

Communities Without Borders

By David Bacon

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In this work of photojournalism and oral history, David Bacon documents the new reality of migrant experience: the creation of transnational communities. Today's indigenous migrants don't simply move from one point to another but create new communities all along the northern road from Guatemala through Mexico into the United States, connected by common culture and history. Drawing on his experience as a photographer and a journalist and also as a former labor organizer, Bacon portrays the lives of the people who migrate between Guatemala and Mexico and the United States. He takes us inside these communities and illuminates the ties that bind them together, the influence of their working conditions on their families and health, and their struggle for better lives. Bacon portrays in photographs and their own words Mixtec and Triqui migrants in Oaxaca, Baja California, and California; Guatemalan migrants in Huehuetenango and Nebraska; miners and indigenous communities in Sonora and Arizona; and veterans of the bracero program of the 1940s and 1950s. Bacon's interviews with this first wave of guest workers are especially relevant in light of the current political focus on guest-worker programs as a model for reforming immigration. The book's section on Oaxaca dramatizes the social and political tensions in this Mexican state which are the root cause of the present upheaval there.

Throughout *Communities without Borders*, Bacon emphasizes the social movements migrants organize to improve their own working conditions and the well-being of their enclaves. U.S. border policy treats undocumented immigrants as an aggregation of individuals, ignoring the social pressures that force whole communities to move and the networks of families and hometowns that sustain them on their journeys. *Communities without Borders* makes an urgent appeal for understanding the human reality that should inform our national debate over immigration.

"David Bacon is a nonfiction Steinbeck, the foremost documentarist of the great human drama of the borderlands."-Mike Davis, author of *Planet of Slums*

David Bacon, Photographs and Stories

<http://dbacon.igc.org>
