study and comprehension of indigenous languages, the training of indigenous pastors in their own languages, and the translation of sacred texts and chapters. This work, along with various forms of material aid and support provided to families, began to have an impact among the indigenous day laborer population. All this effort contributed to the local adaptation of the new churches to the San Quintin missionary territory. This approach should not be considered unique to the missionary families and organizations from local churches in the U.S. or Canada. We are referring more to the international religious groups that function as global religious enterprises operating locally.[16]

[16] An example of this type of international missionary group operating in San Quintin is Buenas Nuevas, a member of the Global Recordings Network (GRN), an organization that has created many recordings and translations of the life of Jesus Christ in more than 6 000 languages since it was founded in 1939. Thus, they have performed translations of at least one language per week during that time. This number must be considered in light of the slightly more than 12 000 languages in the world. Therefore, this organization has addressed just over half of the languages and dialects spoken throughout the world.

The permanent presence of these groups of churches was established concurrently with the work calendar of the people in this labor market extending for longer periods, which resulted in the permanent settlement of these workers and the development of marginal neighborhoods throughout the region (Camargo, 2012).[17] As previously mentioned, the permanent presence of agricultural workers resulted from the economic development and integration of the San Quintin region with foreign capital; thus, the missionary model also had to adapt. The evangelization strategy based its approach for proselytism on territorial expansionism; that is, on the adaptation of Protestant practices to the living conditions of the target population—the neighborhoods inhabited by the workers. An itinerant proselytism in the region's principal municipal districts, and in the camps and neighborhoods where the working population lived, defined a local Protestantism that based its initial evangelization strategy on the ongoing presence of missionaries in the work camps, which paved the way for the channeling of economic resources and social assistance to the neighborhoods that were later established. Only after the most pressing local problems were solved (e.g., residential land subdivision and construction of housing, schools, and clinics) did churches have a louder voice in these new indigenous territories, because as local communities were established throughout the region, the churches also expanded. The search for new employment and housing opportunities simultaneously spurred a renewal of the Protestant locations in the residential core from which the neighborhoods grew. The emergence of local churches in these locations was due to the ability of an indigenous leadership to develop a symbolic universe that blended Protestant rites with familiar Catholicism while allowing Pentecostal practices to emerge. In a place with weak government institutions, the role of these churches has been fundamental.[18] In this context, the Catholic Church has been able to do very little to counteract the Protestant influence in the area (Hernández, 1999).

It is important to emphasize that this massive influx of people in the region has caused some to view this working-class indigenous group as foreigners that do not share the region's initial nativist identity of the immigrant pioneer—the enterprising mestizo—embodied by the area's first settlers, ranchers, and entrepreneurs. The

[17] Since the 1980s, profound economic and demographic transformations have occurred in San Quintin as a result of the changes in the horticultural industry and the settlement of thousands of agricultural day laborers and their families in working-class neighborhoods. This process of settlement is relatively recent and we can already see its implications for the demographic transformation of that part of Mexico. Between 1970 and 2000, the Valley's population grew at the dizzying rate of 7.2% per year on average, from 8 559 inhabitants in 1970 to 92 177 in 2010 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía [Inegi], 2010; Velasco et al., 2014).

[18] The residential working-class neighborhoods of San Quintin changed the historical profile of the regional population because these latest migrations were massive, stimulated by a commercial dynamic, and were unrelated to any governmental effort. The enormity of the region's growth is connected to the growth of the entire state, because the 20th century brought explosive population growth to all of Baja California due to significant influxes of immigrants attracted by the industrial development of the border region, and who went to work in the *maquila* factories or in commercial agriculture. According to data from Canales (1995, p. 12), between 1910 and 1990, the state grew at an average annual rate of 6.4%, which was much higher than the national average and the other border states (2.1% and 2.6%, respectively). This growth rate meant that Baja California's population doubled every 11 years, while Mexico's overall population only doubled every 33 years.

predominant narrative is that the indigenous migrants are the product of the efforts of these first men, and in the logic of these pioneers, this mass of workers is nothing more than an appendage needed for the area's economic development, but that lacks the entrepreneurial spirit that forged the regional identity. This discussion is racial rather than moral.

Lastly, it should be noted that an analysis of the development of the social mechanisms that accompanied the settlement of this workforce in the region—social movements, community exchanges, and the defense of their rights—reveals that the religious overtures of these groups represented a form of political action and can be viewed as a novel aspect of indigenous mobilization (Bengoa, 2000). As Lalive (1970, p. 88) indicates, "Protestantism and, in particular Pentecostalism, is manifested as a religious response by a community to the neglect of large groups of excluded and socially marginalized people". Therefore, we argue that the church participation of this workforce is not for purely doctrinal reasons but represents a consistent way to consider the possibility of improved living conditions when pressing needs must be addressed. This process of appropriation of the Protestant universe by the region's indigenous groups has not been free of conflict between families and communities. However, one could say that in the definition of contemporary indigenous religiosity in that region, evangelical and Pentecostal practices were added as a form of resistance and to provide continuity of the elements of ethnicity. The syncretism in this border region therefore allows the convergence of old worldviews first transformed by the Spanish conquest, then reformulated in popular Catholicism, and now redesigned with the Pentecostal elements that contribute to the civil, religious, and political development of many of the indigenous groups that settled in the Valley. By appropriating Pentecostal values, these groups are "producing" a sense of community and are able to inhibit the colonial and extractive dynamics on which the agro-export model is based.

Conclusions

Migrations to the San Quintin Valley area in the state of Baja California, both historical and recent, have contributed to the development of a region that bases its competitive advantage on its strategic location and the intensive use of a workforce that adapts to marketplace demands (Lara, 2011). In addition to the region's production dynamics, religious pluralism has guided the shaping of a region where global entities function in a distinctive cross-border zone.

Historically, the world of Protestantism was first accepted in San Quintin by people residing in the existing municipal districts. This was a mestizo population living in scattered communities with a relatively stable purchasing power derived from a nascent agricultural industry and who developed a sense of nativist entitlement for the San Quintin region. It was not until the second half of the 20th century, with the area rebounding and positioning itself as an agricultural exporter, that the massive influx of indigenous workers was accompanied by more activism by these religious groups in the agricultural fields and nascent communities. As such, the assimilation of Protestantism

in the area acknowledged the local characteristics of the region's settlement as well as the dynamism of its economy.

The massive presence of indigenous workers has sparked a debate concerning how the ethnicity of the regional identity should be categorized. This debate has intensified due to the permanent presence of indigenous labor in the region's residential communities that resulted from the processes of technological modernization that enabled the permanent employment of these proletarian masses. The indigenous presence also redirected the methods of evangelization developed by international religious groups that had undertaken a methodical labor of evangelization as part of their missionary activities and of overall U.S. expansionism. After the day laborer population arrived in droves in the 1970s, religious pluralization gradually spread throughout the region through the ongoing presence of missionary groups and the social assistance they provided to the local population. An itinerant campaign of proselytization in the workplace and at home defined a localized Protestantism focused on social welfare, which was able to adapt both to historical-local conditions and the characteristics of its members.

The role of these religious denominations in the overall region, and particularly in the communities, has been extremely significant to how residential patterns changed. This is because as relationship and organizational networks developed in the communities through evangelical crusades, international organizations with local branches, pastoral conferences, the news media, and the Christian core groups providing aid to the needy ensured the ongoing presence of these religious groups, as well as their expansion and acceptance of the new faith in this cross-border region. The propagation of this type of Protestantism in the indigenous worker communities completes a model of evangelization in which global religious enterprises acted through a focused missionary model.

From this perspective, the presence of an indigenous population in northwestern Mexico, particularly in regions with characteristics similar to the San Quintin Valley, has not only enabled them to solidify their economic participation in international markets (Martínez, 2006) but also enabled an ethnic Protestantism to establish itself in the region (Camargo, 2011). This establishment has been shaping a local religiosity supported by ethnic identity and is part of the reconfiguration of the religious faith of the country's indigenous communities.

We consider that the Protestant religious context that these indigenous contingents joined has had important impacts on the formation of the religious identity of these groups, as well as on how they organize themselves in the new settlements. Given that the coexistence of cultural and ethnic diversity can be reinforced by religious heterogeneity (Garma, 2004), we consider that, in San Quintin, we must describe the context for the development of these faith communities and the vitality that they attained in the border regions (Demera, 2008). Thus, our approach aligns with those studies in which Protestantism and multiple religious options influence the application of strategies for survival and for strengthening the community structures of indigenous groups oriented toward ethnic unity (Barabas, 2008; Glick, Çağlar, Guldbrandsen, 2006; Levitt, 2001). The various forms of community integration that exist today in the Valley—such as festivals, regional assemblies, and social movements—and are led by indigenous groups from the communities have extolled the vitality of community

involvement by these groups. We should note that the Protestant environment has also served to solidify this collectivism.

Regardless, we view these civilizing missions and the international Christian movement as a new form of internationalization of religion (Levitt, 2001) and as a new, neocolonial stage of the U.S. expansionist system. In this sense, the colonial mindset that Christian values have propagated throughout the region explains the transition to modernity by the residents of that border region, because it instills a moral universe of achievement, individual effort, and the quest for improvement (Bonino, Alvarez, & Craig, 1983) that is openly linked with the commercial dynamics of the area and its agro-export industry.

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