

Mexican Migrant Civic and Political Participation in the U.S.: The Case of Hometown Associations in Los Angeles and Chicago

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Background Paper to be presented at the seminar

“Mexican Migrant Social and Civic Participation in the United States.”

To be held at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

This seminar is sponsored by the Latin American and Latino Studies Department of the University of California, Santa Cruz and the Mexico Institute and Division of United States Studies of the Woodrow Wilson Center. With support from the Rockefeller, Inter-American, and Ford Foundations.

Washington D.C., November 4th and 5th, 2005.

Abstract

Mexican migration to the United States has become an increasingly debated topic in the public arena, mainly as a result of its sustained high-density flow and vast distribution nationwide. While this growing population has been negatively portrayed through several political and media campaigns, the grassroots organizations forged by these migrants have received less attention. This report examines the increasing civic and political participation of Mexican migrants organized through hometown associations (HTAs), the most prevalent form of voluntary-sector activity among first-generation Mexican migrants in the United States. It focuses on two metropolitan areas, Los Angeles and Chicago, the two major cities with the highest concentrations of Mexican migrants and Mexican HTAs in the United States. The report assesses Mexican migrant participation in U.S. politics and civic life through membership in HTAs, and reveals that these organizations have been a powerful force for social support for their members in the United States, as well as an important mechanism for philanthropic work in Mexico.

Resumen

La migración de mexicanos hacia los Estados Unidos se ha convertido en un asunto de creciente debate público, debido principalmente a la alta densidad y permanencia de estos flujos de población y su vasta distribución en los Estados Unidos. Mientras que esta población en crecimiento ha sido negativamente representada a través de varias campañas políticas y de medios, las organizaciones comunitarias de base formadas por estos migrantes han recibido menos atención. Este reporte examina la creciente participación cívica y política de los migrantes mexicanos que se organizan en asociaciones de oriundos (HTAs por sus siglas en inglés), que es la forma más común de organización entre los migrantes mexicanos de primera generación en el sector de asociaciones de beneficencia en los Estados Unidos. Este reporte se enfoca en dos áreas metropolitanas, Los Angeles y Chicago, las dos ciudades más importantes que tienen las concentraciones más altas de migrantes mexicanos y asociaciones de oriundos en los Estados Unidos. El reporte evalúa la participación de los migrantes mexicanos en la vida política y cívica de los Estados Unidos a través de su membresía en asociaciones de oriundos, y revela que estas organizaciones han sido tanto una fuerza poderosa de apoyo social para sus miembros en los Estados Unidos como un mecanismo importante de trabajo filantrópico en México.

Introduction

Grassroots organizations formed by Mexican migrants in the United States have proliferated since the early 1980s, especially in the metropolitan areas of Los Angeles and Chicago. More recently, Mexican migrant grassroots organizations have become more visible in less urban rural areas such as the San Joaquin Valley in California and communities in the Midwest and the South, which are the new destinations of Mexican migration. Although migrants from different regions in Mexico have forged several kinds of organizations—including committees, fronts, and coalitions—through which to pursue their diverse goals, by the end of the 1990s hometown associations (HTAs) and home state federations (Federations) had become the most prevalent organizational type for Mexican migrant communities, as well as for migrants from Central America (mainly from El Salvador and Guatemala). In fact, we find hometown associations (which appear under various names, including civic clubs, social clubs, and committees) and their federations among Mexican groups with a long migratory tradition, such as those from the western central Mexico, as well as from new sending regions from the southern, central, and eastern states.

This trend has produced two fundamental changes in the profiles of Mexican migrant organizations overall. On the one hand, contrast to the relative informality and political isolation that characterized them in the mid-1990s,¹ these associations have now consolidated their organizational structures. Notably, the philanthropic activities they carry out for their communities of origin have changed significantly. While these projects were infrequent and haphazardly organized in the past, cross-border fund-raising and investments in home community infrastructure have grown substantially in scale and become much more formalized and systematic. This “scaling up” has increased the federations’ visibility, leading to a growing recognition of them in both the public and political spheres, which in turn has encouraged extended dialogue between them and all levels of the Mexican government: federal, state, and municipal.

On the other hand, these changes are not limited to the associations’ internal structure but also involve their external relationships. In recent years, Mexican officials from all levels of government have forged important relationships with the associations, relationships that both civil society and state actors consider to be real partnerships, at least in the case of organized migrants in Los Angeles and Chicago.

Politicians, researchers, and activists in both Mexico and the United States have noted the growing importance of these migrant groups and highlighted their significance—as bridges between the two nations. What is needed now is a better understanding of migrant organizations’ internal dynamics, including their differences and similarities with other types of migrant-led organizations (e.g. labor, faith and ethnic) and other Mexican-American organizations, in order to evaluate their effectiveness and binational impact on local political processes in their communities of origin and in their communities of settlement in the U.S.

Our main argument regarding the prevalence of HTAs across broad segments of the Mexican migrant community is that the development of these organizations cannot be limited to the social networking capabilities of home state federations. Instead, the explanation of the increased significance of these organizations lies with the ability of Mexican migrants to become political actors and, in the process, adapt traditional and ethnic forms of social networks to a new social and political context.

This report outlines the basic characteristics of Mexican migrant civic and political participation binationally, through collective action organized around hometown associations and home state federations. We analyze two main areas of Mexican migrant participation in the civic-political arena: public policy and advocacy for migrant rights.

The Universe of Hometown Associations in the U.S.

The consolidation of strong social networks between specific regions in Mexico and the United States has encouraged the emergence of *paisano*² organizations that base themselves in their locality, municipality, ethnic group, or state of origin. These associations, which represent Mexican migrants' first attempts to formalize their organizations, can trace their origins to informal networks of migrant *paisanos* based on their respective hometowns.³ From the 1970s onward, there was a proliferation of Mexican clubs and associations, with varied social and ethnic constituencies and distinct levels of organization.⁴

A key element in the emergence and development of these associations is the strengthening of ties between migrants and their towns in rural Mexico, which transform hometowns into powerful reference points for creating a collective identity among migrants from the same community or region. The "*paisano* connection" becomes an essential part of the migrants' social organization, akin to the ties that bind family and friends. Ties with the "little homeland," far from weakening or disappearing with distance, are strengthened and transformed into *paisano* networks that eventually lead to the construction of associations as a privileged way of "translocal" belonging. In this context, working together in the United States as an organized group allows migrants to promote and consolidate a feeling of shared cultural identity.⁵

A clear sign of the importance achieved by this organizational type among the different Mexican migrant communities is their steady growth during the last few years, as well as their expanding presence throughout the United States. Tables one and two illustrate this growth during the period of 1998-2003, as the total number of HTA's registered nationwide went from 441 to 623.

**Table 1. Number of Mexican HTAs in the United States
by State of Origin (1998-2003)**

States of origin in Mexico	1998	2003
Aguascalientes	3	1
Baja California	1	1
Chihuahua	6	10
Coahuila	2	2
Colima	1	4
Distrito Federal	3	6
Durango	19	20
México	6	11
Guerrero	23	51
Guanajuato	40	48
Hidalgo	4	11
Jalisco	74	100
Michoacán	19	51
Morelos	0	5
Nayarit	22	27
Nuevo León	2	4
Oaxaca	22	36
Puebla	12	34
Querétaro	1	0
San Luis Potosí	39	23
Sinaloa	12	17
Sonora	2	5
Tamaulipas	2	3
Tlaxcala	7	13
Veracruz	2	12
Yucatán	4	2
Zacatecas	113	126
Total	441	623

Source: Directorio de Oriundos en los Estados Unidos (SRE, 1999), and the Programa para las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Exterior (SRE, 2003).

**Table 2. Number of Mexican HTAs by State of Destination
in the United States (1998-2003)**

States of Destination	1998	2003
Arizona	5	9
California	240	329
Colorado	4	5
Florida	3	1
Georgia	2	2
Illinois	82	170
Indiana	-	2
Michigan	-	1
Nevada	-	1
New Mexico	-	3
New York	15	27
North Carolina	-	1
Oregon	3	4
Pennsylvania	5	11
Texas	73	48
Utah	2	2
Washington	7	7
Total	441	623

Source: Directorio de Oriundos en los Estados Unidos (SRE, 1999), and the Programa para las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Exterior (SRE, 2003).

Although this data is incomplete, since it is based only on the number of organizations registered by the Mexican Consulates' office of Community Affairs, there is a clear pattern of growth in the numbers of HTAs and their expanding presence in different parts of the United States, beyond the traditional migrant destinations. Table one highlights the expansion of this organizational form among Mexican migrants from practically all states, both from the traditional western central sending areas and the new, emergent sending regions. These figures illustrate the extent and success of HTAs as an increasingly visible organizational strategy of first generation Mexican migrants. Table two shows the general increase in the number of HTAs by state in the U.S. However, California and Illinois concentrate 80 percent of the total number of HTAs in 2003, a figure that is consistent with the increase and clustering of the Mexican migrant population. According to the 2000 Census, 70 percent of the 9.2 million Mexican migrants are concentrated in three states (California, Texas, and Illinois). Despite these clusters, their distribution throughout the U.S. points out not only their growth but also the expanded points of destination of this migrant influx. In addition, this table suggests that the recent increase in the migrant population has been paralleled by the increasing number of their organizations. As we will elaborate below, this well organized minority constituted the "critical mass" that has been pivotal in the promotion of a more defined binational civic and political participation among Mexican migrants.

Literally hundreds of these hometown associations now exist across the United States. In many cases they are informal groups known only to their members and have little contact with other groups in either Mexico or the United States. This early structure is sometimes the first step toward organizational formalization, which then allows for the integration of migrants' communities in the United States by linking them not only through kinship relations but also

through *paisano* relations based on town and region of origin in Mexico. The main activities of these groups are fund-raising events to finance philanthropic projects in their towns in Mexico. They hold dances, dinners, raffles, *charreadas* (Mexican rodeos), beauty contests, and other cultural and social activities throughout the year. These events serve two important objectives: they enable the associations to finance projects in their home communities in Mexico, and they create a sense of community by strengthening the ties among migrant *paisanos*. In this sense, the founding of these associations is an important element for the consolidation of relations among Mexican communities on both sides of the border.⁶

Hometown Associations in Los Angeles

The emergence and growth of these examples of formal organization among Mexican migrants led to the creation of an additional organizational level—the federation—that unites clubs or associations. The first was the Federation of United Mexican Clubs (*Federación de Clubes Mexicanos Unidos*) in Los Angeles, established in 1972 with eight migrant clubs from the Mexican states of Jalisco, Chihuahua, Michoacán, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas. Its main objective was to strengthen social ties between similar associations and to support the philanthropic projects of the associations in a more decisive way.

The emergence of this organizational model of hometown clubs and unifying federations supported Mexican migrant communities in the United States throughout the 1970s and 1980s as the migrant population became more numerous and more permanent, the latter largely as a result of the amnesty provisions in the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). During this period, contact with Mexican government agencies—with the federal government through consulates in the United States and with Mexican state governments—was largely sporadic and informal.

By the second half of the 1980s, however, a number of factors led to a strengthening of these contacts. For example, with the gradual addition over time of Zacatecan clubs, the Federation of United Mexican Clubs became the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California—and the model for federations based on state of origin in Mexico. At the same time, the Zacatecan state government was seeking increased contact with migrant communities in the United States, particularly with Zacatecan clubs in the Los Angeles area. These efforts evolved into a gradual formalization of the relationship between the migrant associations and the state government, which led, in turn, to the implementation of more social projects in Zacatecas. This coming together of the Zacatecas state government and Mexican migrant organizations was a seminal experience in the Mexican government's broader outreach strategy with Mexican communities in the United States.⁷

In the 1990s the growing presence of associations within Mexican migrant communities in California, along with the Mexican government's outreach campaign (led by the Program for Mexican Communities Abroad, or PCME), encouraged the further expansion of migrant associations via the organizational model of clubs and federations. Those communities that had a long migratory and organizational tradition managed to take advantage of this new circumstance to consolidate their organizational networks, especially those from Jalisco, Michoacán, Oaxaca, and Zacatecas, (see table 3).⁸

Table 3. Mexican Migrant Clubs and Federations in Los Angeles, 1998–2005

State of Origin	Number of Clubs		Federation	
	1998	2005	1998	2005
Jalisco	49	103	Yes	Yes*
Zacatecas	51	75	Yes	Yes*
Oaxaca	8	41	No	Yes*
Michoacán	11	21	No	Yes*+
Nayarit	9	16	Yes	Yes*
Guanajuato	1	13	No	Yes*
Puebla	5	12	No	Yes*
Yucatan	0	10	No	Yes*+
Colima	0	8	No	Yes
Sinaloa	11	6	Yes	Yes*
Durango	4	3	Yes	Yes*
Baja California	0	2	No	Yes*
Veracruz	0	3	No	Yes*
Guerrero	1	2	No	No
Hidalgo	0	2	No	No
Other	20	49	—	—
Total	170	420	5	13

Sources: Carol Zabin and Luis Escala Rabadán. 2002. "From Civic Association to Political Participation: Mexican Hometown Associations and Mexican Immigrant Political Empowerment in Los Angeles," *Frontera Norte* 27 (14), January-June and authors' estimates based on information from the Mexican consulate in Los Angeles and from interviews with federation leaders, 1998, 2002 and 2005. *Indicates current members of the *Consejo de Presidentes de Federaciones de Los Angeles*. + Indicates more than one federation.

It is not surprising that Jalisco is now the state with the largest numbers of HTAs in Los Angeles (103), surpassing Zacatecas (75), the long-term leader in numbers of clubs affiliated to its federation, by a rather large margin just in the last couple years, since Jalisco is the home state of the largest Mexican migrant community living in the United States. This western Mexican state has in the past been the largest single source of Mexican migration to the United States, which explains the consolidation of Jalisco's migrant communities in different areas of northern and southern California, their main destinations in the US. Networks of Jalisco *paisanos* living in the Los Angeles area led to the emergence of their associations 40 years ago.⁹ During the 1960s and 1970s, they began to form hometown sports teams and later decided to adopt the organizational model already common in other migrant communities.

The sports leagues and migrant clubs from Jalisco that had existed throughout the 1970s and 1980s received a significant boost when the PCME was established in 1990. The Mexican consulate in Los Angeles was particularly active in developing these clubs; and because of its past experiences, the community of Jalisco migrants was especially receptive. The consulate developed a very effective strategy that involved arranging meetings between municipal presidents from Jalisco and their *paisanos* in Los Angeles.¹⁰

This strategy was so successful that by 1991 there were enough Jalisciense clubs to establish a federation. The Federation of Jalisciense Clubs (*Federación de Clubes Jaliscienses*) was created that year in Los Angeles. Through its collaboration with the Mexican consulate, it was able to increase the number of member clubs to about fifty by the end of the decade. The inclusion of so many associations within a single federation over such a short period represents a remarkable achievement on the part of the migrant community from Jalisco.

The Zacatecas migratory tradition also dates from the early twentieth century. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, Zacatecans had already created the Fresno, Zacatecano, Guadalupe Victoria, and Yahualica clubs in the Los Angeles area, so their organizational structures have already been tested for decades. As with similar associations, these clubs were the starting point for the development of two central organizational aims: the creation and strengthening of ties between *paisanos* from the same community, and a philanthropic orientation with regard to their towns of origin.

Hometown Associations in Chicago

Mexican hometown clubs and federations are heirs of an older generation of Mexican organizations in the Midwest region. In 1925, the *Círculo de Obreros Católicos San José* was formed by migrants from Jalisco and Guanajuato in the city of East Chicago. Many others followed this example such as the Benito Juárez, Cuauhtémoc, José María Morelos, and Ignacio Zaragoza Societies. During that same year, the *Confederación de Sociedades Mexicanas de los Estados Unidos de América* appeared to protect the legal rights of Mexican citizens in Chicago. This confederation was an umbrella organization of about 35 Mexican mutual aid societies. All these associations functioned as self-help groups, offering support in times of economic hardships due to unemployment, illness, injury, and burial expenses. They helped new migrants to adjust to the new environment, combat discrimination, and protect their members from the cultural and economic shock created by their uprooting.¹¹ During and after the Depression years, many of these associations disappeared as a consequence of massive deportations of Mexican migrants and other organizational problems. It was not until the 1960s that the HTAs reappeared in the Chicago scene, filling the void left by the Mexican organizations of the early 1920s.

Thanks to the amnesty granted by IRCA in 1986, thousands of Mexican migrants living in the Chicago metropolitan area were able to legalize their status and obtained the opportunity to travel more easily between Mexico and the United States. They returned to their communities of origin more frequently and gradually became aware of the sheer economic disparities that many rural towns were facing due to economic restructuring. Each return trip to the U.S meant to face the shocking reality that many of the comforts of modernity that they enjoyed on a daily basis, such as running water and electricity, were lacking in many of their communities. Many migrants still had family members living in Mexico and wanted to do something to improve those conditions. This is how many clubs started to gather on a weekly basis, to share a friendly soccer match, some home-made ethnic food, and to chat about their towns' most pressing needs. Telephone was introduced in many Mexican rural towns by the mid eighties and information about collective needs spread faster. This and other technological advances, such as cheaper air transportation, fax machines, the internet, and handheld video cameras helped to coordinate infrastructure development plans between physically absent financial sponsors and local collective remittance beneficiaries.

In 1995, the Mexican consulate in Chicago recorded 35 Mexican HTAs in the metropolitan area. By that time, there were already 6000 Mexican soccer leagues across the United States supported by the Program for the Mexican Communities Abroad (PCME).¹² Today, the Mexican consulate in Chicago lists 270 HTAs in their database.¹³ These associations are organized in 17 federations and one Confederation of Mexican Federations, representing mainly the states of Chihuahua, Durango, Estado de México, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Puebla, San Luis Potosí, and Zacatecas (See table four). Mexican HTAs' numbers keep swelling and it is estimated that there could be as many as 1000 organizations registered in 46 Mexican consulates across 31 states in the U.S.¹⁴ The vast majority of the leaders and board members of these associations are naturalized citizens or legal permanent residents.

Table 4. Mexican Migrant Clubs and Federations in Chicago, 1998–2005

State of Origin	Number of Clubs		Federation	
	1998	2005	1998	2005
Guerrero	36	59	Yes	Yes*+
Zacatecas	28	33	Yes	Yes*
Jalisco	21	26	Yes	Yes*
Guanajuato	22	30	Yes	Yes*+
Michoacán	14	37	Yes	Yes*+
San Luis	6	13	Yes	Yes
Potosí				
Durango	3	20	Yes	Yes*+
Hidalgo	0	7	No	Yes*
Oaxaca	4	6	No	Yes*
Edo. de	1	4	No	Yes
México				
Chihuahua	0	4	No	Yes*
Veracruz	0	4	No	No
Puebla	1	3	No	Yes
Distrito	2	2	No	Yes
Federal				
Nuevo León	0	1	No	No
Other	2	2	—	—
Total	140	251	7	17

Sources: Selene Barceló Monroy. 2005. "La diáspora mexicana y el consulado en Chicago." *Foreign Affairs en Español* 5 (3), July-September and authors' estimates based on information from the Mexican consulate in Chicago and from interviews with federation leaders, 1998, 2002 and 2005. *Indicates current members of the Confederation of Mexican Federations in the Midwest. + Indicates more than one federation.

In the last two decades, we have witnessed a vigorous development of these migrant-led associations. In contrast, membership in many conventional US voluntary associations has simultaneously declined by roughly 25 to 50 percent since the 1970s.¹⁵ In an era where the Elks fraternal organizations, Red Cross, PTAs, Lions, and Kiwanis are facing difficulties keeping their rosters alive, the Mexican HTAs in Chicago are spreading across the Midwest with great vitality and lots of expectations for civic, political, and binational social action. In a recent survey conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center, 4,000 Mexican migrants visiting several consulates to request a *matricula consular* card were interviewed and 14% of them declared to be members of HTAs.¹⁶

If we consider the sharp decline in civic participation across all sectors representing membership-based organizations, from labor unions to social clubs and political organizations, then the rate of participation of Mexicans in HTAs is a very inspiring sign. According to a recent survey of Latinos in the Chicago Metropolitan area, it has been observed that that civic engagement in the United States is positively correlated to remittance behavior for both first and second generation Latinos, which is also related with engagement in binational social action.¹⁷

In addition, the strong ethnic identities that these organizations display through their multiple activities are a positive sign towards integration into American society. Indeed, having a strong ethnic identity has been found to be a good predictor of civic participation behavior among non-citizen Latinos.¹⁸ Likewise, some analysts have observed that "past studies have underestimated civic participation among Latinos by failing to acknowledge the role of

migration-related factors in depressing Latino's involvement in civic organizations." These analysts conclude that once migration-factors are accounted for, Latinos are more likely to participate in civic organizations than whites.¹⁹

In the last ten years, the activities of Mexican HTAs in Chicago have become more diverse. Today, these groups are increasingly addressing rural development issues in Mexico and Latin America while also participating in domestic issues in the U.S. It is increasingly common to see HTA leaders taking salient roles in different organizations in Chicago such as local unions, block clubs, neighborhood organizations, March of Dimes volunteering efforts, and PTAs. Chicago's HTAs have also made alliances with the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund to establish leadership programs for their members and with the Catholic Church to defend migrant rights. For instance, each year, the Federation of Michoacano clubs in Illinois (hereafter FEDECEMI for its acronym in Spanish) hosts the visit of an archbishop from Mexico to offer an inaugural mass for the Michoacano cultural week. The mass takes place at *El Cerrito del Tepeyac*, an outdoor shrine in the suburb of Des Plaines dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe that is a replica of Mexico City's *Cerro del Tepeyac*.²⁰ More than 1,500 members of HTAs attend this mass, in which the archbishop recognizes the work that these organizations do in favor of their communities of origin, and pledges to continue working for the Catholic Church campaign to pursue an immigration reform and a migrant's agenda for social change in the United States.

Migrants' Organizations and their Binational Public Policy Engagement: The case of Los Angeles

The increasing importance of migrant clubs and federations, as well as the implementation of new policies pertaining to migrants, has led the Mexican government, at the state and federal levels, to implement a wide array of programs to facilitate relations between communities on both sides of the border and to optimize the material and financial resources provided by the different groups. Not only have these programs been useful for channeling resources from organized migrants to their places of origin, but they have also created a predictable institutional framework through which migrant associations can interact with local, state, and federal governments in Mexico.

The result has been a sometimes comfortable, sometimes conflictive, relationship between these associations and the various levels of government. For example, for several years now the state governments of Oaxaca, Zacatecas, Michoacan and Jalisco have operated liaison offices for their migrant communities. Migrant liaison agencies coordinate with the federations and other organizations to implement the "Three for One" co-investment program, to access emergency funds (mainly to transport home the bodies of migrants who die in the United States), to coordinate Mexican governors' visits to the United States, and to organize state government-sponsored cultural events such as the Oaxacans' Guelaguetza and, for Zacatecas, Jalisco, and Michoacán, the election of beauty queens and cultural weeks.

Although the migrant communities themselves laid the foundations for their new organizational structures, Mexican government involvement, particularly in the 1990s, has been crucial in consolidating the federation of clubs as an organizational model.²¹ Almost all Mexican migrant associations have adopted this model, probably because of the advantages it offers in the interaction between government influences and the migrant associations' assertion of political independence. On the one hand, federations are better able to interact with other agencies in Mexico, particularly with municipal and state governments, as well as with Mexican consulates in areas like Los Angeles, a fact that enables them to better support the objectives and initiatives of their member clubs. On the other hand, the various Mexican government agencies find it more

productive to work with the federations, which can negotiate agreements and more easily overcome any obstacles that emerge.²²

Zacatecan Organizations and their Participation in the 3 X 1 Program for Migrants

The case of the Zacatecas Federation is very telling in this respect, since they have been able to build a solid relationship with Mexican government officials, particularly state and federal officials. These links, along with the federation's organizational history, have made it an important intermediary between its member clubs and government agencies in Mexico. The Zacatecas clubs in California have taken extensive advantage of their effective intermediation to implement infrastructure projects in their communities of origin. Through the "Two for One" program, established in 1992, and the "Three for One" program created in 1999 (under the former program, federal and state governments match every dollar the clubs provide for social infrastructure projects; the latter adds a match from municipal governments), the Zacatecas Federation has generated more investment funding and implemented more infrastructure projects than any other federation. This program, that matches migrants' investments in their home communities, grew out of the relationship between this migrant organization and the Zacatecas state government, attesting to the federation's ability to create effective intermediation between its member associations and communities of origin in Mexico.²³

In 2002 the program was officially "federalized" during a ceremony led by Mexican President Vicente Fox and with Guadalupe Gómez, with the then President of the Federation as a guest of honor and a signatory to the official document. Initially named as *Iniciativa Ciudadana 3X1*, the official name of the program became "Programa 3 X 1 para Migrantes" (3X1 Program for Migrants) after Zacatecano migrants complained that the program should have a more explicit name. The Program is housed in the office of the Secretary for Social Development (*Secretaría de Desarrollo Social-SEDESOL*), where it is called "Citizen Initiative 3 x 1." According to official figures for 2005 the program will spend a total of 66.5 million dollars (a contribution of 16.6 million dollars for each of the four sectors participating) on projects supported by migrants organized in HTAs in the United States. Initially federal officials had designated a share of 2.7 million dollars for the state of Zacatecas (a global investment of 10.9 million). Then, in a very savvy move, this Federation petitioned and obtained the approval to celebrate for the first time in the history of the program a meeting of the state's executive committee of the 3 X 1 Program for Migrants to meet in Los Angeles at "Casa del Zacatecano."

This executive committee (called *Comité de Validación* or validation committee) oversees the allocation of funds through the 3 X 1 program. It is composed of eight members, two people per sector participating in the program (two representatives each from the federal, state and municipal governments, as well as two people representing the migrants' federations). During this meeting on August 19, 2005 the Zacatecan Federation's Secretary of Projects, Efraín Jiménez, an expert on the inner working of this program, basically ran the meeting, with the government officials agreeing. They approved two proposals made by this association: first, that the Zacatecas share of the 3X1 program be increased by 7.3 million dollars to 18.3 million; and second, that the rules of the program be adjusted so that next year it can be used to fund productive projects. This level of access and the ability to shape important decision-making processes about the allocation of "real money" illustrates how far along in terms of political weight the federation has come, shaping in a very decisive way not only important policies emanating from the Mexican governments at the state and federal level, but also taking leadership in their implementation and modification.

On October 12, 2005 the HTAs from Zacatecas became the pioneers in a milestone program, the new Mexico 4X1 Program for Community Development. The Inter-American

Dialogue, First Data Corporation, and the government of Zacatecas developed a partnership with Mexican HTAs to fund some basic infrastructure and economic development projects in states with high levels of migration and poverty. According to the press release, First Data, owner of the leading international money transfer company Western Union, announced its contribution of \$1.25 million in Washington, DC and earmarked \$250,000 (20% of the total contribution) exclusively for the state of Zacatecas.²⁴

Ginger Thompson from the *New York Times* wrote in an article earlier this year that:

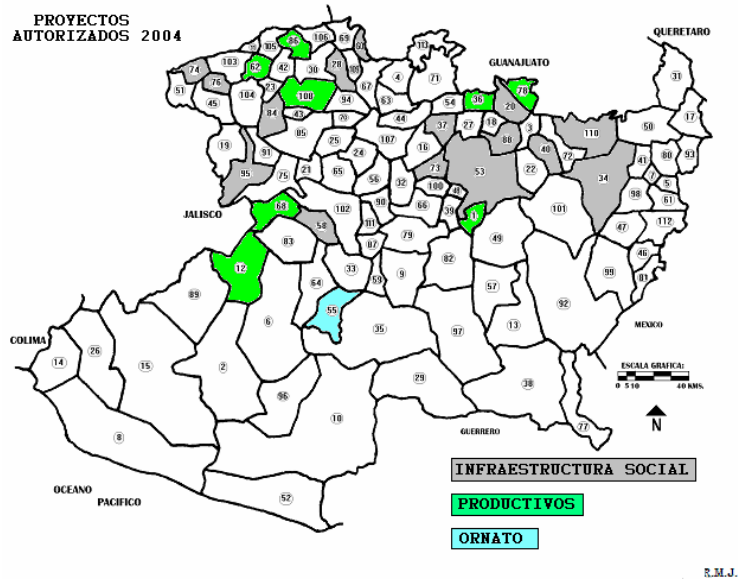
“Southern California is the capital of the Mexican diaspora, and a hotbed of Mexican politics, led by the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs... The federation meets in a drab gray building in the City Terrace section of East Los Angeles [and] nearly everybody who wants to be anybody in Zacatecan politics has walked through its doors. Presidential agreements have been signed there. Political campaigns have been started. The federation proclaims that it is apolitical. But it is precisely its close ties to the government of Zacatecas that have helped it grow out of its members' garages into one of the most successful migrant fund-raising groups in the United States.”²⁵

This quote eloquently captures the rising significance of the Zacatecan Federation as a transnational political institution. Their actions are no longer invisible and their increasing visibility also demands more clarity in terms of their plans and positions vis-à-vis the communities where they reside now. This aspect of their political agenda will be explored in the sections that follow, as we discuss the emergence of new political actors on the California political landscape.

Participation of Michoacano Hometown Associations in the 3X1 Program for Migrants

The Michoacano HTAs are very active participants in social projects to improve the conditions of their communities of origin. Between the 1970s and the last decade of the past century, Michoacano HTAs organized collective remittance projects for urbanization improvements without systematic support from their local governments. They financed wells, electrification projects, rodeo rings, church renovations, main squares, roads and sidewalks pavement, highway construction, donations of ambulances, school and medical supplies, computers, and musical instruments for school bands, to mention some examples of their trans-border accomplishments.²⁶ Besides these philanthropic activities, HTAs monitor the environmental protection of endangered zones, water resources, and the pollution of lakes and rivers affecting their agricultural land. More recently, they have been involved in the federal initiative called 3X1 Program for Migrants in which the Mexican government donates 3 pesos for every peso raised by HTAs for public infrastructure and some job-generating projects²⁷ (See map 1). In fact, Michoacano HTAs have been pioneers in their campaign to convince the federal government to fund productive projects through the 3X1 Program for Migrants. For instance, the club Francisco Villa from Chicago and some small migrant groups from California have established tomato greenhouses and poultry production projects in the municipalities of Zinapécuaro and Zamora. They are currently using a cooperative society business model, including a minimum of 50 migrant partners for each project.

Map 1: Regional distribution of authorized 3X1 projects in Michoacán FY2004



Source: Eneida Reynoso Acosta. 2004. "Aspectos relevantes del programa Iniciativa Ciudadana 3X1." Coordinación General de Atención al Migrante Michoacano. Color codes: Gray: social infrastructure; green: productive; and blue: communal spaces and recreation.

Through the collective remittance projects organized with the 3X1 Program, Michoacán municipalities were allocated an average 7% of the total share of this program for years 2002 and 2003. Michoacano migrants have been quite successful in distributing the benefits of this program outside town centers. Historically, the majority of public investments were allocated to benefit the town center, thus leaving the most remote communities with scarce resources to fend for themselves. Thanks to this initiative, Michoacano migrants have allocated 75% of the projects outside the town centers in 2002 and 2003. (See table 5). In comparison, Zacatecano migrants have only allocated 60% of the 3X1 sponsored projects outside the town centers during the same period.²⁸ The decision of HTAs to allocate funds for the most vulnerable communities has secured a more equitable distribution of benefits.

Table 5. Share of 3X1 Projects in Communities Outside *cabeceras municipales* (%)

State	2002	2003	Average 2002–2003
Jalisco	59.84%	59.78%	59.81%
Michoacán	72.31	79.69	74.50
Zacatecas	73.36	68.32	70.84

Source: Katrina Burgess. Forthcoming. "Migrant Philanthropy and Local Governance in Mexico." in *New Patterns for Mexico: Remittances, Philanthropic Giving, and Equitable Development*, edited by B. Merz. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

While some could argue that this matching funds program has contributed to let state governments off the hook in their inherent responsibilities for public investment in development, it can not be denied that this program has empowered migrant communities, helping them to build more and better social capital networks as well as to restore the shattered social fabric of many communities of origin. These funds have been able to provide the much needed spaces for many actors to promote social change in rural Mexico, such as dignified churches, main squares, public benches, community meeting rooms, and sports facilities. In some cases, civic participation can only start if there is a public and communal space to discuss the more pressing needs of rural towns. In the U.S. the matching fund programs sponsored by HTAs have also contributed to foster a sense of place and belonging to migrants who often-times feel alienated from the mainstream society. The infrastructure projects have provided a good reason to gather and reconnect with their roots many miles away from their birth places. The collectively shared experience of U.S. markers of modernity (impressive highways, clean and well supplied schools, elegant churches, street pavement and the like) have inspired them to bring these comforts to their *paisanos* in the towns and villages of Michoacán.

Michoacano HTAs have even been able to pursue projects that sometimes are outside of the municipal responsibilities, such as rodeo rings and churches, arguing that they have the power to prove the need and convince state and federal authorities to fund these projects through the 3X1 program. This case reflects one of the many ways in which Michoacano migrants are altering the traditional hierarchies of the municipal governments.

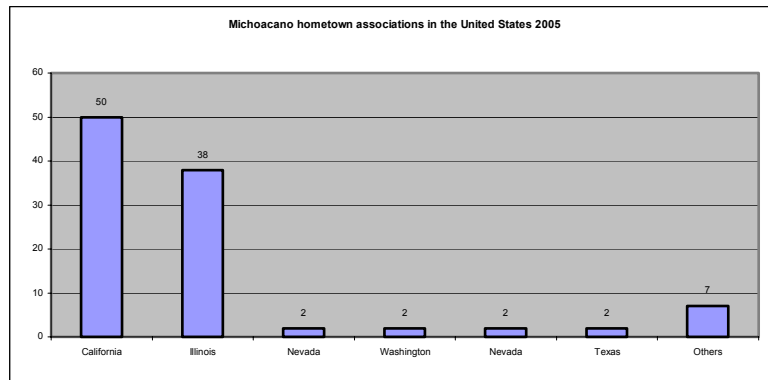
Binational Civic and Political Participation of Michoacano HTAs in Chicago

Although HTAs from Chicago are a more recent phenomenon -at least in their institutional consolidation- than their counterparts in Los Angeles, they have also been able to increase their binational activities and visibility. To offer an idea of the road traveled in the last 10 years, we will now focus on one case, the Michoacano HTAs, which are among the most successful in the Chicago metropolitan area.²⁹ The FEDECEMI is an example of leadership and civic participation on both sides of the border. Michoacán has one of the longest migration traditions to the United States.³⁰ Many Michoacano migrants have moved back and forth between Mexico and the United States in search of work and family members for more than 100 years. The Michoacano HTAs in Illinois were established around the late 1960s and the first federation was formed more than three decades later. Throughout these years, these emerging Michoacano migrant organizations were able to fight corruption and disinterested governments as a scattered force in their municipalities, demanding more attention and resources for their communities from local government officials.

In the last two decades, Michoacano remittances and civic influence flew back and forth through the close circuits between the two countries. For example, migrants used transnational media to criticize the state governments, both for authoritarian politics and for forcing them to become exiles in search of jobs. Simultaneously, many Michoacano HTAs kept doing their silent work, improving the living conditions of their fellow citizens without government intervention, until they gained some state recognition. In this case, the improvement in the communication channels between Michoacán and Illinois coincided with the political transition in Mexico, which opened the door to the first opposition government in the state of Michoacán in 2001. After more than two decades of hard work to get recognition, Michoacano migrants have been able to forge a strong network of more than 100 HTAs established in the states of California, Kansas, Florida, Nevada, Oregon, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Alaska, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington. (See figure 1) ³¹ Since the creation of the first Federation of 14 Michoacano HTAs

in Illinois in 1997, the number of HTAs affiliated to this federation has doubled and now there are two federations in California and two in Illinois.

Figure 1



Source: Elaborated with database from Eneida Reynoso Acosta. 2005. “Relación de clubes de michoacanos en los EUA”, COGAMIM, Morelia.

In 2004, during the state congressional mid-term elections, several current and former migrant candidates ran for seats in the state legislature. The PRD agreed to include Jesús Martínez Saldaña -a former professor at the California State University at Fresno- and Reveriano Orozco, -a migrant representative from Nevada-, in its proportional representation list. Since August of 2004, Mr. Martínez Saldaña toured the United States as a formal candidate, trying to raise awareness of the issue of absentee ballots and calling for direct political representation in federal and state elections among Michoacano migrants living in the United States. Mr. Martínez Saldaña won a seat in congress, with Mr. Orozco as his substitute, and now serves on the migrant affairs commission in the legislature. He is not a lonely migrant in the State Congress, however. Among his colleagues, there are at least seven “former migrant” legislators who also obtained seats after returning to Michoacán to run their campaigns for different state districts.³²

Between 2001 and 2004, the government of the state of Michoacán made increasing efforts to extend its presence beyond the geographical borders in several domains, including health, education, and job training; especially in California and Illinois. Several government agencies are offering direct services for the Michoacano Diaspora, such as job training, government-sponsored migrant medical insurance³³, and distant-learning high school education. Increasingly, more mayors are interested in visiting their transnational communities in the United States to invite them to cooperate in some infrastructure projects.

In 2004, in order to increase the presence of Michoacanos in the Midwest, the state government made a donation to the Federation of Illinois to buy a building for the Michoacanos to have a headquarters. The house is located in Pilsen –one of the most important historical Mexican neighborhoods in the city of Chicago- and it offers a space to hometown clubs and other type of Michoacano organizations interested in transnational activities such as the Michoacano Chamber of Commerce or the Association of Michoacano Artists. The building has a permanent staff member representing the General Coordinating Office for Michoacano Migrant Attention (hereafter COGAMIM for its acronym in Spanish) and offers different services to the community in Chicago.

During the last decade, many staff members of governmental agencies from Michoacán have visited Michoacano HTAs in the United States to collaborate on several projects for

hometown development, tourism, and regional economic investment. Information flows between Michoacán and Illinois have improved, with better coverage from local newspapers. In the capital city of Morelia, at least three leading newspapers publish daily special sections on migrant affairs. For example, *La Voz de Michoacán* has *Al Otro Lado*, *La Voz de los Migrantes* (On the Other Side, The Voice of the Migrants). In Chicago, many Spanish language newspapers regularly report on the meetings of HTAs with government officials. The Michoacanos also have *La Diligencia Michoacana*, a weekly newspaper inaugurated in 1999 that is distributed in Michoacán as well as in Minnesota, California, Illinois, Nevada, Texas, and Florida.

At the micro-level, the increasing involvement of HTAs in development projects for their communities has resulted in greater local awareness of migrant issues. For example, some municipalities have opened special migrant outreach offices to avoid the long trips of their constituents to the capital city of Morelia in search of more information at the COGAMIM. Likewise, some new mayors have included a special chapter on migration and development in their three-year development plans. Increasingly, Michoacano citizens are reaching out to their municipal presidents in search of name and addresses of HTAs, to appeal for help to address pressing needs. School teachers, agrarian leaders, students, and homemakers are asking the municipal authorities to share the contact information of HTA leaders in hopes of interesting them in a project to benefit their towns.

The level of rapprochement between Michoacano federations and their home state is steadily growing but this closeness sometimes puts the autonomy of the grassroots organizations at risk. The HTAs have mostly relied on the executive branch of the Michoacán government as their most important source of external funding. As a result, their possibilities for forging alliances with non-governmental associations that are independent from the government are compromised. However, at the municipal level, some HTAs have followed independent paths. In some cases, they have successfully mobilized their economic leverage to defend infrastructure projects for their *paisanos* against corrupt or non-cooperative authorities. Through their privileged relations with higher levels of government, they have been able to effectively inform the appropriate authorities about problems. Thus, the information flows from Michoacán to the U.S. and back to Morelia are shaping new forms of transnational accountability. In fact, some community development project representatives living in Michoacán believe that hometown leaders living in the United States have more direct access to government circles because the migrants are the ones who send the dollars for the projects.

The Formation of the Council of Presidents of Mexican Federations in Los Angeles

As discussed in previous sections, the consolidation of migrant-led federations shows how Mexican migrants have responded creatively to the dilemma of participating in the decisions that affect their communities of origin by building effective grassroots organizations that make political participation possible in Mexico even when they are not physically present. The other novel aspect of hometown Mexican migrant federations is their increasing participation in the US civic and political arena, in the communities where they live. Indeed, these migrant organizations have leveraged their power as counterparts not only of political actors in Mexico, but increasingly here in the United States, thereby reinforcing their members' sense of identity and empowerment.

The creation in July 2002 of the Council of Presidents of Mexican Federations of Los Angeles (which includes the heads of twelve of the thirteen Mexican federations in the region) has strengthened the migrant associations' public voice.³⁴ In January 2004 the Council of Presidents of Mexican Federations participated in two key political events. First, responding to an invitation from the Bush administration, the council sent a member to the White House to attend the January 7 announcement of a new immigration reform initiative. Second, on January 20, at

the offices of the Mexican consulate in Los Angeles, the council hosted a delegation of five Mexican governors (representing the Mexican Conference of Governors) who came to discuss the right to vote of Mexicans living abroad and President Bush's immigration proposal and its implications for the Mexican migrant community.

The Council of Presidents of Mexican Federations has also collaborated closely with unions and immigration advocates to lobby for drivers' licenses for undocumented workers. In addition, it sent six participants on the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride to Washington, DC which took place from September 20 to October 4, 2003. In 2004, the Zacatecas Federation partnered with the Mexican American Legal and Educational Fund (MALDEF) to serve as plaintiff in some Mexican migrant labor right cases. More recently the Sacramento Bee headline read "A drive for clout: Community groups representing Mexican immigrants form a confederation to influence public policy in California."³⁵ This article reported the encounter between the Council of Presidents of Mexican Federations and Ann Marie Tallman, national president and general counsel for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF). According to this article Tallman proposed "a partnership, offering the *Consejo* presidents use of office space at the legal defense and education fund's Los Angeles headquarters, business leadership classes and media training. She pledged to work with the hometown groups on legal and policy issues affecting immigrant communities." The punchline of the article was that "the presidents of Mexican hometown associations [. . .] are a powerful political and economic force in Mexico and a potentially potent social movement in California." In May of 2005, MALDEF launched the MALDEF-Hometown Association Leadership Program ("LIDER"), aimed at offering some 180 association officers a series of workshops on issues such as how to build teams and coalitions, how to launch a non-profit organization, and best practices for accessing the mass media.³⁶

The Council of Presidents of Mexican Federations in Los Angeles is very explicit about playing an active role in regional and state politics and is clearly attempting to influence public policy on immigration, education and health care--issues that are of primary importance to their constituency. They have lobbied state official about drivers' licenses for undocumented migrants and have appeared before the Los Angeles County Board of supervisors to defending the use of the *Matricula Consular*, issued by the Mexican consulate, as a legal ID for local law enforcement agencies. On August 19, 2005 the California Latino Legislative Caucus, the Senate Select Committee on California-Mexico Cooperation and the Assembly Select Committee on California Latin American Affairs, held a joint informational hearing in Los Angeles entitled, "The Emergence of Immigrant Hometown Associations in California."³⁷ This invitation read in part:

"As legislators across the state consider key factors that influence California, an emergent organized immigrant population and the impact they have on the State has largely been unexplored. Over the last decade, the emergence of hometown associations has reshaped the way that Latinos deal with organized immigrant communities. The joint informational hearing will serve as an avenue to assess and explore the present and future impact that hometown associations have in the areas of policy formulation, civic participation and bi-national collaboration, among others."

The reasons for holding the hearing reflected the increasing visibility of Mexican hometown association in California to mainstream Latino political leaders. During the hearing, the message from the presidents of Mexican Federations in Los Angeles was that, as leaders of a vast network of grassroots organizations, they can provide a crucial connection between the Latino political leadership and a dynamic Mexican migrant community in California.

This new political activism stands in sharp contrast to the general political disengagement of hometown associations in the mid-1990s, when anti-immigrant Proposition 187 was being

debated in California. These activities show how the consolidation of Mexican migrant organizations has permitted the emergence of a dense transnational communications network linking migrants with their communities and with Mexico's municipal, state, and federal governments. This expanding communications network has now come to incorporate political and social actors in the United States as well.

Despite their achievements, these associations now face a broad array of challenges. The first is the increasing competition between migrant-led organizations that claim to represent the Mexican migrant community. The Council of Presidents of Mexican Federations of Los Angeles has emerged as a very strong voice in this debate, but it is not the only one.³⁸ In the Fall of 2003, the Mexican government created the Advisory Council to the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (a governmental entity within the Foreign Ministry). This council includes one hundred Mexican migrants from different walks of life—from activists to lawyers and business owners.³⁹ Officially, the Mexican federal government created this council to serve as the main conduit for its relations with Mexican migrants in the United States. Clearly, the emergence and institutionalization of migrant-led organizations has allowed for the creation and strengthening of ties that link migrant communities in the United States to their home communities in Mexico and to the different levels of the Mexican government. We expect that this trend will not only continue but will expand dramatically in the near future.

The Formation of the Confederation of Mexican Federations in the Midwest

The majority of the HTAs and federations in Chicago have made great inroads in capacity building, both extending their network within and outside their traditional webs of relations. In the year 2000, several migrant-led Mexican organizations decided to form the Coalition of Mexican Migrant Organizations in the Midwest (COMMO for its acronym in Spanish), an umbrella organization including local branches of Mexican political parties, hometown federations, and civic associations. Three years later, the federations created an specific structure to organize the increasing number of HTAs and established the Confederation of Mexican Federations in the Midwest (CONFEMEX for its acronym in Spanish), an umbrella organization representing 9 federations of Mexican migrants. In the Chicago metropolitan area, 179 HTAs belong to this confederation. The main difference with the Council of Presidents of Mexican Federations in Los Angeles is its organizational structure. The Board of Directors of CONFEMEX is composed from elected hometown club representatives from within the federations, not necessarily the presidents. CONFEMEX holds elections every two years and on April 2005 they elected a woman, Marcia Soto, a former President of Durango's federation to be the President of CONFEMEX. However, not all Chicago federations presidents have positions on the Board of Directors.

In 2004, CONFEMEX became one of the founding members of NALACC, a new network of 90 Latin American and Caribbean migrant-led organizations working to improve the quality of life in their communities, both in the United States and in countries of origin⁴⁰. Through this alliance, CONFEMEX has actively participated in domestic issues such as immigration reform, drivers' licenses bill SB67⁴¹, consular identification card bill SB 1623⁴², education reform, day laborers' rights, civil rights, and economic development in Latin America. In fact, thanks to the overwhelming civic participation of many organized migrant groups, non-profit associations, and community based organizations, the State of Illinois approved the passage of a bi-partisan bill that allowed undocumented youth to in-state tuition rates at universities in Illinois and is now working on the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (D.R.E.A.M) and Students Adjustment Acts that would provide undocumented students a path to legalizing their status to become eligible for financial aid in order to attend the colleges and universities of their choice.

In only two and half years of existence, CONFEMEX has been able to forge alliances with other organizations advocating for migrant labor rights. For example, in 2003, CONFEMEX joined the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride Coalition as a formal endorser and sent some representatives to participate (see <http://www.iwfr.org>).⁴³ Many HTA leaders have also received valuable training in capacity building through special programs offered by the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights and *Enlaces America*. The Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights recently granted them funds to participate in The New Americans Initiative, a three year outreach campaign sponsored by the Illinois government aimed at helping 348,000 legal permanent residents currently eligible to become citizens. CONFEMEX, through their network of 179 HTAs, have been mobilizing their constituents to advertise citizenship literacy classes to help many residents to overcome barriers and obstacles to obtain citizenship.⁴⁴

This year, some CONFEMEX members attended the annual conference of the Rainbow/Push Coalition and Citizenship Education Fund to discuss the ways in which immigration laws affect employment, citizenship, and overall human rights. After the hurricane Katrina displaced thousands of undocumented migrants, NALACC immediately mobilized its network to demand a temporary protected status for all undocumented victims of the hurricane (see www.nalacc.org). In fact, CONFEMEX was among the first organizations advising the Mexican Secretary of Social Development regarding fundraising strategies to help Mexican victims of Katrina through activities organized in Chicago by Mexican HTAs. This year, one representative of CONFEMEX was invited by a non governmental organization working on social development to visit El Salvador for advising local groups on strategies to improve the collective remittance infrastructure projects financed by Salvadoran migrants in the U.S. In addition, Marcia Soto, the president of CONFEMEX, was invited to represent this organization at the II Iberoamerican Summit for State Decentralization and Local Development in San Salvador. With these new coalitions among HTAs, several federations have built more legitimacy and credibility among local elected officials in Illinois. Local politicians attend the events and fundraisings organized by Mexican HTAs in Chicago more frequently now.

CONFEMEX has increasing presence in metropolitan Chicago and other parts of the country. The spread of news about this organization through ethnic media and other government sponsored news broadcasts has created a trickle down effect. Increasingly, more migrants are organizing from other states, following this model of town by town and state by state associations. Chicago-based federations are also recruiting HTAs from throughout the Midwest, and HTAs working in Ohio, Minnesota, Indiana, and Michigan have affiliated with them.

Rights, Active Membership, and Citizenship among Mexican HTAs

While hometown development activities of Mexican HTAs have gained considerable visibility in recent years, the fact is that there has been much less attention paid to their civic and political engagement in the US communities where they live. In this section we will examine the shifts in their organizational strategies, which have responded to changes in the regions where they have settled.

Traditionally, these migrant groups focused on their philanthropic and social infrastructure works they promoted in their hometowns and cities of origin in Mexico, as well as on the consolidation of their migrant communities in the U.S. Likewise, the eventual implementation of several cooperation programs with the Mexican government in the following years, with the aim of enabling a relationship (social, cultural, but mostly economic) between communities on both sides of the border, led to the strengthening of ties between these groups, their communities of origin and Mexico's different government levels. In contrast, their links

with the political and community realms in the U.S. were very limited, and had little contact even with Latino representatives and organizations in the locations where they were active.⁴⁵

However, during the 1990s we can observe several shifts within these associations regarding their scope of action. During those years these groups became increasingly engaged in civic and political issues in general, including the issue of rights and citizenship in the US. While this shift has to be examined in light of their regions of origin as well as of their inner dynamics, the fact is that a pivotal component to explain these changes can be found where Mexican migrant communities live.

In the context of the Mexico – U.S. migration, the Mexican diaspora grew significantly during the 1990s. While there had been a steady increase in Mexican migration ever since the 1970s, some estimates point out that during the decade of the 1990s, this population more than doubled, from 4.3 million in the year 1990 to 9.2 in 2000 (See table 6). And according to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, this number had grown to 9.9 million Mexican born in the United States in 2002, the largest migrant community in the US.⁴⁶

Table 6:

States of Residence of the Mexican Migrant Population, 2000

State	Number	Percentage
California	3,928,701	42.8
Texas	1,879,369	20.5
Illinois	617,828	6.7
Arizona	436,022	4.7
Florida	189,119	2.1
Georgia	190,621	2.1
Colorado	181,508	2.0
North Carolina	172,065	1.9
New York	161,189	1.8
Nevada	153,946	1.7
Washington	148,115	1.6
New Mexico	107,272	1.2
Oregon	113,083	1.2
Other States	901,348	9.7
Total	9,180,186	100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2001

In addition to this remarkable growth, the Mexican migrant population in the U.S. reveals other salient socio-demographic and socio-economic features as well. According to the U.S. Census Bureau analysis, and by comparing it with migrants from other regions of origin in the world (Europe; Asia; Africa; North, Central, and South America; and others), Mexican migrants are the youngest (32.6 years on average), with the shortest number of years of residence in the U.S. (12.8 years), and with the largest household members on average (4.2 members). In addition, they have the lowest educational levels (only 33.8 percent of those who are 25 years or older finished high school or the equivalent degree), the highest poverty level (25.8 percent of total population), and the lowest income per household on average (27,345 dollars per year).⁴⁷

Finally, the legal status of this population adds to this disadvantaged profile. Mexican migrants have the lowest rate of naturalization (20.3%). But the most revealing sign is their legal status. According to some estimates, there were 10.3 million undocumented migrants in the U.S., from which 5.9 million (57 percent) were from Mexican origin. In addition, slightly more than half of this population is clustered in the states of California (24 percent), Texas (14 percent), Florida (9 percent), and New York (7 percent).⁴⁸ The resulting profile indicates a remarkable growth of the Mexican migrant population during the last decade of the twentieth century, but with major challenge in terms of their structural and cultural vulnerability and lack of rights.⁴⁹

The most revealing case of this vulnerability among Mexican migrants in the U.S. occurred in California during those years. Their high concentration in this state, in addition to the

1990-1991 economic recession, the negative impact of the military budget reductions, and electoral agendas led to the rise of a marked anti-immigrant climate, which was manifested through an orthodox sense of citizenship. The prevailing notion of citizenship was restricted to those who had full access to rights as members of the political community, in contrast with those who did not. A considerable sector of California's political discourse of those years recurrently opposed "citizens" and "aliens", through which the latter were equated with "illegal aliens," especially if they came from Latin America. As a result, this dichotomy revealed the existence of two different types of membership to the American society, and with it two communities in terms of access to rights.⁵⁰

The most palpable case in point of this anti-immigrant climate in California was Proposition 187, submitted to popular vote on November 1994, and whose main goal was the prohibition of public services –namely education and health– to undocumented migrants. The discriminatory character of this initiative has been the subject of several studies.⁵¹ But the most important aspect for the argument we are laying out is that this initiative had a decisive impact in terms of sparking active participation among Mexican HTAs, as well as encouraging more collaboration between them and the Mexican-American organizations that led the campaign against it.

For the first time, these migrant groups decided to participate in a clearly political event that involved the open defense of the migrants' rights in the U.S. This involvement adopted several forms: through the direct donation of funds to the campaign against this proposition; through their participation in public rallies against it; or by promoting their memberships to vote against this initiative. But equally noteworthy was their willingness to participate in California's public sphere. In contrast with their traditional low profile, Mexican HTAs in Southern California decided to go public with their opposition to Proposition 187. In an unprecedented move, these associations decided to publish, on September 1993, a paid open letter to then Governor Peter Wilson in *La Opinión*, the oldest and most influential Spanish language newspaper in the U.S.

This action was revealing for several reasons. First, it is worth emphasizing the chosen format used by these groups, an "open letter" addressed to then Governor Wilson in California, which exhibits a clear willingness to place their criticism in the public sphere. Second, it is also worth pointing out the number of signing associations from thirteen states of origin in Mexico, as well as other Mexican migrant groups,. Third, the tone adopted by these groups to address the highest political authorities in California is also unparalleled. In contrast with the reverence these groups traditionally used to address political authorities in general, in this letter they did not hesitate to censure "the racist attitude", "ignorance," and "xenophobic prejudices" of Governor Wilson, as well as Senators Feinstein and Boxer, who also supported Proposition 187. Finally, the closing of this document is notable as well, by exhorting "all our brothers and sisters from Mexico and Latin America and to all the people *to defend the human rights of the weakest sector of this society: the undocumented migrants* (emphasis added)." In this portrayal, Proposition 187 and its supporters are depicted as a sign of "those old nationalist and ethnic traumas that do little in favor of the integration of our America," while undocumented migrants are presented as vulnerable victims of the former. But most importantly, Mexican HTAs decided to display their open support for the latter, through the defense of their human rights.

What had happened? And how can we explain this shift in the scope of Mexican HTAs? As we pointed out above, these groups traditionally focused mostly on their philanthropic and social infrastructure works in their hometowns and states of origin in Mexico, and had kept a low profile in their places of destination. And while they had forged some ties with several political and community organizations in California, these links were limited and mostly formal. In addition, other groups with which they might have cultural affinities, like the Mexican-American organizations, had not reached out to them. Nevertheless, despite the fact that Proposition 187 was supported by the California electorate on November 1994, and eventually was declared unconstitutional on 1997, it was the watershed event that triggered the creation of more durable

relationships not only among Mexican migrant groups, but also between them and other political and community organizations and representatives.

While this shift in the scope of action did not occurred homogeneously among all Mexican HTAs, and does not convey either a linear and simplistic path (from “philanthropy” in the places of origin towards “civic-mindedness” in the communities of settlement, we want to highlight the importance of this transformation in the organizational scope of these migrant groups, by showing their concern and willingness to participate in debates over issues regarding rights, citizenship, and membership in the U.S. Indeed, the leaders of some of these groups depict this transformation through the adoption of a new language, which underscores the issue of rights and civic participation in the U.S.:

Proposition 187 opened our eyes to the necessity of getting involved in issues that affect the community here. At least in my opinion, we need to be even more united here in political questions, we need to be involved, because our existence depends on it.

I have my life here, my work is here, my house is here, my children were born here, and they feel like Americans. So we have to worry about what’s affecting us here and about those of us who are here.

We have to confront politics here. The fact that we’re from Mexico has nothing to do with it; I still have the right to defend my community. We have the right to be heard and to be respected, and not treated like a door mat.⁵²

This transformation (which in these excerpts is illustrated by a noticeable contrast between “here” and “there”) became more visible during the first years of the twenty first century, when several Mexican HTAs and their federations in California kept participating in initiatives focused on migrants’ rights. Gradually, these groups displayed an increasing concern for the issue of membership in their new societies, which they identified as a matter of equal rights. As a result, this redefinition of their collective identity led to an expanded range of their actions as groups. For example, during these years we may observe the increasing participation of Mexican HTAs in several initiatives based on the defense of migrants’ rights, like the different actions in favor of an amnesty (the “Amnesty Campaign”), or their participation in different rallies and campaigns in favor of initiatives before the California House of Representatives, like the AB 60 initiative (supporting to grant drivers’ licenses to undocumented migrants), or the AB 40 initiative (supporting to ease College access to undocumented migrant students).

The gradual weaving of ties with other groups –migrant associations, political representatives, community organizations, NGOs, scholars, and foundations– thus suggests an important shift in the organizational scope of Mexican HTAs. Traditionally, these Mexican migrant clubs had not forged links, even with those organizations with which they may have cultural affinities, like the Latino civil rights organizations (for example, the National Council of La Raza –NCLR–, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund –MALDEF–, or the League of United Latin American Citizens –LULAC–, to mention some of the best known). By the same token, these Mexican-American organizations did not focus on Mexican HTAs, in light of their low profile. However, the ongoing relationship has exposed these groups to key issues like human rights and migrant rights in the U.S., thus explaining their gradual incorporation in their agendas. For example, a representative of one of these federations pointed out the following in his yearly message:

I was appointed representative [of the Zacatecan Federation in Southern California] before an organization that fights for the rights of all migrants in the United States, and it has made me proud to be able to support the poor and working people, the underprivileged that struggle every day to survive in this great nation (...) *We fully*

believe in human rights, the times of unfairness have been left behind. We're in the times of justice. That's the reason why we'll keep fighting wherever we are, so that *all human migrants, documented and undocumented*, receive the same fair and decent treatment in our daily lives, and that our children get education without distinction of race or legal status.⁵³

Finally, it is also worth pointing out that in addition to the changing context where Mexican migrants live, there have been several important changes within these groups. Probably the most significant factor has been the rise of new leadership, which has been attuned to the US context and has promoted more active engagement.⁵⁴

Conclusions

The formation of migrant-led federations shows how Mexican migrants, far from being passive victims of the discriminatory and exploitative conditions they face in the United States, have responded creatively, building grassroots organizations that make collective action possible in their communities of origin and in the communities they have established along their migratory circuit in the United States. These HTAs and federations demonstrate Mexican migrants' capacity to build transnational organizations and social spaces over the long term; their efforts even predate the Mexican government's various attempts to incorporate Mexicans abroad. Indeed, these migrant organizations, based on their states of origin, have leveraged their power as counterparts of political authorities in Mexico and the United States, thereby reinforcing their members' sense of identity and empowerment.

By comparing the organizational experiences of migrants in different parts of the United States we can further our understanding of how ethnicity shapes the migratory experience and incorporation patterns of Mexican migrants. It also sheds light on the intensification of ethnicity in the form of "a topophilic *paisano* identity"⁵⁵ among these migrants, which leads to the counterintuitive proposition that long-term transnational migration is increasing, not reducing, self-identification by ethnicity. This new identity is an important force in the formation of hometown associations and federations among Mexican migrants.

While it is true that the HTAs based on their hometowns and regions of origin are not the only kind of association among Mexican migrants in the U.S., they have achieved a growing centrality within their communities on both sides of the border. Indeed, during recent years we have witnessed an increasing interest among both political leaders and scholars in these groups. On the one hand, these associations provide a privileged standpoint through which it is possible to examine in detail the inner organizational dynamics of Mexican migrant communities in the U.S. On the other hand, most of this interest focuses on the traditional role of these groups in the promotion of local and regional development in their places of origin through their collective remittances. However, these groups have expanded their scope of action in recent years, aiming to strengthen their civic and political participation on both sides of the border.

An important transformation in the organizational scope of these groups has been the adoption of new agendas, like their involvement in the defense of migrants' rights in the U.S. As we pointed out, this shift is related with important changes in their states and cities of destination. The remarkable growth of Mexican migration during the 1990s, its concentration in specific states, as well as the demographic, socio-economic, and legal profile of this population, reveal not only its increasing density but also a clear vulnerability. In turn, this has led to the rise of an anti-immigrant sentiment in some of these states, targeting the Mexican undocumented migrants. Different cities have responded in distinct ways towards the undocumented migrant plight. Some local and state governments have steadily increased their anti-immigrant climate, as in the case of California, while others have adopted a more nuanced response as the case of Chicago illustrates.

This difference in public policies towards non-citizens can partially explain the difference in the consolidation and scope of activities of HTAs in Los Angeles and Chicago.

In light of this new context, the increasing civic and political participation among Mexican HTAs is revealing in several ways. The groups' incorporation of concepts like human rights, migrants' rights, membership, and citizenship onto their agendas, indicates that they have gradually increased and consolidated their ties with other groups based on shared goals, which reveals in turn an expansion of their networks and their organizational sphere. Nevertheless, despite the strengthening of these links, we do not want to suggest that this convergence suggest an inexorable path towards the traditional assimilationist approach. Rather, this participation suggests the possible confluence of different groups, organizations, and identities in the strengthening of their new nation's civil and political life. But despite their possible cultural resemblances and differences, with other groups and communities, HTAs can sustain and reinforce their own identities. The following example illustrates this point. By the end of 2002, in his yearly welcome message, the President of the Zacatecan Federation in Southern California, Mr. Guadalupe Gómez, pointed out the importance of Mexican HTAs "to make *our* communities a better place to live on *both* sides of the border." He underscored the fact that he had been invited to the White House on October of that year to "an event with *our* President of the United States," where he also had the chance to meet "with *our* beloved Congresswomen," but by the same token, he also "thank *our* Government of Mexico," and closed this message by saying "We hope that your participation will help you in your personal lives and *feel proud to be from Zacatecas*, as I am. God Bless You, *God Bless America*."⁵⁶

In fact, the display of strong regional identities must be understood as prior to national identities because the manifestation of local patriotism existed well before the creation of the modern nation-state. In the near future, it is possible that these contemporary types of transnational ties may work against melting into the dominant Protestant Anglo-Saxon culture, thus leading to different forms of integration. Mexican born migrants have demonstrated great capacity to participate in both communities of origin and residence, while taking care of their U.S. born children. In fact, the second generation is not showing strong signs of following the steps of their parents regarding transnational connections, at least not with the same intensity.⁵⁷ This suggests that full integration into U.S. society is happening, though with different paths than those followed by the linear assimilation approach. If we are to believe that migrant integration no longer means assimilating to mainstream culture, then we have grounds to expect that first and second generation of Mexican migrants will integrate into more pluralistic and multicultural social spaces, as the previous example illustrates.

In addition, the link between HTAs and migrants' rights can be seen as an important transformation of the *nature* of these groups vis-à-vis the Mexican migrant community as a whole. As we have pointed out, the activities of these groups in the promotion of local development in their regions of origin in Mexico through their sending of collective remittances are based upon their concern for their own communities. Nevertheless, the increasing participation of these groups in the broader issues, such as defense of migrants' rights, suggests a departure from their traditional *translocal* character.

Finally, we are aware that the relationship between Mexican HTAs and civic and political participation in the U.S. is a process in its initial stages, and it is far from being homogeneous and unidirectional among all Mexican migrants. Nevertheless, we believe that this increasing participation is an expanded sign of what has been called the "claims of substantive membership" (Goldring, 2002: 64) among Mexican migrant communities both in Mexico and in the U.S. In this regard, the development of new ways and strategies of participation by the Mexican migrant clubs suggest not only their willingness to intervene both "here" and "there", but most of all, the consolidation of what has been called a real "migrant civil society" between Mexico and the United States.

Appendices

Appendix 1



**THE CALIFORNIA LATINO LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS,
THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON CALIFORNIA-MEXICO COOPERATION &
THE ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON CALIFORNIA LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS**

cordially invite you to a joint informational hearing on:

**“The Emergence of Immigrant Hometown
Associations as a Bi-National Force of
Political and Economic Development”**

The emergence of Hometown Associations over the last decade has reshaped the way Latino organizations interact with organized immigrant communities in the United States. The joint informational hearing will examine how Hometown Associations can serve as agents of change in the state of California, playing a driving force in various arenas such as the formulation of policy, civic participation, economic development and bi-national collaboration.

Friday, August 19, 2005

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Metropolitan Water District Headquarters
Boardroom**

**700 N. Alameda Street
Los Angeles, California 90015**
(Located off the US 101, next to Union Station)

For further information or to RSVP, please contact Irene Muro at (562) 929-6060.

Appendix 2

Members of the Council of Presidents of HTA Federations of Los Angeles (2005)

- (1) Federación de Clubes de Baja California
Mr. Sebastian Domínguez, President
- (2) Federación de Clubes de Puebla
Roberto Bravo, President
- (3) Federación de Clubes de Durango
Samuel Magaña, President
- (4) Federación de Clubes de Guanajuato
Sergio Aguirre, President
- (5) Federación de Clubes Jaliscienses (FCJ)
Salvador García, President
- (6) Federación Californiana de Michoacanos “Lazaro Cardenas del Rio”
(FECADEMI)
Francisco Moreno, President
- (7) Federación de Nayaritas, Nacional e Internacional en USA
Mario Arcadia, President
- (8) Federación Oaxaqueña de Comunidades y Organizaciones Indígenas en California
(FOCOICA)
Fernando López, President
- (9) Federación de Clubes de Veracruz
Luis García, President
- (10) Fraternidad de Clubes Sinaloenses
Manuel Gutiérrez, President
- (11) Federación de Clubes Yucatecos, USA.
Sara Mijares, President
- (12) Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California (FCZSC)
Felipe Cabrales, President

Appendix 3

Members of the Confederation of Mexican Federations in the Midwest (2005)

President: Marcia Soto

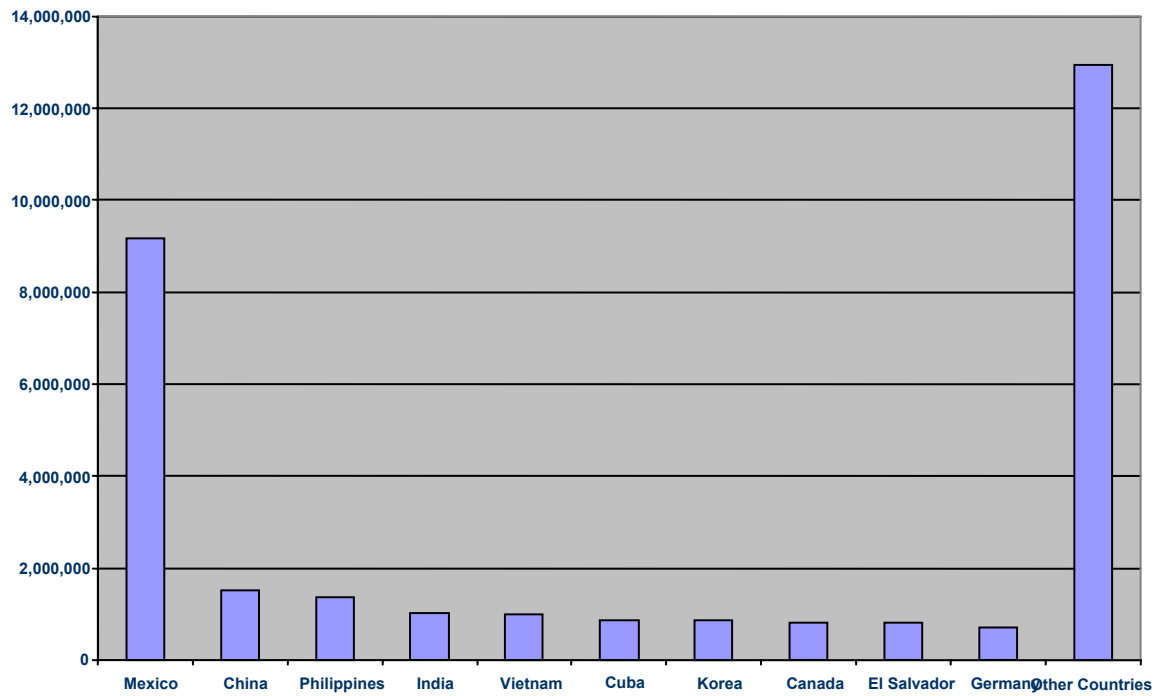
- (1) Federación de Chihuahuenses
President*: Víctor Soria
Affiliated HTAs : 12
- (2) Durango Unido en Chicago Federación de Duranguenses
President*: Maricela Herrera
Affiliated HTAs : 10
- (3) Casa Guanajuato en Chicago
President*: Arcadio Delgado
Affiliated HTAs : 19
- (4) Federación de Clubes Guerrerenses en Illinois
President*: Gregorio Salgado
Affiliated HTAs : 28
- (5) Federación de Clubes Jaliscienses en Illinois (FEDEJAL)
President*: Antonio Zubieta
Affiliated HTAs : 23
- (6) Federación de Hidalguenses
President*: Julio César Cortés
Affiliated HTAs : 5
- (7) Federación de Clubes Michoacanos en Illinois (FEDECFMI)
President*: José Luis Gutiérrez
Affiliated HTAs : 34
- (8) Federación de Oaxaca
President*: Gilberto González
Affiliated HTAs : 3
- (9) Federación de Clubes Unidos Zacatecanos de Illinois (FECUZI)
President*: Jaime Rodríguez
Affiliated HTAs : 45

Total HTAs affiliated to CONFEMEX : 179

*Presidents are only listed as representing their federations. Not all of them belong to the Board of Directors of CONFEMEX

Appendix 4 :

Main Countries of Origin of the Migrant Population in the United States, 2000



Appendix 5:

States of Residence of the Mexican Migrant Population, 2000

State	Number	Percentage
California	3,928,701	42.8
Texas	1,879,369	20.5
Illinois	617,828	6.7
Arizona	436,022	4.7
Florida	189,119	2.1
Georgia	190,621	2.1
Colorado	181,508	2.0
North Carolina	172,065	1.9
New York	161,189	1.8
Nevada	153,946	1.7
Washington	148,115	1.6
New Mexico	107,272	1.2
Oregon	113,083	1.2
Other States	901,348	9.7
Total	9,180,186	100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2001

Appendix 6:

Socio-Economic Status of the Immigrant Population in the U.S. by Region of Origin, 2000

	Poverty Levels (%)	Average Household Income in 1999 (in dollars)*
Total	16.8	\$ 36,048
Europe	9.3	\$ 41,733
Asia	12.8	\$ 51,363
Africa	13.2	\$ 36,371
Latin America +	21.9	\$ 29,388
Mexico	25.8	\$ 27,345
Others	17.8	\$ 29,855
South America	11.5	\$ 40,480
North America ++	7.4	\$ 46,799

Source: Schmidley - U.S. Census Bureau, 2001.

*Based on the region of origin of the household head

+ Includes the Caribbean and Central America

++ Excludes Mexico

Appendix 7:

Evolution 3x1 Program /2002-2004. Increase (%)

Attention in the U.S.	2002	2003	2004	2002-2004
Migrant Groups	20	200	527	2,535 %
U.S. States	8	17	31	287 %
Canada Projects	-	1	2	

Source: SEDESOL, October 2004.

Appendix 8:**Evolution 3x1 Program /2002-2004 Increase %**

Attention in Mexico	2002	2003	2004	2002-2004
Projects	942	899	1,113	18 %
Municipalities Supported	247	257	343	39 %

Budget	2002	2003	2004
Federal Resources Allocated to States (Millions of US Dollars)	10.4	8.9	16.4

Source: SEDESOL, October 2004.

Appendix 9:

Three-for-One Projects, by State in Mexico

State	2002		2003	
	Number	Share of Total	Number	Share of Total
Jalisco	122	13	184	21
Michoacán	65	7	64	7
Zacatecas	259	28	322	36
Other States	496	52	329	36
Total	942	100	899	100

Source: Katrina Burgess, Forthcoming. "Migrant Philanthropy and Local Governance in Mexico." in *New Patterns for Mexico: Remittances, Philanthropic Giving, and Equitable Development*, edited by B. Merz. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

¹ Zabin and Escala Rabadán (2002) found a high level of political isolation among the federations and the more prominent Latino politicians in the Los Angeles area, especially with regard to their very limited participation in the movement against California's Proposition 187 in 1994. See Carol Zabin and Luis Escala Rabadán. 2002. "From Civic Association to Political Participation: Mexican Hometown Associations and Mexican Immigrant Political Empowerment in Los Angeles," *Frontera Norte* 27, Vol. 14, January-June.

² *Paisano* is a term used for people who were born in the same village.

³ For the historical evolution of Mexican migrant associations, see, for example, Roger Díaz de Cossío, Graciela Orozco, and Esther González. 1997. *Los mexicanos en Estados Unidos*. Mexico City: Sistemas Técnicos de Edición. There is an extensive literature on the importance of social networks in the Mexico-U.S. migratory process; see, among others, Douglas Massey, Rafael Alarcón, Jorge Durand, and Humberto González. 1987. *Return to Aztlán. The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Richard Mines. 1981. *Developing a Community Tradition of Migration: A Field Study in Rural Zacatecas, Mexico and California Settlement Areas*. La Jolla: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego; and Carol Zabin, Michael Kearney, Anna García, Dave Runsten, and Carole Nagengast. 1993. *Mixtec Migrants in California Agriculture: A New Cycle of Poverty*. Davis: California Institute for Rural Studies.

⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the emergence of these migrant associations in the United States from several perspectives, see Xóchitl Bada. 2003a. "Mexican Hometown Associations." Interhemispheric Resource Center (IRC), Albuquerque, NM; Víctor M. Espinosa. 1999. "The Federation of Michoacán Clubs in Illinois. The Chicago-Michoacán Project Report." Chicago: Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights; Luin Goldring. 2002. "The Mexican State and Transmigrant Organizations: Negotiating the Boundaries of Membership and Participation." *Latin American Research Review* 37:55-99; Alex Rivera, *The Sixth Section*, a video film on HTAs from Puebla produced with support from P.O.V., MacArthur Foundation, and Rockefeller Foundation; Gaspar Rivera-Salgado. 1999. "Binational organizations of Mexican migrants in the United States", *Social Justice* 26 (3); and Robert C. Smith. 2001. "Comparing Local-level Swedish and Mexican Transnational Life: an Essay in Historical Retrieval" pp. 37-58 in *New Transnational Social Spaces. International Migration and Transnational Companies in the Early Twenty-First Century*, edited by L. Pries. London: Routledge.

⁵ The importance of these Mexican migrant associations in constructing a local/national identity can also be found in the historical evidence. According to some historians, Mexican groups formed in California in the second half of the nineteenth century to promote celebrations of national events. In so doing, they also developed an ethnic consciousness among Mexicans in the United States. This organizational tradition extended into the early decades of the twentieth century with, for example, the founding of the "Independence Club" in Los Angeles and the *Confederación de Sociedades Mexicanas de los Estados Unidos de América* in Chicago in 1925. See Juan R. García. 1996. *Mexicans in the Midwest, 1900-1932*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press; and Lawrence Taylor. 1997 "Las fiestas patrias y la preservación de la identidad cultural mexicana en California: una visión histórica." *Frontera Norte*, 18, Vol. 9, Mexico, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte.

⁶ For a detailed analysis of the associations' internal dynamics, see Xóchitl Bada. 2003b. "La participación cívica comunitaria transnacional de los clubes de michoacanos." in *Diáspora Michoacana*, edited by Gustavo López Castro. Mexico: El Colegio de Michoacán- Gobierno del Estado de Michoacán; Luin Goldring *Op. cit.*; Carlos González Gutiérrez. 1995. "La organización de los inmigrantes mexicanos en Los Angeles: la lealtad de los oriundos". *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior*, Núm. 46, p. 59-101.; Gaspar Rivera-Salgado. *Op. cit.*; and Carol Zabin and Luis Escala Rabadán *Op. cit.*

⁷ For a more detailed analysis of the participation of different Mexican agencies and these associations, see Carlos González Gutiérrez. 1993. "The Mexican Diaspora in California: The Limits and Possibilities of the Mexican Government." in *The California-Mexico Connection*, edited by A. Lowenthal and K. Burgess. Stanford: Stanford University Press; Carlos González Gutiérrez. *Op. cit.*; Víctor M. Espinoza. *Op. cit.*; Gaspar Rivera-Salgado. *Op. cit.*; and Carol Zabin and Luis Escala Rabadán. *Op. cit.*

⁸ Most of the literature on Mexican clubs and federations in the United States focuses on migrants from these regions. For seminal work on migrants from Zacatecas, see Luin Goldring. 1995. "Blurring Borders: Constructing Transnational Community Process of México-U.S. Migration". *Research in Community*

Sociology, 6; Miguel Moctezuma Longoria. 2000. "La organización de los migrantes zacatecanos en los Estados Unidos", *Cuadernos Agrarios*, num. 19-20: 81-104; and Francis Mestries. 1998. "Tradición migratoria y organización comunitaria: el caso de Zacatecas." in *Población, desarrollo y globalización*, edited by R. Zenteno. México: SOMEDE-El Colegio de la Frontera Norte. For the case of Jalisco, see Rodolfo Morán. 1998. "Los sentidos de la transición: migrantes internacionales y cultura regional." Ph.D Dissertation. Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte. For the case of Oaxaca, see Gaspar Rivera-Salgado. 1999. "Migration and political activism: Mexican transnational indigenous communities in a comparative perspective". Ph. D. Dissertation. University of California, Santa Cruz. For the case of HTAs from Michoacán see Víctor M. Espinosa, *Op. cit.*

⁹ There are a significant number of studies on migration from Jalisco to the United States in general, and to California in particular. See, for example, Andrés Arroyo Alejandro et. al. 1991. *Migración rural hacia Estados Unidos. Un estudio regional en Jalisco*. México D. F.: CONACULTA; Pedro Castillo and Antonio Ríos. 1989. *México en Los Angeles. Una historia social y cultural, 1781-1985*. Mexico City: Alianza Editorial-CONACULTA; Marilyn Davis. 1990. *Mexican Voices/American Dreams. An Oral History of Mexican Immigration to the United States*. New York: Henry Holt & Co.; Agustín Escobar et al. 1987. "Migración mercados de trabajo y economía internacional: Jalisco y los Estados Unidos". *Encuentro*, El Colegio de Jalisco, 16, Vol. 4, Núm. 4; and Andrés Fábregas. 1986. *La formación histórica de una región: Los Altos de Jalisco*. Mexico City: CIESAS

¹⁰ For a more detailed discussion of the Mexican consulate in Los Angeles's implementation of these mechanisms, see Carol Zabin and Luis Escala Rabadán. *Op. Cit.*

¹¹ See Juan R. García, 1996. *Op. cit.*

¹² David Thelen. 1999. "Rethinking History and the Nation-State: Mexico and the United States." *The Journal of American History on line*. <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/86.2/thelen.html>

¹³ However, the consulate only disaggregates the numbers by state of origin until April of 2005 and lists 251 HTAs representing 16 Mexican States of origin and the Federal District. See Selene Barceló Monroy. 2005. "La diáspora mexicana y el consulado en Chicago." *Foreign Affairs en español*. vol. 5, num. 3, July-September.

¹⁴ See Dan Gordon, 2005. "Local Heroes. How Mexican immigrants have forged complex government partnerships to improve living conditions back home." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*:51-53 and Josefina Vázquez Mota. 2005. "El Programa Iniciativa Ciudadana 3X1." *Foreign Affairs en Español*. vol. 5, num. 3, July-September.

¹⁵ See Robert D. Putnam, 2000. *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York City: Simon and Schuster.

¹⁶ See Roberto Suro. 2005. "Mexican Migrant Worker Survey." Pew Hispanic Center, University of Southern California, Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior. Unpublished charts.

¹⁷ See Sung Chun. 2005. "Remittance Behavior, Assimilation, and Socio-Cultural-Economic Factors: A Case Study of Latinos in the Chicago Metropolitan Area." Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the Population Association of America. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

¹⁸ See David L. Leal. 2002. "Political Participation by Latino Non-Citizens in the United States." *British Journal of Political Science* 32:353-370.

¹⁹ Michael A. Stoll and Janelle S. Wong. 2003. "Civic Participation in a Multiracial and a Multiethnic Context." in *Working Paper Series*. Los Angeles: Center for the Study of Urban Poverty, University of California, Los Angeles.

²⁰ The suburbanization of the Mexican population in the Chicago metropolitan area has increased in the last decade. For example, the city of Des Plaines, a suburban city northwest of Chicago, experienced a total increase of 156 percent of Mexican migrants. See Inter-University Program for Latino Research – Census Population Estimates at http://www.nd.edu/~iuplr/censuspop_estimates.html

²¹ An extensive literature on "transnational communities" set the basis for "transnational studies" or, simply, "transnationalism." See, for example, the classic collection compiled by Linda G. Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc. 1994. *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-states*. Luxemburg: Gordon and Breach. A more recent work in this fruitful analytical field is Peggy Levitt. 2001. *The Transnational Villagers*. Berkeley: University of California Press. However, this perspective has also been subject to criticism; see for example David Fitzgerald. 2004. "Beyond 'Transnationalism': Mexican hometown politics at an American labor union",

Ethnic and Racial Studies Vol. 27, No. 2, March. pp. 228-247; Ewa Morawska. 2001. "Migrants, Transnationalism, and Ethnicization: A Comparison of This Great Wave and the Last." Pp. 175-212 in *E Pluribus Unum? Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Migrant Incorporation*, edited by G. Gerstle and J. J. Mollenkopf. New York: Russell Sage; Roger Waldinger and David Fitzgerald. 2004. "Transnationalism in Question." *American Journal of Sociology* 109:1177-95; and Devra Weber. 1999. "Historical Perspectives on Mexican Transnationalism". *Social Justice*, Vol. 26, no. 3.

²² Much of the literature on this issue has emphasized the Mexican government's role in this relationship and analyzed its importance. See, for example, Luin Goldring. 2002. *Op. cit.* and 1995. *Op. cit.*; Miguel Moctezuma Longoria. 2000. "Coinversión en servicios e infraestructura comunitaria impulsados por los migrantes y el gobierno de Zacatecas". In *Memorias del Foro Sevilla-Fundación Produce sobre temas de migración*, edited by Miguel Moctezuma. Zacatecas: Mexico; and Robert Smith. 1995. "Los Ausentes Siempre Presentes: The Imagining, Making and Politics of a Transnational Migrant Community Between Ticuani, Puebla, México and New York City." Ph.D Dissertation, Sociology Dept., Columbia University. See also Luis Guarnizo's comparative work on Mexican and Dominican migrants and the policies of their respective governments, "The Rise of Transnational Social Formations: Mexican and Dominican State Responses to Transnational Migration." *Political Power and Social Theory*, 12: 45-94, 1998.

²³ Practically all writings about the Zacatecas Federation and clubs in Los Angeles have underlined the achievements of cooperative mechanisms as an indicator of their solidity. In addition to the works already cited, see Armando Esparza. 2000. "Evaluación del Programa 'Tres por Uno'". In *Memorias del Foro Sevilla-Fundación Produce sobre temas de migración*, edited by Miguel Moctezuma, Zacatecas; and Rodolfo García Zamora. 2000. *Agricultura, migración y desarrollo regional*. Zacatecas: Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas; and 2001. "Migración internacional y desarrollo local: una propuesta para Zacatecas, México". Zacatecas: Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas.

²⁴ See Press Advisory. 2005. "Launch of Mexico 4x1 Program. Sign of Corporate Commitment to Migrant Communities." Washington, DC: Inter-American Dialogue, October 12.

²⁵ Ginger Thompson. 2005. "Mexico's Migrants Profit From Dollars Sent Home." *The New York Times*, February 23.

²⁶ For a more detailed account of HTAs in Chicago see, for example, Xóchitl Bada. 2003a. *Op. cit.*; Víctor M. Espinosa. *Op. cit.*; Juan R. García, *Op. cit.*; and Juan Javier Pescador. 2004. "Vamos Taximaroa! Mexican/Chicano Soccer Associations and Transnational/Translocal Communities, 1967-2002" *Latino Studies* 2 (3):459-460, December.

²⁷ In the year 2004, the combined investment for this program including migrant, federal, state, and municipal funds totaled USD 66.2 millions allocated for 1263 projects, a modest amount if we compared it with family remittances. The majority of the migrant contributions to the program (82%) came from California, Illinois, and Texas. See Josefina Vázquez Mota. 2005. *Op. cit.*

²⁸ See Katrina Burgess. Forthcoming. "Migrant Philanthropy and Local Governance in Mexico." in *New Patterns for Mexico: Remittances, Philanthropic Giving, and Equitable Development*, edited by B. Merz. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

²⁹ The Federation of Guerrerenses is the oldest federation in Chicago (established in 1995) and offers an array of services for migrants from the Mexican state of Guerrero. This organization claims to have 30,000 members. See Matthew DeFour. 2005. "Museum charts network of local Mexican migrants. Aurora tie: City is only community outside of Chicago to participate." *La Raza online*. Chicago. May 31.

³⁰ For a detailed account of Michoacano transnational activities since early twentieth century, see Álvaro Ochoa Serrano. 1998. "Michoacanos in Los Angeles: United States-Mexican Transnational Culture 1920-1970." Ph. D. Dissertation, Department of History, University of California, Los Angeles, and Juan Javier Pescador. *Op. cit.*

³¹ See Eneida Reynoso Acosta. 2005. "Relación de clubes de michoacanos en los E.U.A." Morelia: Coordinación General de Atención al Migrante Michoacano.

³² Personal communication with Jesús Martínez Saldaña.

³³ This is a medical insurance for migrants giving them the opportunity to receive medical treatment whenever they return to Mexico.

- ³⁴ The Council of Presidents claims to represent almost 300,000 Mexican migrant families in California. See Laura Wides. 2004. "Immigrant Mexican Philanthropic Groups Turn Toward Politics" Associated Press, January 19.
- ³⁵ See Peter Hecht. 2005. "A drive for clout: Community groups representing Mexican migrants form a confederation to influence public policy in California." *Sacramento Bee*. August 29, p. A1.
- ³⁶ See Press Release. "MALDEF Launches Immigrant Leadership Program," May 18, 2005
- ³⁷ See flier in Appendix #1: *The Emergence of Immigrant Hometown Associations in California*.
- ³⁸ Other organizations vying to position themselves as representatives of Mexicans in the United States include the *Coalición por los Derechos Políticos de los Mexicanos en el Exterior* (CDPME), the *Frente Cívico Zacatecano* (FCZ), the *Coalición Internacional de Mexicanos en el Extranjero* (CIME), and the *Asociación Mundial de Mexicanos en el Exterior* (AMME).
- ³⁹ For an excellent account of the process of electing council members in different U.S. cities, see Arturo Cano, Tania Molina, and Alberto Najar. 2002. "El consejo de migrantes nace bajo fuego: Lista, la representación de los mexicanos en EU." *Masiosare*, December 1.
- ⁴⁰ NALACC is the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities. For more information, visit their website at: <http://www.nalacc.org/>
- ⁴¹ This is a bill that would provide for safer roads and highways by allowing more migrant drivers the ability to obtain a drivers license in Illinois.
- ⁴² This bill would create the Consular ID Document Act. If approved, this act will oblige state authorities at all levels to accept consular *matrículas* as official identification documents.
- ⁴³ Other HTAs endorsing this march were the *Federación de Clubes Colimenses*, *Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California*, *Zacatecanos en Marcha USA*, and *Club Activo Sinaloa*.
- ⁴⁴ More information about this program can be found at <http://www.newamericans-il.org>
- ⁴⁵ See, for example, Carol Zabin and Luis Escala Rabadán. *Op. cit.*
- ⁴⁶ See Elizabeth Grieco. 2003. "The Foreign Born from Mexico in the United States." *Migration Information Source*. Migration Policy Institute, October.
<http://www.migrationinformation.org/USFocus/idsplay.cfm?ID=163>. See also Rafael Alarcón, "Hacia la construcción de una política de emigración en México," paper presented at the Conference "Relaciones Estado - Diáspora." Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior, Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City, October 2004.
- ⁴⁷ See Appendix 7 and Diane Schmidley. 2001. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, Series P23-206, *Profile of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2000*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office. See also Rafael Alarcón, *Op. Cit.*
- ⁴⁸ Jeffrey S. Passel. 2005. *Estimates of the Size and Characteristics of the Undocumented Population*. Washington, D.C., Pew Hispanic Center.
- ⁴⁹ See Jorge Bustamante. 2001. "Proposition 187 and Operation Gatekeeper: Cases for the Sociology of International Migrations and Human Rights." *Migraciones Internacionales* 1:1, July.
- ⁵⁰ See Jorge Bustamante. 2001. *Op. cit.* and Kristen Hill Maher. 2002. "Who Has a Right to Rights? Citizenship's Exclusions in an Age of Migration." In *Globalization and Human Rights*, edited by Alison Brysk. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.
- ⁵¹ See for example, Jorge Bustamante. 2001, *Op. cit.*; Stanley Mailman. 1995. "California's Proposition 187 and Its Lessons." *New York Law Journal*, 3; Philip Martin. 1995. "Proposition 187 in California." *International Migration Review* 29:1; Otto Santa Ana. 2002. *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse*. Austin: University of Texas Press; and Kent Ono and John Sloop. 2002. *Shifting Borders: Rhetoric, Immigration, and California's Proposition 187*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- ⁵² These excerpts are from interviews from leaders of Mexican HTAs from Nayarit, Zacatecas, and Guerrero in Los Angeles, respectively. Previously quoted in Carol Zabin and and Luis Escala Rabadán. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 26-27.
- ⁵³ Message by Guadalupe Rodríguez, First Vice-President of the Zacatecan Federation of Southern California. *Revista Anual*, 2002-2003, p. 44, emphasis added.
- ⁵⁴ See Gaspar Rivera-Salgado and Luis Escala-Rabadán. 2004. "Collective Identity and Organizational Strategies of Indigenous and Mestizo Mexican Migrants." In *Indigenous Mexican Migrants*

in the United States, edited by Jonathan Fox and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado. La Jolla, California: University of California, San Diego.

⁵⁵ Topophilic identities refer to attachments to geographical spaces, such as the local countryside in Mexico. The ethnic identity of many Mexican migrants is not only manifested through a nation-state allegiance but also as a sense of belonging that primarily resides in their *oriundez* (attachment to birth place). Thus, Mexican topophilic identities have a historic resemblance with late nineteenth century arrivals to United States. According to Morawska, “the overwhelming majority of turn-of-the-twentieth century Slavic and Italian arrivals in the United States, more than 90 percent of whom were of rural backgrounds, came to this country with a group identity and a sense of belonging that extended no further than the *okolica* (local countryside).” See Ewa Morawska. (1999:8) “The New-Old Transmigrants, their Transnational Lives, and Ethnicization: A Comparison of 19th/20th and 20th/21st Century Situations.” San Domenico: EUI Working Papers, European University Institute.

⁵⁶ Zacatecan Federation of Southern California, *Revista Anual* 2002-2003, emphasis added.

⁵⁷ See Peggy Levitt and Mary C. Waters. 2002. *The Changing Face of Home: the Transnational Lives of the Second Generation*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.