

Introduction

The top part of the avenue leading from the Dominican city of Baní to the village of Miraflores is bordered by thick, leafy mimosa trees. Throughout the year, they are covered by orange blossoms and blanket the street with a delicious shade. On the way out of town, the sidewalks are busy with women shopping and children returning home from school. The streets grow quiet as the beauty parlors, small grocery stores (*colmados*), and lawyers' offices closest to the town square gradually give way to residential neighborhoods. On one corner is Mayor Carlos Peña's feed store, where he and his coworkers from the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD)¹ meet to talk about politics every late afternoon. Farther down the street, members of the Partido Reformista Social Cristiano (PRSC)² also sit in front of their party's headquarters, drinking sweet cups of coffee and discussing the current election campaign. At the edge of town, the buildings end abruptly in overgrown fields. The avenue goes silent except for a lone motorcycle driver. The countryside is overwhelmingly beautiful.

A few hundred yards ahead, two sights unexpectedly interrupt this peaceful landscape. On the right side of the road, four partially complete mansions stand behind large iron gates. Their crumbling marble pillars and large cracked windows, so out of character with the rest of the scene, mock onlookers from the street. A little farther down the avenue, at the edge of a large, uncultivated field, a billboard proclaims, "Viaje a Boston con Sierra Travel"—Travel to Boston with Sierra Travel. Telephone numbers in Boston and Baní, coincidentally beginning with the same exchange, are hidden by grasses so tall they almost cover the sign completely.

A small restaurant, its rusting metal chairs and tables glinting

brightly in the sun, announces the entrance to Miraflores. Turning off the road into this village of close to four thousand residents reveals further discontinuities. While some of the homes resemble miniature, finished versions of the empty mansions along the avenue, one out of five families still lives in a small, two-room wooden house. Four in ten use outdoor privies. Though the electricity goes off nightly for weeks at a stretch, nearly every household has a television, VCR, or compact-disc player. And although it takes months to get a phone installed in Santo Domingo, the Dominican capital, Mirafloresños can get phone service in their homes almost immediately after they request it.

What explains these sharp contrasts? Who is responsible for these half-finished homes that differ so completely in style and scale from the other houses in the area? Who is the audience for the billboards in the middle of fields that advertise international plane flights? How is it that people who must collect rainwater in barrels so they can wash when the water supply goes off are watching the latest videos in the comfort of their living rooms?

Transnational migration is at the root of these contradictions. The billboard speaks to the nearly two-thirds of Mirafloresño families who have relatives in the greater Boston metropolitan area. These migrants pay for the home improvements and buy the appliances. They create such a lucrative market for long-distance phone service that CODETEL (the Dominican phone company) installs phone lines in Miraflores almost immediately after they are requested. And some built the dream palaces on the avenue, which they completed only halfway before their money dried up.

Mirafloresños began migrating to Boston, Massachusetts, in the late 1960s. Most settled in and around Jamaica Plain, traditionally a white-ethnic neighborhood until Latinos and young white professionals replaced those who began leaving the city in the 1960s. Over the years, migrants from the Dominican Republic and the friends and family they left behind have sustained such strong, frequent contacts with one another it is as if village life takes place in two settings. Fashion, food, and forms of speech, as well as appliances and home decorating styles, attest to these strong connections. In Miraflores, villagers often dress in T-shirts emblazoned with the names of businesses in Massachusetts, although they do not know what these words or logos mean. They proudly serve their visitors coffee with Cremora and juice made from Tang. The local *colmados* stock SpaghettiOs and Frosted Flakes.

Many of the benches in the Miraflores park are inscribed with the names of villagers who moved to Boston years ago. And almost everyone, including older community members who can count on their fingers how many times they have visited Santo Domingo, can talk about “La Mozart” or “La Centre”—Mozart Street Park and Centre Street, two focal points of the Dominican community in Jamaica Plain.

In Boston, Mirafloreños have re-created their premigration lives to the extent that their new physical and cultural environment allows. Particularly during the early years of settlement, but even today, a large number of migrants lived within the same twenty-block radius. There are several streets where people from Miraflores live in almost every triple-decker house.³ Community members leave their apartment doors open so that the flow between households is as easy and uninhibited as it is in Miraflores. They decorate their refrigerators with the same plastic fruit magnets they used in Miraflores, and they put the same sets of ceramic animal families on the shelves of their living rooms. Women continue to hang curtains around the door frames; these provide privacy without keeping in the heat in the Dominican Republic but are merely decorative in Boston. Because someone is always traveling between Boston and the island, there is a continuous, circular flow of goods, news, and information. As a result, when someone is ill, cheating on his or her spouse, or finally granted a visa, the news spreads as quickly in Jamaica Plain as it does on the streets of Miraflores.

Many Americans expect migrants like Mirafloreños to sever their ties to their homeland as they become assimilated into the United States. They assume that migrants will eventually transfer their loyalty and community membership from the countries they leave behind to the ones that receive them. But increasing numbers of migrants continue to participate in the political and economic lives of their homelands, even as they are incorporated into their host societies. Instead of loosening their connections and trading one membership for another, some individuals are keeping their feet in both worlds. They use political, religious, and civic arenas to forge social relations, earn their livelihoods, and exercise their rights across borders.

The proliferation of these long-term transnational ties challenges conventional notions about the assimilation of immigrants into host countries and about migration's impact on sending-country life. But how do ordinary people actually manage to stay connected to two

places? Who participates, where, and with what consequences? Under what circumstances is this a recipe for long-term social and political marginalization, or can participation in two polities result in a case of “two for the price of one”?

This book is about everyday life in a transnational village. It is about how ordinary people are incorporated into the countries that receive them while remaining active in the places they come from, and about how life in sending and receiving countries changes as a result. It explores the costs and benefits of transnational practices by detailing who engages in them, who the winners and losers are, and why. The book also examines how economic and political globalization shapes local-level dynamics, showing how transnational ties at the village level create—and are created by—ties at the municipal and national levels of each country. Local-level transnational activities are also reinforced by the growing numbers of global economic and governance structures that make decision-making and problem-solving across borders increasingly common. Consequently, in this era of heightened globalization, transnational lifestyles may become not the exception but the rule.

How Do Transnational Lives Actually Work?

The United States at the turn of the twenty-first century is much more tolerant of ethnic diversity than it was at the beginning of the twentieth century. We acknowledge that there is no monolithic “American” culture that immigrants assimilate into. Migrants adopt some values and practices but not others, and they do so at different rates.⁴ They gain access to some social and economic institutions and are blocked from integrating into others. They may exhibit structural assimilation without cultural or residential assimilation, or they may assimilate into different segments of U.S. society.⁵ They often use their identities symbolically or instrumentally, tailoring them to fit particular settings.⁶ Nevertheless, many Americans continue to view assimilation as incompatible with transnational participation. We expect newcomers to renounce their membership in their home countries in exchange for full social and political membership in the United States.

Parallel changes have also occurred in conceptions of political integration. Marshall (1950) and Evans (1988) distinguished between

civil, political, and social citizenship. They argued that not all people achieve these memberships simultaneously and that they could assert or be allowed to assert one form without the others. They also assumed, however, that migrants would not continue to participate in their countries of origin; where one resided ultimately determined where one belonged.

More recent work calls into question the meaning of citizenship and its relevance for social and political participation. Yuval-Davis (1997) views citizenship as a multitiered construct that categorizes people's memberships in a variety of local, ethnic, national, and transnational communities. Individuals' rights and obligations to specific states are mediated by and dependent upon—but rarely completely contained by—their membership in specific ethnic, racial, or religious groups. Baubock (1994) and Soysal (1994) propose the notion of postnational membership. They argue that international legal regimes and discourses now guarantee certain human rights within a globally accepted framework regardless of citizenship. They suggest that new forms of participation and representation are emerging that do not require citizenship and that newly emerging supranational institutions guarantee a set of basic rights, thereby superseding the nation-state.

In this book, I argue that the case of Miraflores, and others like it, suggests yet another kind of experience. Here migrants' social and economic lives are not bounded by national borders (Pessar 1999). They do not shift their loyalties and participatory energies from one country to another. Instead, they are integrated, to varying degrees, into the countries that receive them, at the same time that they remain connected to the countries they leave behind. Citizenship is only one of several bases upon which individuals form their identities or exercise their rights. New forms of representation and participation are emerging that do not require full membership or residence. In contrast to a postnational view, however, the state is not superfluous. Rather than disappearing or being subordinated to international regimes, states play a major role, along with other civic, religious, and political institutions, in creating and reinforcing lasting transnational involvements. From this perspective, transnational practices are not just another way station along the path to assimilation. Rather, assimilation and transnational practices are not incompatible. Many first- and possibly second-generation immigrants will continue to be active in their countries of origin from their firm base in the United States.

Scholars from a variety of disciplines use the term *transnationalism* to describe this contemporary complex of migratory activities.⁷ But this term has been used to delineate such a wide variety of connections at so many different levels of social interaction that it risks losing much of its analytical power. Several scholars have made important strides toward clarifying what is meant by transnationalism with respect to migration. Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc define it as the “processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multistranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (1994, 6). Guarnizo argues that it is a “series of economic, sociocultural, and political practical and discursive relations that transcend the territorially bound jurisdiction of the nation-state” (1997, 9). He and his colleague M. P. Smith (1998) juxtapose “transnationalism from below,” or the everyday, grounded practices of individuals and groups, with “transnationalism from above,” or global governance and economic activities. Portes et al. (1999) use *transnationalism* to describe those economic, political, and sociocultural occupations and activities that require regular, long-term contacts across borders for their success. They propose the individual is the appropriate unit of analysis for assessing the extent to which transnationalism occurs. Finally, some scholars suggest using the term *transmigrant* to describe those individuals who engage regularly in cross-border activities (England 1999; Glick Schiller 1995; Guarnizo 1997).

Many questions remain unanswered. Are transnational practices primarily economic, or are other aspects of life also enacted across borders? How does their impact vary by type and level of social activity? Are transnational migrants only those who regularly engage in cross-border activities, or do those who remain behind also become embedded in the transnational social fields created by migration? What forms do different transnational communities assume? And, finally, what are the consequences of these arrangements for sending and receiving country life?

To answer these questions, this book focuses on the transnational practices that individual migrants and nonmigrants engage in and on the transnational social groups and arenas within which they carry these out. To do this, I insert the intermediary level of community between what M. P. Smith and Guarnizo call “transnationalism from above and below” and what Portes et al. call “high” and “low” levels of institutionalized transnationalism. The kinds of transnational prac-

tices migrants and nonmigrants engage in, and the impact of these activities, are a function of the kinds of organized social groups within which they are carried out. Individual actors cannot be viewed in isolation from the transnational social fields in which they are embedded. The economic initiatives, political activities, and sociocultural enterprises they engage in are powerfully shaped by the social fields in which they occur.

Adding community to the analysis helps clarify several things. First, communities are one of several mechanisms mediating between “high” and “low” levels of transnationalism. When individual actors identify and organize themselves as transnational communities, the state or international religious groups from “above” are most likely to respond. When national political and economic actors reach out to local communities on both sides of the border, they encourage individual members to maintain dual loyalties.

Second, the communities and organizations that emerge from transnational migration offer migrants a variety of ways in which to distribute their energies and loyalties between their sending and receiving countries. When transnational communities establish many diverse organizations across borders, membership in both places is easier than when there are fewer, more narrowly focused organizational arenas. Third, a focus on community provides a constant reminder that the impact of transnational migration extends far beyond the migrant to the individuals and collectivities that remain behind.

A combination of political, economic, and social factors stimulates transnational migration. Many contemporary transnational actors are former subjects who settled in the nations that colonized them. Political and economic relations established under formal or unofficial colonial rule, as in the case of the United States and the Caribbean, for example, stimulated labor migration and the emergence of transnational ties. Other transnational migrants are refugees and former Warsaw Pact residents who migrated in response to the political aftermath of the Cold War. A third set of transnational migrants are the exiles, ethnic outsiders, and other stigmatized communities who have been cast out by nationalistic and repressive states (Gold 2000). Members of this last group, in particular, are often keenly interested in remaining active in their homelands because they want to bring about regime change.

The globalization of production and consumption, or the height-

ened mobility of people, goods, ideas, and capital, also creates transnational communities and generates a demand for the skills and outlooks these communities offer. Global markets create a permanent demand for highly skilled technical and professional workers and for unskilled laborers willing to work for low wages with little job stability (Massey et al. 1993; Piore 1979). Uneven development and the industrialization of traditional economic sectors in sending countries create large, mobile pools of underemployed labor. The countries sending the greatest numbers to the United States tend to be those with the longest history of economic, military, and political ties to this country (Rumbaut 1996).

Once begun, migration spreads through social networks. Social networks are the sets of cross-border interpersonal ties connecting migrants, return migrants, and nonmigrants through kinship, friendship, and attachment to a shared place of origin. Once a network is in place, it becomes more likely that additional migration will occur. The risks and costs of movement for subsequent migrants are lower because there is a group of “experts” already in the receiving country to greet newcomers and serve as their guides. Because these well-established migrants help new arrivals find jobs and housing, they also increase migration’s economic returns (Massey et al. 1993).

These social networks do not develop further among some immigrant groups. They do not deepen, grow more extensive, or become more institutionalized. Over time, they may even begin to unravel as migrants transfer their economic and political loyalties to the countries that receive them or as they become less beholden to claims from those who stay behind. Transnational social networks also weaken when there are no new arrivals reinforcing them.

In other cases, continued contacts and social network development between migrants and nonmigrants create a transnational social field or public sphere between the sending and receiving country (Mahler 1998; Fraser 1991).⁸ The many social connections and organizations that tie these individuals to one another create a border-spanning arena that enables migrants, if they so choose, to remain active in both worlds. This arena has multiple levels. A political party, for example, links nonmigrants and migrants through their membership in local sending and receiving country chapters. These local, personalized ties often form part of the party’s national-level operations as well. In an increasing

number of cases, the state also plays an active role in creating and sustaining this transnational social space.

The transnational social fields that migration engenders encompass all aspects of social life. Though they generally emerge from economic relations between migrants and nonmigrants, social, religious, and political connections also constitute these arenas. The more diverse and thick a transnational social field is, the more numerous the ways it offers migrants to remain active in their homelands. The more institutionalized these relationships become, the more likely it is that transnational membership will persist.

Many migrants and nonmigrants described in prior research engage in some kind of transnational activities, but not all are embedded in transnational social fields, nor do all belong to transnational communities. A distinction must be made among individuals who travel regularly to conduct their routine economic and political affairs; those whose lives are primarily rooted in a single setting, though much of what they do involves resources, contacts, and people in the places that they come from; and those who do not move but who live their lives within a context that has become transnationalized.⁹ The entrepreneurs who travel regularly to get the money, information, and supplies they need to conduct their business on both sides of the border are transnational migrants (Portes and Guarnizo 1991; Smart and Smart 1998). The political party official whose job it is to coordinate activities between the United States and the home country also falls into this category. The parent who leaves a child behind to be raised by a grandparent and the leader of an immigrant religious group who travels periodically to his homeland to consult with superiors are individuals who are based physically in their host countries but who engage in numerous activities and social relationships spanning borders. Many of their social ties and practices are transnational, though they themselves may only travel once or twice a year. Likewise, the individual who never migrated, but who is completely dependent on the economic remittances she receives each month and who lives in a socio-cultural context completely transformed by migration, also inhabits a transnational social field. To understand the relationship between transnational migration and development, we must assess the impact of transnational practices on all those embedded in these transnational spaces.

Some scholars describe social fields spanning entire sending countries and embracing all migrants living in an important place of reception. Glick Schiller and Fouron (1998), for example, argue that Haitian young adults, who have never migrated, live their lives within a social field connecting the United States and Haiti because so many aspects of their lives are permeated by Haitian immigrant influences. Transnational social fields, however, are multilayered composites, with numerous sending-receiving country ties at each level. Though there may be large, overarching fields between the United States and Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and El Salvador, for example, these encompass smaller fields between particular sending and receiving villages and cities. Brazilian migrations to the United States have created transnational social fields between nonmigrants in the city of Governor Valadares and migrants in New York City; Pompano Beach, Florida; Danbury, Connecticut; and the greater Boston metropolitan area (Margolis 1994). Transnational social fields also unite Dominicans in Venezuela and Spain and those who stay behind.

In many cases, numerous individuals embedded within transnational social fields engage in high levels of transnational practices, but few communal activities emerge. Colombian migrants in New York have created a complex web of multidirectional relationships, but their mistrust and fragmentation impede community organization (Guarnizo et al. 1999). Often, however, certain sites within transnational social fields become sufficiently organized and institutionalized to give rise to some kind of transnational community. In such cases, it is not merely that numerous individuals live their lives within a social formation that crosses borders; it is that a significant number from a given place of origin and settlement share this experience collectively with one another, transforming the way they think of themselves as a group.

Since transnational communities emerge from the social networks that first encourage migration, members tend to know one another personally or have family members or acquaintances in common, at least initially. They acknowledge that they belong to a collectivity constituted across space and express some level of self-consciousness about this membership by forming groups like hometown organizations that manifest their transnational character. In the receiving country and at home, their social lives continue to be so entwined with one another's that those who do not send money to their families or do not "do right" by the community feel the consequences. Transnational communities

are generally small and personalized enough that values like bounded solidarity and enforceable trust still work (Portes 1995). Furthermore, many migrants still use their sending community as the reference group against which they gauge their status. One of the reasons so many Mexicans, Dominicans, and Central Americans contribute to development projects or help organize and participate in beauty pageants and patron-saint celebrations in their communities of origin is to affirm their continued membership in these transnational groups and to demonstrate their enhanced position within them (Golding 1998; Smith 1995; Berry 1985). These organizations stimulate and are stimulated by the institutionalization of transnational practices at other levels of the transnational social field.

Miraflores is just one type of transnational community, which I call a transnational village.¹⁰ Transnational villages have several unique characteristics. First, actual migration is not required to be a member. Migrants' continued participation in their home communities transforms the sending-community context to such an extent that nonmigrants also adapt many of the values and practices of their migrant counterparts, engage in social relationships that span two settings, and participate in organizations that act across borders. This is not to say that those who migrate and those who remain behind live in an imagined, third, transnational space. Instead, they are all firmly rooted in a particular place and time, though their daily lives often depend upon people, money, ideas, and resources located in another setting.

A second characteristic of transnational villages is that they emerge and endure partially because of social remittances (Levitt 1999). Social remittances are the ideas, behaviors, and social capital that flow from receiving to sending communities. They are the tools with which ordinary individuals create global culture at the local level. They help individuals embedded in a particular context and accustomed to a particular set of identities and practices to imagine a new cartography (Appadurai 1990), encouraging them to try on new gender roles, experiment with new ideas about politics, and adopt new organizing strategies. Once this process has begun, daily life in the village is changed to such an extent, and migrants and nonmigrants often become so dependent on one another, that transnational villages are likely to endure.

A third feature distinguishing transnational villages is that they create and are created by organizations that themselves come to act across

borders. These political, religious, and civic organizations arise or are reorganized to meet the needs of their newly transnational members, enabling migrants to continue to participate in both settings and encouraging community perpetuation. This also means that migrants have multiple channels through which to pursue transnational belonging. Dual citizenship is just one way to be a transnational actor. Religious, civic, and political groups allow migrants to express and act upon dual allegiances.

Migrants organize groups across borders in several ways. They may establish hometown associations, like the Miraflores Development Committee, with chapters in the sending community and in the areas where migrant residents cluster. They may form receiving-country divisions of national political parties. Or, as in the case of the Catholic Church, they may extend an already established international institution to incorporate new connections resulting from relations between migrants and nonmigrants.

Groups that are organized and act across borders do not always aim to produce transnational effects, nor do they always succeed when they set out to do so. Though resources, money, or ideas from both sides of the border are harnessed to achieve transnational goals, the impact of these efforts may be felt primarily in either the sending or the receiving country. In this study, Mirafloresños participated in three types of transnational organizations: a political organization that acted transnationally but did not achieve its transnational goals, a religious organization that acted and accomplished its goals transnationally, and a community development organization that acted transnationally to benefit one direction only.

A fourth feature characterizing transnational villages is that they are studies in contrast. Material well-being increases at a high social cost. Some community members used the social and economic resources available to them across borders to their advantage, while others returned to Miraflores not much better off than when they first set out. Class, gender, and generational divisions sharpened at the same time that community members' reliance on and commitment to one another increased. Transnational villages endure because they are constituted flexibly enough to be able to tolerate heightened power and status differences and the increased economic and emotional attachments that accompany them.

Other types of transnational communities arise between sending

and receiving countries. Looser, more flexibly defined place-based communities form when migrants leave one urban area for another, though norms of bounded solidarity and enforceable trust still hold sway. Because cities encompass greater numbers, whose social ties to one another are weaker, not all potential members chose to belong (Levitt 2000; Roberts et al. 1999). Migration from the city of Governador Valadares in Brazil to the greater Boston Metropolitan area is a case in point. Elite community members who articulated a vision of transnational community, and tried to organize around it, received only minimal support from ordinary community members (Levitt 2000).

Other communities grow initially out of members' shared attachments to a particular place but then mature into groups based more on the identities, occupations, or values that people from a particular region share with one another. Members of the Patidar community in Massachusetts have ties back to Gujarat State in India where their families originally came from. But because this group has such a long history of migration to East Africa and England, their sense of community grows less out of their common roots than on the norms and values they have in common. Similar transnational communities have formed between Mixtec Indians in Mexico and Northern California, who also share geography but organize themselves around their mutual ethnic identities and experience of oppression (Rivera-Salgado 1999). Turkish immigrants throughout Europe have created transnational groups to press for greater religious freedom (Kastoryano 1994). These individuals come from multiple sending areas but, again, their shared norms provide the basis for transnational community formation.

By using the term *community*, I do not wish to imply that all members feel a sense of affinity or solidarity toward one another. The divisiveness and hierarchical nature of all social groups also characterizes transnational communities. The costs and rewards of transnational community membership are not more equitably distributed than they are in communities rooted in one place. Long-standing patterns of privilege and access do not disappear merely because they are recreated across borders. In fact, though some predict that transnational migration allows its participants to rebel against global capital and the nation-state (Kearney 1991) or elude essentializing national identities (Bhabha 1990), this has not been the case for most Mirafloresños. In this community, transnational migration re-creates patterns of gender and class inequality and creates new frictions between parents and chil-

dren, men and women, and poorer and more advantaged community members at the same time that it opens up opportunities for others.

A distinction must be made between transnational communities, the less organized social fields within which they are embedded, and the overall context of economic and cultural globalization that produces these different social forms. Migration-driven transnational activities at all levels are different from those arising from globalization, though economic and political globalization often precipitate migration flows. Globalization refers to the political, economic, and social activities that have become interregional or intercontinental and to the intensification of levels of interaction and interconnectedness within and between states and societies (Held 1999). Global processes tend to be de-linked from specific national territories, while transnational processes are anchored in and transcend one or more nation-states (Kearney 1995).

Globalization also transforms relationships at the local level, but these changes differ from those transnational migration brings about. The Miraflores woman who tries to establish a more equitable relationship with her husband does so not only because Dominican women in general are gaining more independence, but because she is inspired by the kind of marriage her migrant sister has with her husband. In such cases, transnational migration and globalization are both changing gender relations. The impact of transnational migration differs from, but must be understood within the context of, the heightened globalization in which it is embedded. Changes prompted by migration and globalization mutually reinforce one another.

Finally, I want to locate transnational communities with respect to the term *diaspora*, which has also been used to describe a range of contemporary migration experiences. Diaspora traditionally referred to groups who were forcibly expelled from their homelands and who remained socially marginal in the societies that received them as they waited to return. The classic examples of this were the Jews, Greeks, and the Armenians. Of late, researchers have begun using this term more broadly, defining those “dwelling in the diaspora” as individuals who have been exiled or displaced to a number of different nation-states by a variety of economic, political, and social forces (Tölölyan 1998). Laguerre describes these individuals as residing “outside the formal boundaries of their states of origin but inside the reterritorialized space of the dispersed nation” (1998, 8). Cohen suggests differ-

ent types of diasporas, distinguishing among those who are victimized, form part of imperialistic projects, seek to trade or labor, or “form part of a cultural diaspora, cemented as much by literature, political ideas, religious convictions, music and lifestyles as by permanent migration” (1997, xii).

Transnational communities are the building blocks of diasporas that may or may not take shape. Diasporas form out of transnational communities spanning sending and receiving countries and out of the real or imagined connections among migrants from a particular homeland who are scattered throughout the world. If a fiction of congregation takes hold, then a diaspora emerges. Dominicans who identify themselves as belonging to a diaspora might be transnational community members or isolated individuals who, wherever they are, share a sense of common belonging to a homeland where they are not. Similarly, the Garifuna diaspora consists of transnational communities connecting New York and Honduras, or Belize and Los Angeles, and the many individual Garifuna migrants who live throughout the world (England 1999; Matthei and Smith 1998).

Miraflores Is Not Unique

Studies of transnational migration evoke passionate responses. Some argue that Miraflores and villages like it are isolated examples that do not represent the experiences of other groups. Most immigrants, they say, will not stay as connected to their homelands as those from Mexico, the Caribbean, or Latin America. These migrants continue to participate actively in their homelands because their countries of origin are close to the United States and have long been dominated by U.S. political and economic interests (Jones-Correa 1999b; Suárez-Orozco 1998; Waldinger 1997).

Clearly, the strength of the relationship between Mirafloreños on the island and those in Boston is, in part, a function of certain special characteristics of the Dominican–United States connection. The Dominican Republic is a mere 1,200 miles from Miami and even closer to Puerto Rico. It takes only five and one-half hours to travel from Boston to Santo Domingo. During the off-season, plane tickets can cost as little as \$500. The national pastime in the Dominican Republic is baseball, unlike most of Latin America, where it is soccer. Is it any wonder that such strong, durable connections would emerge?