MÁS ALLÁ DE LAS FRONTERAS

(BEYOND THE BORDERS):

SUBNATIONAL TRANSNATIONALISM AND THE STATE IN MEXICO

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Migrants from Michoacán, Mexico, have journeyed north to work in the United States for around 150 years, creating lives and maintaining connections "here" and "there." Mexican national and subnational levels of government have actively institutionalized transnationalism. Michoacanos, who number around 2 million in the U.S., are one focus of recent government policy changes toward migrants. This paper proposes that the concept of a transnational (subnational) state best fits Mexico's historical, economic, and political situation. It provides a structure for conceptualizing a transnational state and evaluates Michoacán's transnational activities within this framework.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

A blonde girl in a navy blue polo shirt ushered me to the registration line, asking–with a distinctive Mexican accent–if I had preregistered. I couldn't help but wonder if she was a michoacana, a daughter of immigrant parents, or like me, an "American mutt," with a penchant for all things Mexican, who had learned taco-stand and quinceañera dance Spanish. Throughout the Cumbre de Comunidades Migrantes Latinomericanas (Summit of Latin American Migrant Communities), I was struck by the fluidity with which many of the cumbre participants moved between worlds. They move between worlds that to me seem disparate, but to them represent the border-transcending "home" created and sustained by individuals, communities, and in some cases certain levels of government.

Fittingly, Morelia, Michoacán, hosted this first international cumbre: the city's streets are witness to Michoacán's culture of migration. Just out of the city's *centro,* grocery stores and auto parts shops with names such as Aborrotes Indianapolis and Refaccionaría Detroit line the narrow streets, symbols of the transnational movement of people, skills, and money.

Yet, the exhibition area of the cumbre suggested more complex levels of transnationalism in Michoacán. Tables showcased michoacano hometown associations (HTAs) from California and Chicago; Western Union and Construmex; Michoacan's chapter of PROBEM, the binational migrant education program;

retirement villages aimed at return migrant clients; special investment and banking opportunities for migrants and "*por los que quedan*" (for those who stay); special production prospects, such as hydroponic greenhouses (with special financing) and consulting for *nopal* (edible prickly pear cactus) production; government agencies such as the Instituto Michoacano de los Migrantes en el Extranjero (Michoacan Institute for Migrants Abroad); and government matching-funds programs.

It was not happenstance that migrant community leaders chose Morelia. It is a reflection on how migrants, policy makers, and academics perceive Michoacán as a state with a history and culture of migration and the Michoacán government's wide-ranging policies and programs directed at its migrants abroad.

Each year roughly 50,000 people are en route to various areas of the United States from Michoacán, located in west central Mexico (CONAPO 2002). Additionally, another 7,600 return to this strikingly beautiful central breadbasket state, which despite lush green hills of pastureland, pine forests, and cultivated lands, has become one of the most recognized migrant-sending states in the Mexican Republic.

Michoacanos leave the avocado orchards, pine forests, and sandal and furniture factories in Uruapan, Paracho, and Sahuayo, among dozens of other towns, for a variety of places and industries in the United States. The old agricultural circuits from the bracero period continue as active as ever, following a *corrida* (run) that reflects seasonal produce harvest. Michoacanos involved in agricultural labor may start in southern California at the end of the cold season, moving north

harvesting asparagus, lettuce, and tomatoes, arriving in northern California to pick

grapes, strawberries, almonds, and cherries. Finally, they finish their corrida

harvesting apples in Washington (López Castro 2003:21). Other agroindustry circuits

include meat-processing cities such as Lexington, Nebraska; Dodge City, Kansas; and

Marshalltown, Iowa. Other michoacano migrants are involved in construction and

the service industry, the arena where most Hispanics work in the United States (U.S.

Census Bureau 2007). And they have done this for over 150 years. Indeed,

michoacanos embody the "culture of migration."

Michoacanos live in every state of the United States, and between 2 and 2.5

million, over half the state's population, are estimated to live outside of Michoacan

(Modelo de Atención al Migrante Michoano 2004:5). Chicago and Los Angeles are

renowned for being home to the Michoacan diaspora.[1] Michoacanos are also to be

found in cities large and small, from Anchorage, Alaska, to Cobden, Illinois

(Anderson 1999; Anderson 2004; Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior 2006).

Their presence has grown from a few isolated laborers at the turn of the 20th century

(Fernández-Ruiz 2003) to extensive networks of friends and families and replanted

Michoacan villages (see Fitzgerald 2000 for discussion of "Little Sahuayo" in Santa

Ana, Calif.). Indicators of Michoacan in United States communities range from *¡Viva

Michoacán!* (Long Live Michoacán!) emblazoned on truck rear windows to

paleterías (ice cream shops) named Paletería La Monarca[2] (Monarch Ice Cream) or

La Flor de Michoacán (The Flower of Michoacán) to formal government presence. In

fact, the state government purchased a building in Chicago, Casa Michoacan, from which to direct its transnational projects in the Midwest United States.

When scholars have recently discussed the idea of a transnational nation-state (Robinson 2001), they usually speak of a "transnational state." But I will use "transnational nation-state" to refer to a country's government and "transnational state" to refer to state–subnational--government. A prime example of a transnational nation-state is the Philippines (Parreñas 2005). However, despite anthropologists' urging to look to state-level, migrant-aimed politics (see especially Goldring 2002), the concept of a transnational state has not appeared in the literature.

In this thesis, I attempt to answer the following questions, using Michoacán as a case study. Does it make sense to talk about a transnational state in terms of Mexico? What would it look like? What are the different levels of government, international forces, and migrants involved?

To determine how Michoacán can be considered a transnational state, I will look at its attitudes, activities, programs, and policies toward its migrants. First, however, I explore the concept of transnationalism in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I discuss political transnationalism, the politics of transnationalism, and the politicization of transnational migration. As more and more migrants form simultaneous lives across international borders, governments are coming to see their roles change and expand. The institutionalization of transnational processes has become an important activity for many governments, including that of Michoacán. Here I will also offer a framework for conceptualizing a transnational state. Chapter

4 encompasses a lengthy discussion of the history and political economy of Mexico in general and Michoacán in particular, providing a justification for choosing Michoacán as a case study. More importantly, this chapter underscores the role of state-level government agency rather than national government. Two periods in particular highlight the "regional over the national" mindset in Mexico and especially in the *bajío* region, which includes Michoacán. Finally, in chapter 5, I will discuss the operational definition of the transnational state more in depth, what the "ideal" would look like, and I will assess how Michoacán fits this model.

CHAPTER 2

TRANSNATIONALISM

Navegando, siempre navegando entre dos aguas, los migrantes han construido todo otro mundo, el suyo propio, con retazos de aquí y sobrantes de allá, con sus propios reglas de conducto y su modo de acción. Sin estar necesariamente divididos entre ambos universos (quizá precisamente por el omnipresente riesgo de fragmentación que representan el desarraigo y la relocalización) han logrado constituir una comunidad extendida, inserta o infiltrada entre los resquicios sociales de las entrañas del monstruo pero con raíces hundidas fuertemente en la tierra materna, casi inaprensible de tan dispersa pero suficientemente articulada y coherente.

Navigating, always navigating between two waters, migrants have constructed an entire other world– their own, with pieces from here and leftovers from there, with their own rules of conduct and modes of action. Without necessarily being divided between both universes (perhaps precisely because of the omnipresent risk of fragmentation that uprooting and relocation represent) they have managed to construct an extended community, inserted or infiltrated between the social openings of the monster's bowels but with roots sunk strongly in the maternal earth, almost incomprehensibly dispersed but sufficiently articulated and coherent.
(Fernández-Ruiz 2003:35)

> *"Transmigrants' concept of 'home' is simultaneously about roots and routes"*
> (Fouron 2003:239, referencing Gilroy 1993)

Carlo, a recent immigrant from Europe, opened a restaurant to bring his cuisine to the rural Midwest and to save enough money to take his new bride back to the "Old Country" to meet his family. He hired Benjamin and Mario, from Mexico and Guatemala, respectively, as evening bus staff. Mario recently received his permanent residency, *la mica*, and travels to Guatemala at least once a year to check on the progress of his new house and small stationery store, the construction of which his uncle, mother, and sisters are supervising. Benjamin holds two jobs to earn extra

money to help his sister who is in medical school in Morelia. In addition to the restaurant job, he also works at the local meat-processing plant where he washes select pieces of meat for export to Japan. At 7:00 a.m., when Benjamin is just starting to pull on his rubber boots, he probably does not realize that a growing number of day-trading Japanese women are putting their children to bed and logging into the Internet just in time for the opening bell of the New York Stock Exchange. Some of these women no doubt dined on beef from the heartland of America, processed by a young man from the heartland of Mexico.[3]

Such globalization and transnationalism are reproduced daily in different colors, faces, spaces, and circumstances from the largest metropolitan areas (see Smith 2006) to the tiniest *rincones* (corners), such as San Gabriel, Durango, Mexico, where the corner-store owner bagged my purchases in plastic sacks appropriated from a small-town Colorado Surefine. In this same town's landfill, I found license plates from Fort Morgan and Greeley, beef-processing towns in Colorado.

In an attempt to make better sense of the increasingly growing number of lives, activities, and processes with links far from "home," social scientists rapidly adopted the concepts of "transnationalism" and "globalization." But these labels gloss over complicated phenomenon and disclose nuanced issues (Guarnizo and Smith 1998:3). Smith (2006:3) says that globalization and transnationalization have "become buzzwords describing how the 'local becomes global,' how distant people are becoming linked through economic markets, communications, and cultural dissemination and homogenization."

At the outset, it is important to distinguish between the processes of globalization and transnationalism because conflating the two similar yet divergent concepts leads to indistinct scholarship. Global processes take place in a space decentered from specific territories under the thumb of nation-states (Kearney 1995:548). Smith (2003b:300) explains that analysis of global processes--economic, cultural, and institutional--tend to examine how changes at a global level transform and transfer power.

Giddens (1990:64) explains globalization as the "intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa." Processes happen in local communities and within national territories, but also transcend boundaries. This fact has enormous implications for anthropology because a scope of examination limited to local processes and identities provides an incomplete understanding of the local (Kearney 1995:547). This perspective is important in the study of transnational labor migration because, as Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc (1994:11) note, when we join a global level of analysis with an examination of a particular group's history, we are better able to understand particular labor migrations.

Kearney (1995:548) contrasts transnational processes as concomitantly "anchored in and transcending one or more nation-states." The term "transnationalism" has been used in such fields as political science and international relations since the 1960s. These fields identified as transnational any association, organization, or interaction that occurs in a created space unbounded by nations (Pries

2001:17); therefore, the European Union and the United Nations would be considered transnational organizations. Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1992a) stress that the seemingly perfunctory, detached, and mechanical flow of goods and activities "have embedded within them relationships between people" (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1992b:11). Transnationalism emphasizes "the ongoing interconnection or flow of people, ideas, objects, and capital across borders of nation-states, in contexts in which the state shapes but does not contain such linkages and movements" (Glick Schiller 2004:449).

As my analysis focuses on the movement of people between Mexico, specifically Michoacán, and the United States, and the cultural-political effects of subsequent unbounded actions, the term transnational is more useful than globalization. Kearney (1995:548) says that

> transnational calls attention to the cultural and political projects of the nation-states as they vie for hegemony in relations with other nation-states, with their citizens and "aliens." This cultural-political dimension of transnationalism is signaled by its resonance with nationalism as a cultural and political project, whereas globalization implies more abstract, less institutionalized, and less intentional processes occurring without reference to nations.

Recognizing the human dimension in transnational processes both grounds the issue and gives rise to analytical and methodological questions. Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (ibid.) claim that the social relations located in transnational flows

> take on meaning within the flow and fabric of daily life, as linkages between different societies are maintained, renewed and reconstituted in the context of families, of institutions, of economic investments, business, and finance and of political organization and structures including nation-states.

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Therefore, it is the warp and weft of daily life, which is comprised of many factors, that embody transnational social fields. Relationships give significance to transnational processes.

The study of migration allows a different perspective on transnational processes. Focusing on individuals and families rather than abstract representations permits anthropologists to work toward a better understanding of the activities, anxieties, and achievements experienced by those whose lives intertwine two or more places (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1995:50). Goldring (2002:59) reminds us that as with all emerging perspectives, the rise in transnational migration research calls for new theoretical tools and vocabulary for investigating sustained processes of cross-border migration.

Transnational Migration

While "transnationalism" in social science literature often refers to "the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin to their country of settlement" (Glick Schiller et al. 1992b:1), it is best to refer to transnational *processes*, of which transnational migration is one example among many, albeit a preeminent, one (Szanton Blanc, Basch and Glick Schiller 1995:684).

Precursors to Transnational Migration Perspective

The idea that immigrants could settle in a new country while keeping close ties to their homelands has not been an accepted and widely used concept in the social sciences. Transnational migration does not fit well in "static" models that steered earlier dialogue on migrants' lives.

Early anthropological work on migration set up dichotomies to explain certain phenomena. Rouse (1992:25) points out that for years many understood migration in bipolar terms. This paradigm was informed by Robert Redfield's work in Mexico, which looked at distinct and opposed lifeways, such as those that could be considered "traditional" or "modern" (Brettell 2000:102). With emphasis on the motivation of individual migrants, anthropologists separated and opposed sending and receiving societies, rural areas and cities, push and pull factors. This focus on the individual can be traced to economic factors; individuals were seen as making rational progressive economic decisions. According to Lewellen (2002:132), "implicit in this paradigm is an economistic Rational Man model, with its emphasis on individuals calculating the costs and benefits of various options." In addition to the focus on the individual, this "modernization" theory defined migration as the "movement of people from capital-scarce but labor-abundant regions" (Brettell 1996:794). Anthropologists believed that migrants would become "agents of change" in their home communities through savings, and the differences would dissolve between rural agrarian and urban industrial areas (Brettell 1996).

The migrant experience was seen as a move between autonomous communities, marked by a shift of focus and severing of bonds. One would understand the experience of a *bracero* (laborer), for example, by examining his decision to extend his stay in the U.S., the conditions that drove him to leave, his motivations for going to a certain locale, and how he adapted to a new environment. Massey, Goldring, and Durand (1994:1499) discuss this understanding of migration

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with the example of "target earners" from Mexico who go to the United States to earn money to pay for a specific expense, such as land or wedding festivities. They usually live in spartan conditions to save money; work long hours, perhaps a couple shifts per day; remit much of their money; and do not have much of a social life. These migrants continue to see themselves as members of their home community and not as participants in the host society.

While the push-pull framework partially explains the reasons for the start of migration flow, Grey and Woodrick (2002:366) highlight the theoretical shortcomings of such a bipolar theory. They believe that it emphasizes two areas that are allegedly autonomous, without taking into consideration the "complexity of regional or national economic structures." Additionally, they reveal that a push-pull analysis of the migration situation is static and does not explain movement on a large scale. It also does not explain how areas with similar "pushes" and "pulls" may not trigger migration.

In effect, by entirely (and perhaps sometimes blindly, for want of an alternative) embracing a bipolar framework, social scientists have been unable until recently to more fully understand migration in practice and how it changes in light of global changes. Rouse (1992:26-27) asserts that the emphasis on a bipolar framework has concealed people's real migration experiences behind an antiquated and insufficient system of understanding.

Another deficiency of the push-pull model is that its focus is centered too much on the individual. In reality, decisions to migrate are made not merely by one

person, but by households, even extended families. Furthermore, the migration of one individual can create waves of migration. Massey, Goldring, and Durand (1994:1496) note that migration in a community can become a "self-reinforcing process that acquires an internal momentum all its own." As a family or community becomes more networked, migration "becomes increasingly independent of the conditions that originally caused it" (ibid.).

Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1992b:6) maintain that social scientists did not recognize that many migrants hold on to their relationships and activities at home, "not in contradiction to but in conjunction with" settlement away from home. They believe this was because social scientists, holding on to a more Geertzian view of culture, studied migrant experiences as discrete, stable, and historically and spatially stable acts in different areas of the world, rather than as a global phenomenon. In contrast, pioneers in the study of transnational migration tended to have a broader, more Tylorian definition of culture; as encompassing "social structure, and trans-generationally transmitted patterns of action, belief, and language" (Glick Schiller 2004:451). Furthermore, Wimmer and Glick Schiller (Glick Schiller 2004:454; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003) attribute social science's tunnel vision to "methodological nationalism," which is the incapacity or unwillingness to "observe and think beyond the borders of the nation-state (Glick Schiller 2004:454).

New Phenomenon or New Perspective?

Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt (1999) warn that before using new terminology it is important to establish that a phenomenon is sufficiently unique and insufficiently explained by other preexisting terms. Scholars debate whether transnational migration is merely a novel perspective for something that has been happening for many years or whether it is a new occurrence. Robert Smith (2006:8) says immigrants to the United States in the 1800s were involved in several types of transnational practices, from political activities to religious movements that transcended borders. Pries (2004:4) and Portes (2003) agree that transnationalism is a novel perspective rather than a new phenomenon.

Most scholars, while acknowledging past transnational activities of migrant populations and sending communities, believe that while not a new phenomenon, migration today is taking on new characteristics. Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt (1999) note that transnational ventures were fewer and farther apart in the past because technology did not allow for nearly effortless long-distance communication.

Before the advent of modern telecommunications and jet airplanes, communication and travel between migrants' different "homes" was expensive, time consuming, and arduous. Immigrant civic organization leaders could not easily travel to their community of origin to check on how migrant-funded projects were being handled. Today, in the span of just a weekend, a Mexican hometown association (HTA) leader can fly directly from any number of cities in the United States to several Mexican cities, conduct business with community leaders, and even digitally

record monetary transactions for proof of transparency. Daily contact would have

been nearly impossible a hundred years ago, and even a few years ago, there were

few cost-effective options for communication to more remote parts of the world.

Today, it is not merely the foreign dignitary or business person who can have instant

access to partners abroad; a michoacano day laborer working in rural Illinois can text

message or chat via the Internet with family and friends in his home village. Fax

machines, the Internet, telephones, and airplanes are "space- and time-compressing

technology" (Portes et al. 1999:224), and the rate and extent of transnational activities

are directly related to the access a group has to these technologies.

Transnational migration is tangled up in global capitalism. The movement of

labor does not make sense outside of the global scene, where capital and goods flow

(relatively) freely (Basch et al. 1994:22). The global economy has prompted the

emergence of new transnational spaces that in previous eras were either not necessary

or unavailable to migrants. "Given the current conjuncture of global capitalism,

newly created transnational spaces are sites at which new and multiple identities are

fashioned and a variety of old and new forms of power and domination are exercised"

(Szanton Blanc et al. 1995:684).

Migrants

Pries (2004:10) classifies migrants into five types: 1) emigrants and

immigrants; 2) return migrants or sojourners; 3) recurrent migrants; 4) diaspora

migrants; and 5) transmigrants. The terms "immigrant" (one who comes to an area)

and "emigrant" (one who leaves an area) bring to mind images of rupture, breaks

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from the past and home, and the distress of living in a new context where old ways are seen as deficient (Glick Schiller et al. 1992b:1; see also Handlin 1951). Return migrants always have "home" on the horizon and may go back because of economic, or legal (immigration) failure, or because they have achieved the goals they set for their stint as migrants. A shuttle or recurrent migrant may migrate following agricultural seasons, usually staying less than a year in the destination and maintaining strong ties with the area of origin, always identifying as separate from and different than the host country. The motivating force for diaspora migrants is not economic, but rather religious or political; usually diaspora migrants are forced to move and disperse. The definition of a transmigrant is more amorphous.

Transnational Migrants

If transnational migration is the "process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement," then a transmigrant is an actor in this process (Glick Schiller et al. 1995:48). As opposed to the first four types of migrants, transmigrants' identities and actions challenge the bipolar framework traditionally used to understand migration processes. These migrants' experiences are not cut and dry-- leaving one country and settling in another (Fitzgerald 2000:5).

Rather than mere "nostalgic imaginings" of home (Glick Schiller et al. 1995:56) transmigrants' everyday lives are marked by constant construction and maintenance of relations spanning national borders. They may live in the country of origin for many years, even gain full legal citizenship, yet continue to develop and

nurture multiple cross-border links. These may include familial, economic, social,

organizational, religious, and even political bonds (Glick Schiller et al. 1992a:ix).

Transmigrants are agents in the creation, configuration, and continuation of

their nation-state-spanning relations. Examples of migrant-led transnational linkages

include social and familial networks across borders and sending or depending on

remittances. These examples help us realize that migrants are not the only members

of transnational social fields (Glick Schiller 2004:457). Others may include elderly

parents who maintain property or businesses or even raise children; nonmigrant

compadres,[4] government and education officials who may interact within and shape

the transnational social field without ever venturing across national borders. Massey,

Goldring, and Durand (1994:1499) claim that migrants are "inevitably linked to a set

of nonmigrants through a variety of social ties that carry reciprocal obligations of

kinship, friendship, and common community of origin."

Transnational migrants can be depicted as simultaneously embedded in home

and host communities, pursuing activities that span national borders, and relying on

extensive networks (Jones 1992:219). Furthermore, their identity is noticeably

indistinct, characterized by the phrase *ni de aquí, ni de allá.*[5]

Simultaneity

A transmigrant does not merely shift direction in activities or identity in

different circumstances. Transnational migrants construct daily activities with the

multiplicity of "here and there" (wherever the "here" or "there" may be at any

particular time) simultaneously. In a discussion of michoacano migrants to Redwood

City, California, Rouse (1992:45) notes that "instead of leaving one community and reorienting in another….many settlers developed transnational involvements that encompass both. *While they lived in Redwood City, they were also living deep in western Mexico*" (italics added).

Engagement, then, is an overarching process that is not geographically bound. Transmigrants "settle and become incorporated in the economy and political institutions, localities, and patterns of daily life of the country in which they reside" (Glick Schiller et al. 1995:48). At the same time, they are "engaged elsewhere," conducting business, building connections, organizing, and influencing events locally and even nationally in their country of origin. Rouse (1992:45) describes this simultaneity well:

> Through constant movement back and forth, the energetic efforts to reproduce involvement across space, and the accompanying circulation of money, goods, and services, the *municipio*, Redwood City and the other settlements in the U.S. had been woven together so tightly that, in an important sense, they had come to form a single community spanning the various locales…a "transnational migrant circuit."

Also employing a fabric metaphor, Glick Schiller (2004:457) says that the transnational model for understanding certain migrations

> directs attention to the simultaneity of transmigrant connections in two or more states. It allows ethnographers to operationalize and investigate the ways in which transmigrants become part of the fabric of daily life in their home state or other states and participate in their forms of nation-state formation, while simultaneously becoming part of the workforce, contributing to neighborhood activities, serving as members of local and neighborhood organizations and entering into politics in their new locality.

While simultaneity is the form of transmigrants' experiences, activities are the content.

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Activities–Social, Political, Economical

Migrant-led transnationalism typically begins with network building and sending remittances to the family. Subsequently, migrants may create hometown associations with quite distinct ends in mind. Mexican hometown associations, for example, often begin as social clubs that plan functions such as dances to raise funds for patron-day festivals or the repatriation of the dead. With time, these hometown associations may conduct infrastructure projects such as paved roads, potable water, or rodeo rings. Changes in technology have made it cheaper and easier to keep in touch with home communities, "thus facilitating remaining actively involved in community life of one's place of origin" (Goldring 2002:62). Thus, migrants today can with increased facility remain active in their communities of origin through use of cellular phones, instantaneous wire transfers, fax machines, and the Internet.

The transnational migrant experience is made up of activities that promote, generate, and preserve such simultaneous relations. These actions are a "forging and sustaining" of "multistranded social relations that link societies of origin and settlement" (Glick Schiller et al. 1992a:ix). These activities may simply be sending money to family members. However, transmigrants may participate in improving living conditions in their home communities, building entertainment facilities, contributing to political campaigns from abroad (monetarily or otherwise), or other transnational processes such as network building and tradition reformulation and expression. Here, in the case of Mexican migrants, I am specifically thinking of *cinco de mayo* celebrations, which have taken on new meanings and importance in the

United States, thus affecting how this holiday is observed in some areas of Mexico where there is a high rate of migration.

Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt (1999:218) include activities such as informal import-export businesses as transnational activities. For example, a Mexican transmigrant woman who sells used clothing she bought at garage sales in the United States in Mexico, then brings back Mexican cheese to sell to her migrant friends in the United States, is involved in an informal transnational business activity. This activity links her nonmigrant connections in Mexico (cheese makers or store owners) with her migrant connections in the U.S. (who may not have the means, legal or economic, to travel to Mexico). Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt (1999:218) also list campaigns of home country politicians among their expatriates as an important transnational activity. As we will see, Mexican politicians have increasingly campaigned in the United States. Such activities do not happen in isolation, and while individuals are definitely actors, they act in association with other individuals.

Networks

A network of transmigrants does not emerge suddenly. Wiltshire (1992:182) says that migration represents, to some families, a cutting of ties; however, "for the majority it represents the creation or reinforcement of a mutually interdependent support network which is neither bounded by the household nor national boundaries."

First migrants from a community have a future of more risks, costs, and danger than successive migrants, who quite literally follow in their footsteps. From Mexico, most vanguard migrants were neither exceptionally poor nor more well off–

they had enough capital to fund a major journey north but still had needs that

promoted taking the risk. Massey et al.'s (1994:1500) account lays out the

development of migrant networks well:

> As migrants make successive trips, they accumulate foreign experience and
> knowledge that render ties to them increasingly valuable. As information
> about the destination country and its socio-economic resources accumulates in
> the population, the costs of migration steadily drop to make the cost-benefit
> calculation positive for an increasingly large set of people, while the risk of
> movement steadily fail to render migration a feasible risk-diversification
> strategy for a growing number of households. Over time, therefore, migration
> becomes progressively less selective and more representative of the
> community as a whole.

Grey and Woodrick (2002:367) also claim that social or familial relationships

between current, former, and potential migrants lead to a decline in costs and risks of

migration and an increase in the odds of success. Migrants' social capital of networks

increases as migrant networks deepen and broaden--more migrants add their

knowledge, skills and resources to the communal experience. Network members

(friends, family, friends of family, or family of friends) loan start-up money, give new

migrants a place to live at first, refer them to jobs, orient them to the community. In

essence, they make the potentially difficult transition to a new country less

complicated.

In her research with Oregon farm workers, Lynn Stephen (2003:28)

encountered an older migrant who personified the process of migrant network

creation. His experience reminds us that processes are never isolated and always

affect subsequent processes, while being affected by others.

> [I]mmigration from his hometown in central Michoacán to the Willamette
> Valley in Oregon has been linked to United States immigration policy.

"Legal" immigration through the Bracero Program generated well-rooted networks that expanded after the program ended. This same phenomenon was repeated in 1986 when the United States granted legal residency to 2.8 million immigrants through the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) and over 1 million undocumented farmworkers were legalized through the Special Agricultural Worker (SAW) program. Once legalized, their undocumented relatives often joined them.

Networks are particularly important for those who are unable for one reason or another to enter the United States legally. Fitzgerald (2006:285) notes that social networks help "circumvent state controls because they are conduits through which experienced migrants provide new migrants the money and information needed to cross the border illegally."

With intensity and duration of migration, these networks come to comprise what Massey et al. (1994: 1500) call "transnational circuits--social and geographic spaces that arise through the constant circulation of people, money, goods, and information." These transnational migration circuits are "distinct societies" that begin to "have a transformative influence on each other" (ibid.). Understanding these networks that link sending and receiving communities is vital for understanding migration, including migrant identity, more fully.

Transmigrant Identity

Identity in a transnational context can seem muddled. Transmigrants may be "at home" here and there, but are simultaneously "ni de aquí, ni de allá." Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1992b:4) argue that transnational migrants' identities potentially change during the migration experience because they arrive with "certain practices and concepts constructed at home….[and] engage in complex

activities across national borders" that generate and form identity. Therefore, transmigrant identity is "multivalent," comprising many levels and nuances (Goldring 2002:59) because "transmigrants draw upon and create fluid and multiple identities grounded both in their society of origin and in their host country" (Glick Schiller et al. 1992b:11)

Kearney (1995:558) claims that transnational identities are not characterized by "either-or" dichotomies but are more defined by "a logic of 'both-and-and' in which the subject shared partial, overlapping identities with other similarly constituted decentered subjects that inhabit reticular social forms." He advances a model of transmigrant networks that is decentered yet interconnected, like the Internet or the human brain. These networks shape transmigrants' identities in a way that does not call for a shedding of the old and cloaking with the new. Rouse (1992:41) points out in his research that transmigrants neither abandoned the perspective gained from their past and home nor did they decisively hold on to old identities out of nostalgia.

> *Because every immigrant is also an emigrant.*
> *(Legain 2006:8)*

In the last two decades, sending countries such as Mexico, have begun to recognize the significance of the concept of transnationalism, leading them to imagine their states "to exist wherever their emigrants have been incorporated" (Glick Schiller et al. 1995:51). Kearney (1995:547) claims that leaders and factions now look at their diasporas not as lost social capital and labor, but as a global resources and constituencies. Consequently, governments have launched initiatives and legislation to manipulate transnational processes for their benefit, constructing new concepts of nations and nationals abroad, and hoping to profit from transmigrants' successes.

Of Nations, Nation-states, and Nationalism

Understanding the politics of transnationalism presupposes understanding of the concepts "nation," "nation-state," and "nationalism." Benedict Anderson (1991:6) defines a nation as "an imagined political community….both inherently limited and sovereign." Members of a nation, according to Anderson, have a "deep, horizontal comradeship" (ibid.:7). The constituents of the nation, nationals, feel strong ties to each other, despite any actual inequities or exploitation; they declare a shared history, ancestry, identity, culture, and traditions. Hackenberg (2000:467) reminds us that a group of people can consider themselves a nation, in spite of where

they live: "We may find them dispersed in space, perhaps residing in enclaves, perhaps not, but claiming uniform 'nationality.'" The concept of "nation" is more ambiguous than the state, which is the civil government (i.e., political organization) that has "sharply defined territorial borders" (Fitzgerald 2004a:229). The nation-state thus is the sovereign state that governs people who imagine themselves as one people. Nationalism, according to Glick Schiller and Fouron (2002:356), is the array of "beliefs and practices" linking nationals and national territory. They argue that the issue of territory is vital to understanding nationalism.

> Central to nationalism is the belief that a nation has the right to control the territory that is the homeland by having its own state, whose territorial boundaries stretch to the borders of the homeland. Therefore, it is difficult to speak of nations without also discussing states (ibid.).

The Nation-state and Nationalism in the Context of Transnationalism

In light of transnational processes, the nation, rather than being contained and bounded by the state, becomes a "porous container of multiple criss-crossing, intersecting flows of different peoples and cultures" (Min-hsi Chan 2003:97). Therefore, there is a more flexible perception of "nation" from a migrant-sending country (Smith 2003a). Given this change, we witness politicians from around the globe claiming to be leaders of global nations. Mary Robinson, president of Ireland (from 1990 to 1997), declared herself the leader of the global Irish (Levitt and Dehesa 2003:587). Despite repercussions that he may have experienced from United States politicians in 2000, then-presidential candidate Vicente Fox said he was looking to be the president of *all* 118 million Mexicans, which included the 18 million Mexicans living in the United States (Smith 2003b:330) In fact, some political parties, leaders,

and other groups go beyond lip service and claim their dispersed populations as resources. Political leaders see migrants as political resources and have taken steps to urge Mexicans in the United States to call their U.S. congressional representatives to support issues that Mexico favors, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the early 1990s (Fitzgerald 2004b:527).

Transnational migrants do not act out their transnational identities in a vacuum. Fitzgerald (2000:9) notes that although most social scientists accept the notion of a nation as an imagined community or invented tradition, the public and policy makers usually operate with an "essentialized conception of nationality" at the forefront of their minds. Therefore, Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1992b:15) urge us to appreciate that transnational migrants are embedded in "nation-ness." "Transmigrants exist, interact, are given and assert their identities, and seek or exercise legal social rights within national structures that monopolize power and foster ideologies of identity" (ibid.). Both migrants and politicians play a role in the project of transnational-nation building.

Role of the Nation-state

Adhering to Appadurai's (1990, 1991) belief that transnational processes have discounted the importance of, and practically supersede the role of, the nation-state, many social scientists have disregarded anything but the most local of politics (except in critiques) in their study of transnationalism. For example, Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc Szanton (1992), believing that global capitalism is the main force driving

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transnationalism, fail to notice that governments play an active role in producing

transnational fields. Guarnizo and Smith (1998:8) declare that

> far from withering away in the epoch of transnationalism, sending states once
> presumed to be "peripheral" are promoting the reproduction of transnational
> subjects; and, in the process reinventing their own role in the "new world
> order."

Taking Alvarez's (2006:36) definition of the nation-state--"the result of

ensembles of practices composed of ...'a fluid and dynamic constellation of people,

practices and ideas'"--transnational processes indeed can be influenced and

manipulated by the hand of government at all levels. Migrants' activities can be seen

as pressures on their home government, while government responses to these

activities and pressures also constitute part of the ensemble.

In the Footsteps of Migrant-led Transnationalism

Guarnizo and Smith (1998) emphasize the dichotomy of "transnationalism

from below" and "transnationalism from above." Above I focused on migrant-led

transnational processes. Transnationalism from above is distinguished by the

involvement of nation-states and subnational governments, international

nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and political parties (Goldring 2002).

In many cases, transnationalism from above follows on the heels of

transnationalism from below. Migrants usually live simultaneously in distant areas,

have activities and networks that span international borders, and have identities that

reflect something of "here" and "there" long before governments take heed of the

large-scale implications of transnational processes. When the "powers above" realize

that power and legitimacy may be areas of contention in the wake of migrant-led

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transnational processes, politicians and leaders may gradually propose

institutionalization of policies to expand their reach.

Institutionalization

Goldring (2002:64) broadly defines nation-state-led transnationalism as those

institutionalized policies and programs that extend the arm of the nation-state's

"political, economic, social, and moral regulation to include emigrants and their

descendants outside national territory." Governments in migrant-sending countries

essentially become more imaginative. They perceive their nation–the imagined

community–to exist anywhere on earth that their emigrants settle (Glick Schiller et al.

1995:51) and they conceive of policies and programs that will bring the entire nation

within the fold.

Institutionalized transnationalism can be categorized into three groups:

economic, political, and cultural. Each faction, party, government, or NGO has a

different transnationalism toolkit, which may include, according to Goldring (2002)

and Levitt and de la Dehesa (2003:589), attempts to track, assist, or channel

remittances; policies aimed at bolstering investment and funding; support of

emigrant-aimed cultural or education exchange programs; advertising of home

country tourism[6]; public decrees about emigrants' worth to the country; legislation

allowing dual nationality or citizenship, voting rights or rights to run for office; and

the extension of protection and services to migrants.

The Transnational Nation-State

Some migrant labor-sending nation-states[7] have so embraced the institutionalization of transnationalism that they may be called "transnational nation-states."[8] Glick Schiller and Fouron (2002:359) note:

> A number of emigrant sending states...have adopted policies that turned them into transnational nation-states. Many have changed their laws and created government agencies to ensure that transmigrants remain incorporated in their native land.

The concept of a transnational nation-state, a country's civil government extending beyond its geopolitical boundaries, has become a significant notion of late. Governments have realized their ability to adapt to emigration by influencing how migrants manage their connections to their origins from their place of residence.

Transnational migration and other processes of globalization require us to reexamine many of the long-presupposed political classification systems. Several decades ago talk of a transnational nation-state would have been absurd. Today the state's ability and responsibility to provide services for its members, collect revenue, channel opinion, and enforce behavior look different, take place differently, and can, in fact, transcend international borders. More than being mere transnational policy, which would entail policies involving two or more countries, a transnational nation-state exists beyond its historically recognized geopolitical boundaries.

Glick Schiller (2004:460) notes that it is the sending countries' political leaders who labor to make and shape transnational nation-states, "but there are significant differences in the degree to which and the ways in which migrants have

responded to these state projects." Issues of corruption, transparency, and migrant goals and autonomy may become obstacles for the transnational nation-state.

The presence of the nation-state in transnational social fields can be "hyper-present" or "hyper-absent" (Glick Schiller 2004:456). A hyper-absent nation-state may attempt to wield power from behind the curtain, using legislation and agreements relaxing "regulatory mechanisms" in realms such as financial markets, production, and communication. A hyper-present transnational nation-state makes its activities apparent, while not necessarily being utterly transparent in its motives. It decides who are citizens and denizens, and who can consider themselves members of the nation.

The Debates

Citizenship

Citizenship is simply "membership in a political community" (Oldfield, quoted by Fitzgerald 2000:12). Smith (2003b:302) claims that citizenship is the complex of "ties and relations between categories of persons and states, where these are in theory mutually enforceable and in general respected by other states or enforced by international treaties."

In the vernacular, there may not be much difference between a national and a citizen. However, in the context of political transnationalism, the distinction between the two is key. Nationality is the "formal legal status of state membership" while citizenship "delineates the character of a member's rights and duties within the national polity" (Levitt and Dehesa 2003:594). Dual nationality permits people to be

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members in two nation-states; however, it does not promise the rights and privileges of citizenship--those benefits typically are the right to vote and hold office.

Generally, there are two levels of citizenship: legal and cultural (also called substantive or moral citizenship). Levels of citizenship are dynamic, ever changing. Fitzgerald (2000:11) notes that citizenship levels vary from "full enjoyment of civil, political, and social rights" to mere symbolic membership with none of the aforementioned rights. Participation affects level of citizenship.

According to Stephen (2003:29), cultural citizenship is the model for understanding how migrants "can be recognized as legitimate political subjects claiming rights for themselves and their children based on their economic and cultural contributions, regardless of their official legal status." Cultural citizenship does not hinge on holding the correct immigration documents. Rather, migrants' "concrete contributions to the community" argue louder for respect and protection (ibid.:31-32). Because of and through participation in transnational activities, transmigrants– especially hometown association leaders–work to increase social citizenship privileges (Goldring 1998:3). Through exercising elevated social status as active migrants, imparting upon their home communities part of their fiscal or social capital gained abroad, they are "exercising status as leaders, a social status generally unavailable to them" either in their home community before migrating or in the receiving country, where they may be considered "the bottom of the racial order" (Glick Schiller et al. 1992b:3).

When migrants invest in their home communities, they increase their arguments for claims to legal citizenship. Citizenship enables migrants, as indicated by Smith (2003b:303), to take part in "democratic, formal state institutions, such as voting, to have the chance to participate directly in governing and to gain control over state resources." However, legal citizenship does not depend totally on migrant participation. The sending nation-state, in creating "economic conditions to encourage investment" (Fitzgerald 2000:109), also creates space for migrants–if they choose to respond with substantial investment–to fortify claims to legal citizenship.

There are differing ideas about extraterritorial citizenship, all anchored in the importance of steady, substantive participation in public life in the home community. Fitzgerald (2000:78) argues that "political participation cannot be a right without commensurate public duties. Because migrants are physically outside the polity, it is impossible to coerce them into fulfilling their duties." Therefore, migrants have power to shape their citizenship. At the same time, sending states are confirming their continued existence by endorsing the creation of and supporting "bifocal subjects"–persons with dual nationality or citizenship and multiple identities (Guarnizo and Smith 1998:9).

The definition of citizenship is a highly contested matter among scholars. Transnational migrants in reality have a voice in this matter because, as indicated by Fitzgerald (2000:25), although most citizens do not have a choice about their citizenship, "extra-territorial citizens are removed from the coercive apparatus of their home state." When transnational migrants' relationships with their home countries'

reach a substantive point, they may begin to feel they are fulfilling their citizen

responsibilities but not receiving adequate citizen rights.

Nation-state governments also have reason to reassess migrants' membership.

According to Smith (2003a:727),

> [S]ending states tend to redefine their relationships with their diasporas when
> they experience a major reconfiguration in their relationship with which
> emigrants are seen to have become potentially or actually of greater
> importance.

Who's Dealing the Cards?: The Resistance-Cooptation Debate

As migrants increasingly act across borders and push for amplified political

rights and recognition, actors from above clamber to resituate power within their

reach. Figuring out who holds the cards in the transnational game can be a

complicated task. Nation-states' institutionalization of transnational policies and

programs opens up "interstitial social spaces" (Guarnizo and Smith 1998:9) where

both migrants and governments have new opportunities for power brokering.

Transnational activities can offer migrants possibilities for "resistance" to power from

above, whereas institutionalization presents ways for governments to co-opt migrant

power. Goldring (2002) notes that simply asking if nation-state–migrant relations are

top-down or hegemonic is short-sighted–the issue is, in fact, much more complex.

Some claim the role of the nation-state has been discounted as a consequence

of transnational processes. However, Goldring (2002:69) says it may appear that

nation-state-led transnationalism, such as in the case of Mexico, has led to the nation-

state "holding the balance of power, limiting transmigrants' autonomy, power, and

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participation." Thus, the transnational nation-state is seen as centralized, hegemonic, co-optive.

Migrant-led transnationalism, however, seemingly allows migrants increased autonomy. Fitzgerald (2006:264) claims that "citizens outside of the country largely escape the state's ability to extract their resources or discipline them for criminal infractions." To control its people, the nation-state must be able to monitor its members to police, tax, or draft them. Migrants abroad are beyond the reach of the nation-state. In the case of Mexico, several processes have limited attempts at the establishment of the Mexican transnational nation-state: an established culture of migration and dependence on remittances, among other factors.

Both sides seen, it is in fact better understood to think of nation-state-migrant relations as

> a set of negotiations in which the national government has more power and
> resources but in which transmigrants can make significant gains and help to
> shape the terms of their membership in the nation (Goldring 2002)

Rather than keeping the discussion on the abstract level of general migrants and nation-states, we would do well to look more closely at the governmental actors to see which levels are involved in "transnationalism from above" and at smaller scales of territory to understand the effects of institutionalization.

Importance of Territory

While I have argued that transnational migrants do not merely have a nostalgic longing for home, but rather have actions and identities that span borders, we must not ignore emotional ties to "home." While the concept of home is fluid and

can come to incorporate not only a migrants' natal home, but also the place where they grew up, settled, or raised their children (be it home or abroad), "home" is still "where the heart is." Anderson (1991:14) reminds us that nations command "profound emotional legitimacy"–people and places are held close to the heart.

Smith (2006:9) claims that today's migrants' identities are tied up with their country of origin, "whereas migrants a hundred years ago might have identified themselves more strongly with their home village." However, this may not always be the case. Goldring (1999:163) notes that Mexicans tend to tune their lives to their place of origin, not necessarily their country of origin. Transnational migrants send money to family members located in certain places, organize to participate in productive projects in their communities of origin, and return to specific areas, not just a broad region or country. Activities are based mainly on membership and identities that are "constituted as more 'local' than national" (Goldring 2002:64). Likewise, as I will more fully expose in Chapter 5, specific subnational levels of government have several hands in the transnational process.

Within transnational studies, there is much talk of the deterritorialized nation-state. However, this idea fails to recognize that territoriality "is a defining dimension of the nation-state" (Smith 2003b:301). In Mexico, state-led transnationalism involves bringing emigrants into the fold, but due to situations that will be discussed in the following chapter, it depends largely on "provincial and municipal authorities and transmigrants for implementation" (Goldring 2002:55). Accordingly,

> the state government remains the principal connection
> between…transmigrants and the Mexican state. The federal government

offered symbolic market membership in the nation, but it is at the state and municipal levels that club and federation leaders participate actively. Transmigrant dollars together with political and economic crises have motivated political authorities to expand membership in the nation, state, and local communities to assure the endurance of social and economic ties to Mexico (ibid:94).

Goldring (ibid.:70) claims that the notion of a transnational nation-state discounts the role of transmigrants, their organizations, and subnational politics. For this reason, it is important to look to the crucial and dynamic role of the subnational state in institutionalized transnationalism and its distinctive relationship with its emigrants. Although often forgotten in social science literature–passed up for the seemingly more significant "transnational nation-state"--it is necessary to contextualize transnationalism "in terms of subnational processes, linkages, and identities" (ibid.:92).

The increasing political involvement of transnational migrants in their home states and municipalities and the increasing involvement of subnational governments in the institutionalization of transnational processes, while being an overlooked area, is a locus for a different conceptualization: the transnational state. A transnational state is one that takes into account its migrants through high intensity of legislation for and implementation of policies and programs directed at the economic, political, and social aspects of the lives of its emigrants. Through state-level policies that span national borders, states may be transnational if, in the absence federal policies, or through allocation of responsibilities from the federal to the state level, they pass legislation and secure the participation from migrants.

The diagrams in Figure 1 represent the situation of the transnational state. The first diagram situates the transnational state at the intersection of the institutionalization of economic, political, and sociocultural activities. A state may institutionalize one type of activity while disregarding others, but only when all three types of institutionalized activities converge is it a transnational state. The second diagram represents the preconditions for the emergence of a transnational state. The transnational state appears when state-level legislation captures migrant participation in the absence of federal policies or when federal policy is to allocate action to the state level. When one of the conditions is missing, the circumstances do not lead to the materialization of a transnational state. For example, without migrant participation, state legislation leads to no end. If the federal government is not absent or does not in effect relegate action to the state level, no state action will carry legal weight.

FIGURE 1: COMPONENTS OF THE TRANSNATIONAL STATE
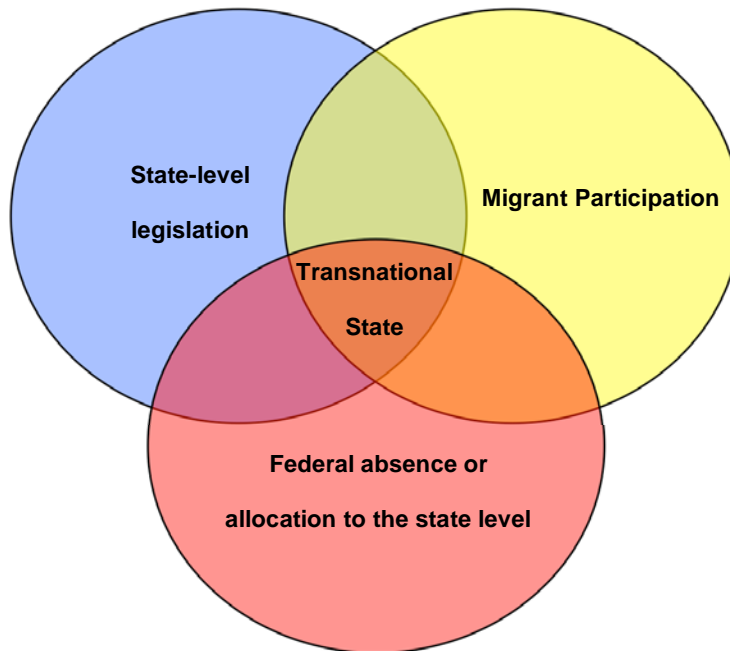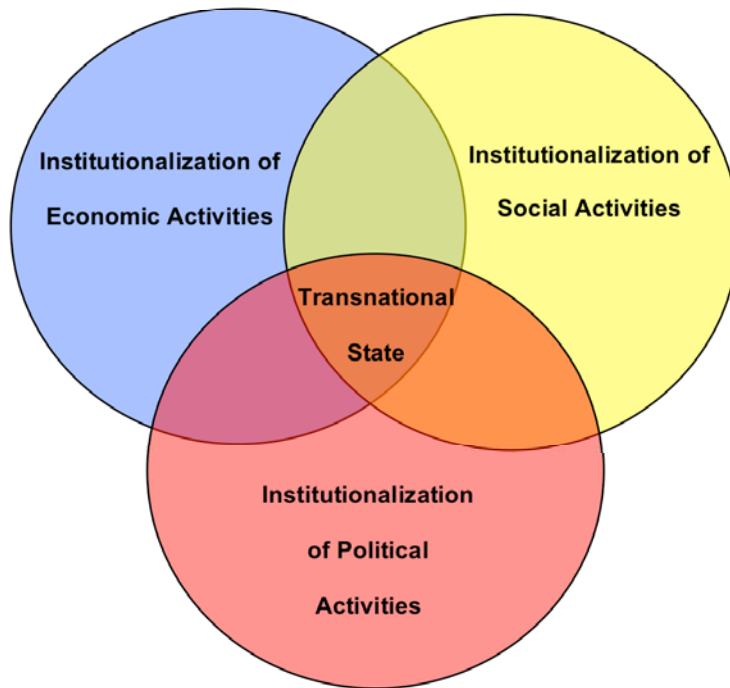
CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY OF A MEXICAN TRANSNATIONAL STATE

In addition to struggling to define their relationship to both the Mexican patria and the United States, immigrants have long expressed an active interest in identifying with particular regions of Mexico, the patrias chicas *(small homelands) that they have called home.*

(Tulchin and Selee 2003:312)

Desperation is the raw material of drastic change. William S.Burroughs

No me critiquen por que vivo	*Don't criticize me because I live*
Al otro lado.	*On the other side.*
No soy un desarraigado.	*I'm not uprooted.*
Vine por necesidad	*I came out of necessity.*
Ya mucho años que me vine de	*It's been many years since I*
mojado.	*came as a "wetback."*
Mis costumbres no han cambiado,	*My customs haven't changed,*
Ni mi nacionalidad.	*Nor my nationality.*

Los Tigres del Norte, "El Otro Mexico"

If we pause to ponder the history, politics, and economics of Mexico, it is evident that talking of subnational transnationalism in Mexico is not only viable but also crucial for the understanding of migration politics in North America. Several factors have contributed to subnational institutionalization of transnationalism: 1) "the regional" in Mexico has historically wielded its autonomy against "the national"; 2) the politics and economics of the neoliberal revolution have placed the states of Mexico in a position with more responsibilities and smaller budgets; 3) the extremity and profundity of migration from certain regions of Mexico, coupled with the

politicization of transnational processes have obliged some states to nestle into their own niche on the transnational stage.

Regional versus National

Since even before Mexico gained its independence in 1821, regional powers met attempts to unify the Mexican nation with reticence or outright obstruction. Creating a national power from disparate regional governments was problematic; agreeing on a constitution for the new country was not easy, as there were compelling arguments from strong-minded folk for a decentralized government. After Mexico's independence, the former colonial units continued to act as individual countries, *patrias chicas* (little homelands), until Mexico City exerted its dominance (Rees 2006:238). Elites in Mexico City feared that Guadalajara would become a "rival capital," surrounded by its own provinces, if the nation did not concede to a federal republican system of government in the Constitution of 1824; however, "while acceptance of the constitution guaranteed the territorial integrity of the nation, it gave an excessive amount of power to the federal states" (MacLachlan and Beezley 2004:10).

In 1836, Santa Ana's reactionary regime attempted to shift the power balance between the national government and the states, drafting a new constitution that "provided for regional political bosses selected by the president. States lost most of the independent authority" (ibid.:18). This centralist regime, under the rule of the *caudillo* (leader) and his subordinates, was not popular with the states of the former

republic, which were transformed into military districts with regional caudillos

selected by the president. The central governmental gave the president sweeping

power, but reining in physically distant communities or ideologically distant areas,

such as the many indigenous areas or Protestant stronghold areas, proved not to be an

easy task (see Gamio 1916). Between 1836 and 1846, revolts against the heavy-

handed centrifugal forces of the national government occurred all over Mexico, most

notably, in Texas (MacLachlan and Beezley 2004; Raat 2004).

The patria chica and regionalism are significant in understanding the greater

importance of regional than national bonds. Cline (1963:89) discusses Mexico's

patrias chicas, saying that allegiance to one's patria chica historically outweighed ties

to the nation:

> The *patria chica* almost defies definition. It is, in general, a group of
> individuals, families, or even villages who have unconsciously formed a
> territorial unit to which they feel bound sentimentally….they form a little
> nation.

Mexico is dotted with many patrias chicas, culturally distinct areas that are ethnically

and linguistically unique. In Michoacán, the four geographic areas of the Zona

Lacustre, the Meseta P'urhépecha, La Cañada de los Once Pueblos, and the Ciénega

de Zacapu all encompass an example of a patria chica. Many of the people here

speak P'urhépecha and identify themselves as distinct from the Mexican populace at

large.

Patria chica patriotism, held on to so strongly throughout Mexico's history,

continues today. Tulchin and Selee (2003:312) say that migrants have expressed

ardent concerns about the patria chica in the United States, and the 1990s witnessed a

"dramatic upsurge" in hometown and homestate clubs in the United States. In fact, the Federación Californiana de Michoacanos' (Californian Federation of Michoacanos) mission statement declares the preservation of the rich P'urhépecha culture as the federation's primary aspiration (Federación Californiana de Michoacanos 2007).

A whole state may be considered a patria chica, but Cline (1963:89) says that the region encompasses another important set of sentiments and traditions.

> The region is larger than any *patria chica*; it contains many of them. The bonds among its members are less numerous, more tenuous, but in given circumstances most members will respond characteristically; they feel a certain consciousness of kind, which approaches nationalism….Regional loyalties are powerful social and political forces.

Even though Mexico technically remained a federal republic (after several reversions to centralism), its de facto system was centralized, as its political and economic resources "have remained heavily concentrated in the country's capital" (Rodríguez 1993:134). Despite this imbalance of power throughout most of Mexico's history, states have a degree of autonomy. State governors'

> very real political power and autonomy belie the idea of state governments as mere conduits of federal power. The six-year incumbencies of state governors do not coincide with those of presidents, so that in the second half of their terms they work with a new president to whom they do not owe their selection. The governors' relative autonomy from presidential power allows them to develop their own state policies (Hernández Chávez 2006:274).

In fact, the power of the central government's subjugation of the state governments is more due to economics than politics. The state governments are tied to shared revenue from the federal government for a large percentage of their state revenues (ibid.:275). The federal government controls 80 percent of revenues today, while

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most states "generate less than 10 percent of their own spending" (Rees 2006:238).

Mexican states have a history of regional exertion of power over the national, even in

the face of a de facto centralist regime. Klesner (2006:402) argues the states' case

well:

> Providing good government may in cases mean needing to gather more
> revenue in order to be able to offer the services required in Mexico's
> burgeoning cities, which is difficult because that federal government has
> controlled income and value-added taxes and has sought to use those revenues
> for its own purposes.

Their autonomy is simply curbed by the federal government's control of the purse

strings. We can see, then, why states would be interested in channeling monies

coming from anywhere–including migrants–into state coffers.

These subnational allegiances solidify the argument that it is valid to look to

the state-level for several reasons, including historical loyalties and governor

autonomy. Not all Mexican states, however, are interested in highly institutionalized

transnationalism. Those with higher migration indices and greater remittance flows

will attempt to co-opt transnational activities of migrants and the federal government.

Mexican Migration: Social, Political, and Economic Structure Transformations

An appreciation of the complexities of the politicization of Mexican

transnational migration entails more than tracking numbers of migrants and places of

origin and settlement. To understand Mexican emigration, transnational migrants,

and institutionalized transnationalism, we must pay attention to the intersection of

politics, economic environment, and emigration (and the United States' immigration)

policies and practicalities. Massey (2002:50) argues that Mexican's decisions to

migrate have never "been taken in isolation but within larger social and economic

structure that have been transformed over time." Therefore, to grasp Michoacan's

institutionalization of transnationalism, we must understand the broader contextual

history of Mexican, and particularly michoacano, migration, and what economic and

political episodes have pushed the state government to develop into a transnational

actor.

> With the exception of a brief hiatus during the 1930s, migration between
> Mexico and the United States has gone on continuously since the dawn of the
> twentieth century….what has changed over time is not so much the *fact* or
> *rate* of immigration as the *auspices* under which it has occurred (Massey et al.
> 2002:51)

The history of Mexican emigration is long, basically dating to 1848, when the Treaty

of Guadalupe Hidalgo created the 2000-mile long border we more or less know today.

According to Massey et al. (2002:25), because the border area, excluding the Rio

Grande Valley, was relatively unpopulated during the 19th century, we cannot

actually "speak of 'international migration' between Mexico and the United States

until the twentieth century." Yet, following the turn of the 20th century, Mexican

emigration began to gain the momentum that has made it the focus of countless

studies, legal debates, and dinner-table discussions on both sides of the border.

Mexico's Politics, Economics, and Migrant Policies

After the Revolution

The beginning of the 20th century to the 1940s was a raucous time in Mexican

migration. Droves of migrants headed north and multitudes were repatriated at the

same time. While Mexico was undergoing modernization, industrialization, and revolution, the United States experienced booms, busts, and wars.

Massey et al. (2002:31) claim that Mexican migration probably would not have started without a demand for labor in the United States. From the turn of the 20th century until World War I, *enganchadores*, indentured labor recruiters, went to the Bajío region of Mexico (Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, San Luis Potosí, and Zacatecas) looking for laborers for the expansion of the U.S. railroad and promising high wages and travel money to the American Southwest. Industrial cities began to rely heavily on enganchadores at the outbreak of World War I, as the war created an increase in industry and decrease in American laborers (Massey et al. 2002:29). Eventually, the U.S. government began worker recruitment programs; however, these programs were terminated at the end of the war. During the Great Depression, Mexicans became handy targets to blame for growing joblessness. In the 1930s, federal, state, and local officials launched massive deportation crusades in agricultural areas and Mexican enclaves.

Mexicans had reason to leave their country. The first decade of the 20th century was the height of the Porfiriato, the reign of President Porfirio Díaz. Under Díaz's presidency, Mexico shifted from a country dominated by agriculture to one focused on industrializing, and 95 percent of *campesino* (peasant) households were landless by 1910. The Mexican Revolution halted the economy and triggered the first and only refugee migration from Mexico to the United States (200,000 immigrants)

(ibid.:30). After the revolution, the country continued its economic growth, but the promises of the revolution, namely land redistribution, were simply not fulfilled.

Mexican politics had varying responses to emigration throughout this period, from attempting to regulate the issue of travel documents (Fitzgerald 2006:264, 266) to asking Mexicans in the United States to register at consulates (Fitzgerald 2000:20). Mexican federal officials considered mass emigration as an atrocity and publicly gave emigrants the label "traitors to the motherland" (Fitzgerald 2006:262). One consular employee referred to the number of native Mexicans living in the United States as a "veritable hemorrhage suffered by the country" (ibid.:267), and the massive emigration was referred to as "bleeding Mexico white" (Fabila 1991:50). Emigration threatened Mexico's nation-building project because it underscored the economic disparity in relation to the United States.

Conversely, Mexico favored repatriation. Fitzgerald (2000:20) notes that the Mexican consulate in Los Angeles, citing nation-building motives, was active in supporting repatriation and immigration restriction.   Mexican academics and government officials, such as Manuel Gamio, saw repatriation as a way to propel Mexican modernization.

Gamio discussed the advantages and disadvantages of traits taken on and changes undergone during a Mexican immigrant's time in the United States. He believed that in many cases, they were advantageous from the point of view of Mexico (Redfield 1929:436-437). Walsh (2004:134) notes that Gamio saw Mexican exiles, emigrants, and repatriates as an important resource for the Mexican

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government's nation-building campaign because they "brought with them from the United States the industrial work discipline and production techniques....as well as exaggerated nationalist sentiments developed in exile." Gamio (1969:173) claimed that "as a whole, it can be said that the Mexican immigrants are bettered in the United States in various ways; but although contact with American civilization is beneficial to them and they adopt some of its characteristics, the majority never become integrally assimilated to American civilization." For this reason, Gamio believed that the most advantageous action would be to repatriate those immigrants to improve conditions in Mexico.

Subsequently, migration plateaued in the mid 1930s. Fernández-Ruiz (2003:40) believes that this absence of growth was due to Cárdenas's land distribution and the nationalization of trains and subsoil minerals, calling these actions the "cimentación que sostendría la modernización de México para las décadas posteriors" (laying of foundations that would maintain the modernization of Mexico for the later decades). Despite Cárdenas's start to the "Mexican economic miracle," which lasted nearly until 1970, jobs created in urban areas could not keep up with the growing rural population. Although many rural Mexicans found themselves for the first time able to access land, Cárdenas's agrarian reform did not set aside resources for productive projects on the land. Massey (2002:36) observes that Mexican peasants saw the dawn of the Bracero Program as a way to finance production on their newly acquired lands.

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The Bracero Program, 1940s-1960s

   The 1940s through the mid-1960s witnessed changes in Mexican migration, U.S. immigration policy, and Mexico's attitude toward its emigrants. Mexico recovered much more quickly from the Great Depression than other parts of the world, primarily due to Mexico's reliance on subsistence agriculture rather than industrial agriculture, and President Cárdenas's unconventional policies that sparked growth in many sectors (Raat 2004:128). As with Roosevelt's New Deal, the Mexican government assumed a central role in managing and regulating economic life (Massey et al. 2002:34)

   During World War II, the United States relied heavily on Mexican oil and labor. Moreover, the conscription of able-bodied American men caused a serious labor shortage that Mexicans were more than willing to fill. The war economy prompted both the Mexican and United States governments to agree on a new program to import temporary manual labor to three distinct arenas: agriculture, the railroad, and mining (Fernández-Ruiz 2003:41). Raat (2004:152) notes that by July 1945, there were 110,000 Mexican workers, *braceros*, working in agriculture and railroads.

   Even though the Mexican government promoted the Bracero Program, authorities also complained about who emigrated. Fitzgerald (2006:273) notes that Mexican authorities contended that "excessive emigration, particularly when aspirants abandoned existing jobs, was detrimental to the economy of major sending states." Even though the bracero years caused a diversification of migrants' points of

origin, Fernández-Ruiz (2003:42) claims that they still primarily hailed from the bajío

region of Mexico. Michoacán, Jalisco, and Guanajuato remained the three primary

"sending states" throughout the 22 years of the Bracero Program (Fitzgerald

2006:273). Yet communities that had not historically been a part of the migration

circuit began to send more and more braceros. They started building social networks

of migrants and set in motion their own migration traditions. This local fostering of

migration was seen as a threat at higher levels of government, and, looking to protect

productive activities, governors of Jalisco, Guanajuato, and Michoacán outlawed the

contracting of braceros between 1943 and 1944 (Fitzgerald 2006:275). Essentially,

the Mexican government's emigration stance was fickle during the bracero period,

implementing strategies meant to slow or increase emigration at a moment's notice,

like a head gate regulates water flow.

Era of Undocumented Immigration, 1960s-1980s

The end of the Bracero Program in 1964 did not signal an end of the demand

for cheap labor in the United States. In fact, even though nearly 5 million Mexican

braceros entered the United States between 1942 and 1964, the number of

apprehensions of undocumented migrants nearly always outnumbered the number of

contract laborers (see Massey, et al. 2002:38). American agriculture had become

dependent on cheap Mexican labor.

At the same time, Mexicans had reason to look north for opportunities.

Stability, the underpinnings of the economic projects that had caused the nation to

eternally revere Cárdenas, began to erode in the mid-1960s. The massacre,

wounding, and imprisoning of hundreds of students and workers at Tlalteloco in 1968 and at least 50 at the Corpus Christi massacre in 1971 marked the end of the economic miracle based on Mexico's solidarity (Raat 2004:149). The demonstrators had rallied to disclose the lack of freedom in Mexico and to demand a more democratic government, and, in the end, they were attacked by their own government's forces. The outcome of these events was a "greatly altered public perception of the country's leadership" and it was "increasingly apparent that much of the PRI's legitimacy had been eroded" (Meyer, Sherman and Deeds 2003:643-644). Ideas of democratization and decentralization began to surface when it became evident that the stability that the PRI-dominated government had heralded was a farce.

During this "era of undocumented" migration, migrants found themselves disdained at home and abroad. The governments of Echeverría, López Portillo, and de la Madrid spurned working-class migrants and Chicanos, referring to them as "*pochos*" or "gringo-ized" Mexicans (Fitzgerald 2000:22). The political elite considered Mexicans who left to "have exited the imagined national community" (Goldring 2002:65).

Although migrants were disdained in the 1970s and 1980s, Mexico had no policy toward its migrants. In the 1980s, there were limited consular protections, which focused mainly on repatriation and cultural nationalism (ibid.). Beginning in the 1980s Mexican officials began to realize that perhaps this policy of no policy was detrimental to Mexico. Rosenblum found that Mexican policy makers believe that

Department of Foreign Ministries' disinterest in migrant affairs prevented the government from at least attempting to influence the United States' unilateral 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) (Fitzgerald 2006:280).

Neoliberal Revolution, 1980s-2000

On the eve of its neoliberal revolution, Mexico was living out the Institutional Revolutionary Party's (PRI) "peace for prosperity" pact. The pact meant that the PRI would ensure Mexico's security in return for all-out loyalty. This meant the PRI controlled labor in return for wage increases. As long as PRI remained in power, it allowed opposition parties. Subsidies were given in turn for allegiance. The government's nationalistic position toward the outside world defined Mexico's attitude toward the United States, transnational corporations, and financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Smith 2003b:308). Still, there were no shortage of circumstances that contributed to the "uncertainty and marginalization experienced by many households" in Mexico (Goldring 1999:165). This marginalization, including that due to changes in the structure of agricultural production and economic and political restructuring, has been grounds for continued northward migration. However, the impetus for this wave of migration were the drastic changes in Mexico's political and economic life that would force individual states, including Michoacán, to squeeze into transnational spaces with new legislation, activities, and policies toward their migrants.

As early as 1976 Mexico was in the midst of political and fiscal crises (Raat 2004:159). By the mid 1970s, President Echeverría's (1970-1976) economic

strategies had left a "bankrupt steel works, increased unemployment, a balance-of-trade deficit, and a decline in the output of basic foodstuffs" (ibid.:160). In the late 1970s Mexico began the depreciation process, first devaluing the peso by 60 percent, which continued throughout the 1980s. The discovery of new oil fields in 1976--billion of barrels worth – allowed Mexico to access international loans with the IMF's restrictions (ibid.:160). Unfortunately, the price of oil dropped drastically in 1981, and Mexico realized it could not make its August debt servicing1982 payment on the $83 billion debt to the United States. The following years were filled with loan restructuring, currency devaluation, bailouts, and their subsequent stipulations. The price of the bailouts were high: "Mexico agreed to an IMF-instituted austerity program that meant wage controls and a cut in government expenditures; price increases for goods and services provided by government agencies…[and] a move toward opening the market to international competition" (Raat 2004:162-3).

The *sexenio* of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) witnessed more privatization at the expense of state power than any other presidency. "Salinas-style modernization meant stressing the themes of electoral reform, debt reduction, improved productivity, privatization of property[9], a larger role for U.S. capital" (ibid.). Despite privatizing national banks, TV networks, the telephone company, and highway construction, the 1991 internal debt was still more than $101 billion (ibid.:199). Understandably, the new economic issues exacerbated the illegal immigration (ibid.:204). The debt problem arose again in the mid 1990s and Zedillo's 1995 austerity plan further endorsed neoliberal practices.

Neoliberalism and Structural Adjustment

Neoliberalism is a politico-economic philosophy, prevalent since the 1980s,

that deemphasizes governmental intervention in the economy and favors free markets

and the primacy of the individual to achieve progress. Popular with President Ronald

Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, neoliberalism promoted

reforms to which "there was no alternative" (Gledhill 2004:332). One Mexican

foreign minister explained neoliberalism in respect to relations with the United States:

"The North agrees to commit more funds to the development of the South on

condition that we put our houses in order" (ibid.2004:333). Putting the Mexican

house in order meant a "stripping away of government infrastructures under the

combined effects of recession and structural adjustment" (Szanton Blanc et al.

1995:684). However, the changes experienced by the Mexican people were not only

imposed upon by international actors (i.e., IMF and the United States). Mexican

political elites significantly changed their perspective about the role of government

(Gledhill 2004:336).

Under Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Mexico adopted neoliberalism. His goal was

to transform Mexico's state-centered economy to a free-market system (McDonald

1999:274). Gledhill (2004:337) says that

> capitalizing on the advantages of globalization for the elite of a country with
> massive reserves of cheap labor and ready access to U.S. markets therefore
> made sense to a wide range of elite actors, beyond the simple fact that relief
> from the debt crisis provoked by earlier policies could only be obtained by
> accepting the new rules of the international game.

The signature of NAFTA, the epitome of neoliberal policies in Mexico, marked Mexico's entrance into the free-market (Canales 2000:409). In 1994, the United States, Canada, and Mexico agreed on lowered tariffs and less regulation (e.g., easier passage of transport vehicles). NAFTA has been beneficial to Mexico in some respects, for example, Mexican foreign trade has increased tremendously and the GNP has grown.

Interestingly, however, NAFTA developments have promoted trade that is "freer" for U.S. corporations than for Mexican labor. In essence, the market has become less free for Mexico at all levels except for the most wealthy. Growth due to NAFTA has been in the maquiladoras, the majority of which are foreign (not Mexican) owned. Frequently, Mexican companies are smaller businesses that are going under because they cannot keep up with the large international companies with seemingly inexhaustible capital. Small Mexican farmers, likewise, are no match for American agroindustry with its chemicals, technology, tractors, and tens of thousands of acres of cultivated land, because the bigger you are, the better you are able to compete. Additionally, U.S. farmers are given government subsidies to operate, something that the Mexican government is unable to do. This system can, therefore, not be considered "free trade" if the players are not dealt the same number of cards or cheating is going on at the table.

McDonald (1999) offers an interesting examination of the position of the state in the neoliberal revolution. Neoliberal strategies in Mexico simply leave state governments in a difficult position. "Free" trade, the privatization of government-run

organizations, and the transfer of programs from the federal government to state or

municipal levels–without adequate increases in revenue sharing–all present increased

stressors to the state government. McDonald (1999:277) claims that the state, in this

case Michoacán, cannot compete in the global market without money for productive

infrastructure improvements. He goes on to point out that

> as neoliberal ideas and policy sift downward to the local level, it becomes
> important to lay bare the knowledge, power, and practices that tie together the
> state as embodied in state functionaries in Mexico City, in Michoacán's state
> capital of Morelia, and in even more proximate local outposts–with farmers
> and dairy processors at the local level (ibid.:280).

McDonald points out the strife and struggles that plague not only small

farmers and laborers but also the state. Yet, the state is put in a double bind because

it has a more intimate understanding of its citizens but, like the central government,

sees no other alternatives. Klesner (2006:403) reveals that the real issue for the state

is there are "limits to the income that can be generated from property taxes and fees

imposed on already poor people. Consequently, the state and local share of total

government revenue raised remains quite low–on the order of 5 percent." Extracting

money from the destitute is difficult, and the added responsibilities given to the state

level of government through decentralization adds to a state's desperation, leading it

to look for lifesavers wherever they may be.

Decentralization

One of the main issues of the "neoliberal revolution" was decentralization.

Mexican power had long been concentrated at the center, figuratively and literally.

Decentralization has taken place not only through formal and informal means.

"Creeping federalism" (ibid.:385) is the growth of the opposition parties' (e.g., PAN) strength at the subnational level. Formally, the presidencies of de la Madrid (1982-1988) and Salinas (1988-1994) decentralized Mexico's government through various programs, using rhetoric such as "descentralizar es democratizar y democratizar es descentralizar" (decentralization is democratization and democratization is decentralization)[10] (de la Madrid in Rodríguez 1993:134). This movement to geographically disperse power and to spread authority more evenly over all levels of government really was a way of being true to Mexico's constitution, which had long incorporated a de jure federalism (Klesner 2006:385). Education and health are examples of sectors that were relegated to the state levels.

De la Madrid instituted municipal reform in 1984. He intended to give more power to the municipal level, which had almost completely depended upon the state and federal levels economically (Rodríguez 1993). He also reformed Article 115 of the Constitution, regarding the functions of the states and municipal governments. With his intended reforms, state and municipal governments would have more autonomy and control of their own development, which would open the space for new subnational actors and actions, including migrant organizations. However, nothing came of the reforms–except an aggravation of the problem–as politics of the day stalled any action.

Salinas termed his decentralization campaign "Nuevo Federalismo" (New Federalism), which was a plan for the formal deconcentration of central power in Mexico. Nuevo Federalismo is based on Salinas's Ph.D. dissertation at Harvard. He

believed that "communities that participated in their own development tended to form highly critical attitudes toward the government;" (quoted in Fitzgerald 2000:23); therefore, he proposed a decentralization program that involved local leaders who would be less corrupt and more responsive. This program, built into the World Bank's antipoverty loans of the mid-1990s, was supposed to allocate "administrative and fiscal responsibility to lower levels of government" (Goldring 2002:83). Nuevo Federalismo increased the financial autonomy of *municipios*, giving them control of revenues from property taxes and fees for public services. This was an important move because in 1983, 64 percent of local government revenues came from federal revenue sharing (Klesner 2006:402).

Nuevo Federalismo was not merely an altruistic act of the head of state. Rodriguez (1993:142) believes the

> contemporary efforts to decentralize…represent a political response to a crisis of legitimacy. In other words, the purpose of decentralization has been to *appear* to redistribute political power while sustaining political control–to decentralize in order to centralize.

Salinas even wrote in his dissertation that with Nuevo Federalismo "the rural sector could be developed economically while simultaneously generating support for the federal government" (quoted in Fitzgerald 2000:23). Decentralization opened the doors for migrant claims to membership in the nation and migrant mobilization (Smith 2003b:329, 311). States, facing increased responsibilities with minimal funds, did not turn a blind eye to migrant mobilization.

Using funds from the sale of previously state-owned companies, Salinas started the Programa Nacional de Solidaridad (National Solidarity Program, known as

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PRONASOL) to "soften the effects of the neo-liberal adjustment policies" (Smith 2003b:308). The objectives of Solidaridad were to improve the living conditions of marginalized peoples, promote fair and balanced regional development, and fortify "the participation of social organizations and local authorities" (Rodríguez 1993:139). PRONASOL allowed more local participation in choosing and carrying out public projects. However, as Fitzgerald (2000:139) notes, "the design of the program, funding levels, and major decisions were controlled by the central government."

PRONASOL was part of the decentralization of the federal government because it no longer took initiative for public works projects. Any organized group approached the PRONASOL officials (advisory functionaries of the central government) and presented its idea for a public work project. The government then provided most of the financial resources for the project if it gained the approval of officials after analysis. The group contributed the labor and if possible local resources to finish the project (Rodríguez 1993:139).

As all of these changes in Mexico's various levels of government were going on, Mexico was also beginning to "intensify, broaden, and institutionalize the relationship with Mexicans in the United States" (Smith 2003b:306). This was part of a larger process known as *acercamiento* (alignment)–Mexico coming closer with the United States. PRONASOL adapted in light of acercamiento, developing Solidaridad Internacional. This federal funding program, appropriately referred to as 2 x 1, matched every dollar raised by a U.S.-based hometown club with two dollars, one from the federal government and one from the appropriate state government.

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Strengthening Ties with Mexicans Abroad

The neoliberal revolution and its economic and political consequences caused Mexico to look to its migrants abroad to bolster the nation, after a period during the 1970s and early 1980s when Mexico was disinterested in its emigrants. Mexican migrants have had a long history of organizing, so municipalities, states, and the federal government worked to gather these organizations under their control to claim some of the benefits, which include remittances. However, people without formal membership in the country are difficult to direct, so Mexico had to formally redefine its relationship with Mexicans residing abroad. The PRI looked to formalize migrant organizations to circumvent the opposition that was gaining favor in certain areas of the country. Additionally, Mexico hoped that its citizens abroad would lobby for Mexico in United States politics. Finally, gaining a closer relationship with Mexican expatriates abroad would help the government to protect their civil rights.

Until the mid-1980s, transnational activities were largely located outside the "sphere of influence of the Mexican state" (Goldring 2002:64). More or less formal versions of hometown clubs have been a channel for "collective and focused expression" to migrants' claims of "substantive membership" in their place and country of origin. The Mexican and certain state-level governments, especially Zacatecas early on, began to realize these organizations' potential to serve the interests of the nation or state.

Zacatecas is considered the "vanguard of creating provincial-level policies aimed at organizing emigrants in the United States by provincial origin and

incorporating them into the political and economic life of the sending region"
(Fitzgerald 2006:281). Smith (2003b:313) cites the Zacatecan Federation (the
umbrella organization of Zacatecan hometown associations) as a model on which
Mexico based other federations. In fact, some members of the Zacatecan Federation
claim ownership of the matching funds idea (Goldring 2002:78) that was later
institutionalized as Solidaridad Internacional in Salinas's term and continues today as
Programa 3x1 para Migrantes.

Since the late 1980s, the Mexican federal government has become more
interested in emigrants and has reached out to them. Goldring (2002:65) claims that
it became particularly interested in emigrants in the 1980s because of several
convergent reasons: Cárdenas's campaign in the United States challenged PRI's
hegemony in Mexico[11] and nearly 3 million Mexicans were legalized in the United
States under IRCA in 1986, creating a "large cohort of persons who considered
themselves Mexicans but had a secure legal position in the United States." Moreover,
preserving ties with emigrants was a way to maintain remittances and promote
investment in the country.

The state and local governments, not the federal government, truly began the
process of politicizing migrants' transnational lives. These activities "attracted little
attention from an unengaged, even neglectful Mexican state" (Smith 2003a:728-729).
But in the early 1990s, the federal government began to pay more attention to
emigrants in the United States, in effect institutionalizing hometown and homestate
organizations (ibid.:56). Migrants were suddenly seen as politically important

because Mexico was losing both economic and political stability--it was grasping anything to avoid further collapse.

How has Mexico Institutionalized Transnationalism?

Mexico's institutionalization of transnationalism is both 1) abstract or universalistic and 2) substantive. Abstract or universalistic transnationalism includes changes in how the government perceives migrants, the use of "global nation" rhetoric, and assurance of nationality and later citizenship. Substantive policies include bureaucratic reforms, development programs, government agencies created especially to serve migrants, the vote abroad, campaigning in the United States, and educational and health programs aimed at migrants.

The intangible or abstract changes that occurred as Mexico drew closer to emigrants are mainly the work of the federal government, as they involve questions of nationality, citizenship, and the government's overall perception of migrants abroad. While subnational levels of government may have their own perceptions of the status of migrants, states and municipalities do not have the power to say if migrants living abroad are still Mexicans.

Blatantly opposing previous presidents' perceptions of migrants as traitors or pochos, Vicente Fox exalted migrants as Mexico's heroes when he took office in 2000 (Fitzgerald 2006:279). Even earlier than that, the Mexican Development Plan of 1995-2000 (Smith 2003b:309) included the following goals:

> to strengthen cultural links with Mexicans abroad and with people with Mexican roots outside Mexico,...to recognize that the Mexican nation extends beyond its physical border.

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Other government officials recognized their position in the new current of drawing migrants in, including Roger Díaz de Cossio, first director of the Programa para las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Extranjero (PCME), who claimed, "this is my job: to create the Mexican global nation" (ibid.). Clearly, the national state progressively began to incorporate Mexicans abroad into the national rhetoric, and its perception of migrants changed from one of derision to one of acclaim. But words alone cannot bring dispersed nationals under the nation's wing.

President Zedillo's (1994-2000) strategy was to redefine the Mexican nation to include Mexicans living outside the national territory. Under his new definition, which was approved in 1996 and put in effect in 1998 (Goldring 2002:67), Mexicans living and working in the United States could become naturalized United States citizens without losing their Mexican nationality. This redefinition of "Mexican-ness" highlights the lengths the nation-state was willing to go. Goldring (ibid.) claims that under Zedillo, Mexico's strategy toward its migrants abroad "shifted to become more universalistic, explicitly extraterritorial, and perhaps more rhetorical." Mexican emigrants who naturalize as U.S. citizens and even their U.S.-born children could keep their Mexican passports, retain their constitutional rights as Mexicans, and own property that only Mexicans are allowed to own. However, they could not vote or serve in the Mexican military (Sherman 1999:855). The understanding of nationhood under Zedillo was more diasporic than in the past (Levitt and Dehesa 2003:592). The no-loss of nationality measure was more rhetorical than substantive, more of an enticement than a concession–a message that we will still consider you

Mexican nationals if you remain economically connected to the nation even though you have settled in the United States.

Substantive policies adopted by the Mexican national state since the 1980s have increased in scope and intensity. Bureaucratic reforms include the creation of several programs under the secretaría de relaciones exteriores (SRE, secretariat of external relations), state offices for services to migrants abroad, changes in politicking and elections, and other services offered to migrants. While the symbolic politics of the universalistic and abstract changes the Mexican government made regarding its migrants were "measures aimed at reinforcing emigrants' sense of long-term membership" (Levitt and Dehesa 2003:597), low-cost policies, such as promoting cultural festivals, contests, and sports, have also been implemented to promote national culture abroad. Interestingly, substantive politics seem to resonate more at the state level of government than at the federal level.

The Mexican national state has looked to existing transmigrant organizations to reaffirm its relationship with Mexicans abroad. With these organizations as its target, bureaucratic reforms created various federal offices and agencies, all with the hope of returning migrants' focus to Mexico on the government's terms. The formal goal of these bureaucratic reforms was to foster "links and mutual understanding between Mexicans on both sides of the border" (ibid.:590).

Salinas developed the Programa Paisano (Countryman Program), the Programa para las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Extranjero (Program for Mexican Communities Abroad, PCME), and Solidaridad Internacional (Solidarity

International) during his presidency. The Programa Paisano's goal is to improve the treatment of returning migrants. Aimed at the thousands of circular, return, or back-and-forth migrants who send money to family, friends, and home communities, the PCME is one of the most "elaborate and successful" matching funds or "like investment" programs instituted by any country of origin (ibid.:592). The name given to this formalized arrangement between transmigrant organizations and the three levels of Mexican government, "Programa para las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Extranjero," is interesting on its own accord, as it accentuates migrants' national identity while distinguishing it with geographical residence (Fitzgerald 2000:23). The PCME's goals were to "maintain cultural links between Mexico, its emigrants and their children; to foster investment in the home communities in Mexico; and to protect the rights and promote the development of the Mexicans in the United States" (Smith 2003:306).

Solidaridad Internacional was also a prominent transnational program created under Salinas de Gortari's presidency in 1992. This federal funding program, appropriately referred to as 2 x 1, matched every dollar raised by a U.S.-based hometown club with two dollars, one from the federal government and one from the appropriate state government. A point worthy of note is the devolution of this program and the subsequent change of policy and name to "3 x 1" following the crisis of 1995, when bail-out loan stipulations and Nuevo Federalismo prompted Mexico to institutionalize its transnational programs at the subnational level (i.e., state and municipal). Goldring (2002:68) reminds us that we must keep the whole picture of

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what was happening in Mexico in mind: Solidaridad Internacional "should be understood as part of a broader agenda of neoliberal restructuring generally couched in rhetoric and policies aimed at reducing the national state sector and expanding the scope of market forces."

Whereas scholars have seen dichotomies of resistance (in this case migrants or migrant organizations) and hegemony (the nation-state co-opting migrants' political autonomy) in the creation of such programs, this view is too simplistic and discounts the multitude of actors between the nation-state and the individual migrant. Goldring (1999:167) claims that the PCME's aims to "build or reinforce national identity among migrants whose home-town, regional or provincial identities may have been stronger when they began to migrate." However, migrant-initiated projects that go through PCME go through the state level of government for approval. This is more than mere bureaucracy for bureaucracy's sake. Mexico would not be able to build its global nation through shared investment projects with migrants without the buttressing of the subnational levels of government. Constructing a potable water or sewer system, paving a road, building baseball or soccer fields "required equipment, materials, negotiations, and especially local knowledge, none of which were at the dispersal of the PCME staff in Mexico City" (Goldring 2002:67).

In addition to legislation and the creation of offices and programs directed at promoting and harnessing remittance flows, Mexican politicians and hopefuls visit migrant communities in the United States. To maintain relations and encourage HTAs to participate in matching fund projects, municipal presidents and governors travel

abroad to towns and cities where many of their constituents live. Calling migrants "agents of change" and highlighting their contributions to the state's economic and social life, Zacatecan gubernatorial candidate Ricardo Monreal campaigned in California in 1998, even though migrants could not vote from abroad (Goldring 1998:167). Notably, Vicente Fox campaigned in Chicago and California in May of 2000. He supported the right to vote for Mexicans living abroad and "he publicly declared that migrants who sustain their hometown's economies should exercise their influence with family members in Mexico" (Fitzgerald 2000:27). Monreal went even further, proposing that "Zacatecanos directly elect congresspersons in the state assembly to represent those in the United States, via a representational scheme" (Smith 2003b:317).

Extending suffrage to Mexicans abroad is probably one of the most significant moves of the Mexican government to strengthen ties with migrants. Furthermore, it points to the importance of state-level government actions. Smith (2003b:311) believes that even *talk* of the right to vote abroad suggests "evidence of the significant decentralization of power away from an omnipotent president" and toward a system where lower levels of the federal and state governments matter.

Allowing migrants to vote deepens migrants' membership in the nation. The extension of dual nationality to migrants allowed a certain level of membership in the nation, but migrants were not allowed political citizenship. Goldring (1998:3) wrote before the extension of the right to vote:

> They can participate economically, lobby for Mexico from the United States, and maintain a vibrant Mexican culture, but they cannot participate directly in

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political processes in Mexico. They can be cultural and dues-paying or market members of the nation, but not full–albeit transnational–citizens.

The activities of programs such as 3x1 para Migrantes, Solidaridad Internacional, and programs under PCME offer a symbolic form of membership, but it is limited because it does not involve full political rights and "does little to alter the benefits or duties with membership in the nation" (Goldring 2002:69).

In 1996, the Mexican Congress removed restrictions on voting of nonresidents. The Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) offered logistical scenarios concerning the extraterritorial vote 1998. However, due to PRI resistance, migrants were not allowed to vote in the 2000 elections. Practical issues further complicate the vote from abroad, as many migrants who are Mexican citizens do not have the necessary IFE *credencial* (voter registration card). Despite the hesitation of PRI politicians, complications, and the fact that of the million applications disseminated only a small percentage actually voted, the legislation itself made

> U.S. migrants instantly more powerful because they could now demand the vote not as a "migrant right" (without legal foundation) but as their 'Constitutional rights as Mexicans,' also legitimizing wider participation in politics (Smith 2003a:732).

At the crux of the political, economic, and migratory histories of Mexico, we find validity in studying the subnational institutionalization of transnationalism. Since Spanish independence, regional areas have claimed autonomy from the national government. The politics and economics of neoliberalism placed stressors on state governments, giving them more responsibilities but nevertheless strapping them to federal revenue-sharing budgets. Finally, states are compelled to search out ways to

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keep afloat. States with high indices of migration search out transnational processes,

co-opting migrants' organizations, and activities and managing federal measures.

CHAPTER 5

MICHOACÁN:

THE STATE OF THE TRANSNATIONAL STATE

Ya me habían dicho,	*Now they have told me*
Me habían contado	*They have recounted to me*
Unos que vienen	*Some who come*
Y otros que van,	*And others who go,*
Que allá en mi tierra	*That there in my land*
Hay cosas bellas	*There are beautiful things*
Y que una de ellas	*And that one of those*
Se llama Michoacán.	*Is called Michoacán.*
	Rudy Flores, "A Michoacán," 1977

Michoacán: cuna de migración transnacional
Michoacán: cradle of transnational migration.
Victor Espinosa, 1998

In "The Study of Transnationalism: Pitfalls and Promise of an Emergent Research Field," Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt (1999) warn potentially overzealous scholars of the snags and dangers inherent in a relatively new perspective on transnationalism. In attempting to promote this concept as a "clearly defined and measurable object of research" (ibid.:218), Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt not only describe the failures and negative tendencies of existing transnationalism studies, they also offer a set of guidelines for responsibly implementing an innovative perspective. In examining Michoacán as a transnational state, I will use Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt's guidelines to offer an analysis that does not "frustrate the viability of an otherwise promising topic of research."

Their guidelines are as follows: 1) establish the phenomenon; 2) delimit the phenomenon; 3) define the unit of analysis; 4) distinguish types; and 5) identify necessary conditions.

Establish the Phenomenon

"It is of no use attempting to explain a phenomenon whose existence has not been proved" (ibid.:218). In arguing that we must look at the subnational level of Mexican transnational politics, we must prove that 1) the process involves a significant number of actors; 2) the activities are not "fleeting or exceptional, but possess certain stability and resilience over time;" and 3) "the content of these activities is not captured by some pre-existing concept, making the invention of a new term redundant" (ibid.:219).

Michoacán's Numbers

Between 1990 and 2000, more than 370,000 michoacanos (9.4% of the population) left for the United States. Between 10 and 11.5 percent of Mexican migrants during this decade were michoacanos (Bada 2004:83; López Castro 2003:14). Of the 893,671 households in Michoacán at the 2000 census (CONAPO 2000b), 15.5 percent either had emigrants who lived in the United States, were circular migrants, or had a migrant return home during 1995-2000. Over 11 percent of michoacano households receive remittances. Almost a quarter of the state's *municipios* (similar to a county in the United States) have a "very high" level of migration intensity,[12] and over half are defined as above "high" (ibid.). Only 7

percent of Michoacán's municipios have a "low" or "very low" level of migration (CONAPO 2000a:7).

From data gathered from the United States census and CONAPO, the Proyecto de Investigación sobre la Situación de los Michoacanos en los Estados Unidos (Investigation Project of the Situation of Michoacanos in the United States) calculates that between 2 and 2.5 million michoacanos–half or more of the population living in the state--live and work in the United States (Modelo de Atención al Migrante Michoano 2004:5). According to the General Coordination for the Attention to Michoacán Migrants (Coordinación General para la Atención al Migrante Michoacano 2006b), the majority of michoacanos migrate to California (73%), Illinois (7.2%), and the state of Washington (6.9%).

Michoacán's long history of migration to the United States has led michoacanos to organize in certain areas of the United States, most notably in Alaska, California, Illinois, Nevada, Texas, and Washington (where the HTAs have registered with the state government) (Instituto Michoacanos de los Migrantes en el Extranjero 2007). Michoacano migrant HTAs numbered 19 in 1998; by 2003 they had grown to 51 (Bada, Fox and Selee 2006:14).

One of the preeminent examples of a michoacano HTA is the Federación de Clubes Michoacanos de Illinois (Federation of Michoacan Clubs of Illinois, FEDECMI). The FEDECMI estimates that there are around 500,000 michoacanos in the Midwest. The Mexican Consulate General in Chicago estimates that 165,000 michoacanos live in Chicago alone.

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Michoacan's Contemporary Programs and Policies

Aligning itself with other Mexican states with high emigration rates, such as Zacatecas, Jalisco, and Guanajuato, Michoacán created the Dirección de Apoyo Legal y Administrativa a Trabajodores Emigrantes (Direction of Administration and Legal Support for Emigrant Workers), on June 22, 1992 (Estado de Michoacán 2006). The creation of the Coordinación Estatal para la Atención al Migrante Michoacano (State Coordination for the Attention to Michoacano Migrantes) subsumed the former entity on April, 23, 2001.

This new body, an autonomous entity under the secretary of the government, was to support michoacano migrants with immigration proceedings, legal assistance, and in emergencies. The Coordinación General para la Atención al Migrante Michoacano (General Coordination for the Attention to Michoacán Migrants) was created on April 19, 2002. It was authorized to propose, coordinate, evaluate, promote, and execute programs and actions for michoacano migrants. The coordination had 24 mandates, including human rights and safety, migrant investment in the state, cultural maintenance, and fostering ties to the state. In September 2003, Governor Cárdenas Batel officially demarcated the coordination's position within the state government, equipped it with a legal framework, defined its rules of procedure, and further delineated powers and mandates (Hernández Tovar 2003). In May 2004, Michoacán's state development plan (Plan Estatal de Desarrollo) included as one of its intentions the coordination's proposition to create a bureau in the United States to further promote state government ties with its migrants.

The Transnational State

Anthropologists, sociologists, and other social scientists have discussed the idea of the transnational nation-state, but arguments for looking at the subnational level of government has only been glossed over in the literature. There is a wealth of literature about Mexico's institutionalized transnationalism and emigrant incorporation, yet individual states' roles have been seen as supplemental evidence to the greater argument. Several social scientists (particularly Fitzgerald 2000, 2004, 2006 and Goldring 1998, 1999, 2002) have called for attention to the state level, but research on state-level emigration politics and transnational processes remains sparce.

Delimit the Phenomenon and Define the Unit of Analysis

Having established that the transnational state is viable for study, we should now delimit the phenomenon. Not all state-level government actions are transnational. Nor do all state-level governments act transnationally. "Delimiting the scope of predication of a term is … necessary to avoid its spurious extension to every aspect of reality, a common experience when a particular concept becomes popular" (Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt 1999). Therefore, the transnational state's actions are those that require legislation and support primarily from the state government or those federal policies that are relegated to the state level (e.g., PCME, with primary decision makers and knowledge located at the state).

One would hope that most legislation, policies, and government programs are not capricious or casual, but we must be wary of state policies or declarations that are merely lip service, with no intention of follow through and application. Portes,

Guarnizo, and Landolt (1999:219) say "[w]hat constitutes truly original phenomena and, hence, a justifiable new topic of investigation, are the high intensity of exchanges, the new modes of transacting, and the multiplication of activities that require cross-border travel and contacts on a sustained basis."

There are plenty of state-directed exchanges, transactions, and activities to justify considering the Michoacán as a transnational state. Notwithstanding the likelihood of incomplete migrant-focused policies and projects, the number of completed state-sponsored transnational activities in Michoacán has grown.[13] Between 2002 and 2005, a total of 402 3x1 para Migrantes projects were completed, a 97 percent increase between 2003 and 2004 and 74 percent between 2004 and 2005. In addition to the economic, cultural, and other political programs used by other Mexican states, such as Zacatecas and Jalisco, Michoacán's vanguard position in allowing its migrants abroad to vote in state and municipal elections, beginning 2007, is evidence of new modes of transacting and the increased need for cross-border travel and sustained contacts.

Distinguish Types

Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt (1999.:221) recommend a working typology of transnationalism that distinguishes between economic, political, and sociocultural activities. They claim that this typology "has proved useful in organizing what otherwise would be a chaotic set of activities." The table below shows their typology of transnationalism and levels of institutionalization, including examples of each type

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and level. The examples of a high level of institutionalization are particularly

important to the study of the transnational state.

TABLE 1: TRANSNATIONALISM AND ITS TYPES

Sector				
		Economic	Political	Sociocultural
Level of institutionalization	Low	• Informal cross-country traders • Small businesses created by returned immigrants in home country • Long-distance circular labor migration	• Hometown civic committees created by immigrants • Alliances of immigrant committee with home country political associations • Fund raisers for home country electoral candidates	• Amateur cross-country sport matches • Folk music groups making presentations in immigrant centers • Priests from home visit and organize their parishioners abroad
	High	• Multinational investments in Third World countries • Development for tourist market of locations abroad • Agencies of home country banks in immigrant centers	• Consular officials and representatives of national political parties abroad • Dual nationality granted by home country governments • Immigrant selected to home country legislatures	• International expositions of national arts • Home country major artists perform abroad • Regular cultural events organized by foreign embassies

(adapted from Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt 1999:222)

A transnational state takes into account its migrants through high intensity of

legislation and implementation of policies and programs directed at the economic,

political, and social aspects of the lives of its emigrants. Through state-level policies

that span national borders, states may be transnational states if--in the absence of

federal policies, or through allocation of responsibilities from the federal to the state level--the state passes legislation and secures participation from migrants.

The high institutionalization of transnational activities dealing with politics is important not only on a symbolic sense but also on a very substantive level. Politicians campaigning abroad and referencing migrants as important to the state bring migrants into the fold of state rhetoric, yet other practices endeavor to ensure migrant support and continued ties to the state. Practices, activities, and policies of more practical value include establishing individual state migrant aid offices where there is a critical mass of migrants abroad, granting suffrage to migrants abroad (for state level and other subnational elections), allocating seats in state legislature for migrants.

Economic activities are rightfully at the forefront of Mexican states' policies toward migrants abroad. With the program 3x1 para Migrantes, Mexico attempts to channel remittances through the state for productive projects. While this is a federal program located in many states in Mexico, it is essentially operated at the state level and is dependent on state-level support, outreach, recruitment, and technical support (registering HTAs, accounting, and project authorization). Burgess (2006:103) claims that even though the central office of Sedesol (the secretaría de desarrollo social, secretary of social development) oversees the 3x1 program, the majority of the specific responsibilities are carried out by state delegates. "Each delegate receives applications for projects and presides over the Comité de Validación y Atención a

Migrantes (Validation and Attention to Migrants Committee), which determines which projects to approve at the state level" (ibid.).

While it may be easy to discount the importance of institutionalized sociocultural projects, state-sponsored cultural events and exchanges create a sense of unity between the "here" and "there" communities. Art exhibitions, culture weeks, classes on indigenous groups' traditions, language classes, beauty queen contests, and binational education strategies (such as distance learning) are examples of how the state is able to attempt to be continually present in migrants' lives abroad.

Identifying Necessary Conditions

It would be wrong to extend the term "transnational state" to just any state, or for that matter, any level of government, that merely happens to have a nominal interest in its citizens abroad. In addition to the three types of transnationalism–political, economic, and sociocultural–there are necessary preconditions that cause a state government to actively pursue its migrants through legislation, policy, and targeted activities. The transnational state lies at the intersection of state-level legislation, migrant buy-in, and federal relegation of policies and programs to the state level.

Although structural adjustment programs implemented in the 1980s required Mexico to decentralize its government and to privatize many of its services, the outcome of such actions left state governments in a bind. Salinas de Gortari's Solidaridad program, part of his Nuevo Federalismo agenda, transferred symbolic power and development decision making to the municipal level, while leaving the

state government to perform an added number of duties with less money. Klesner (2006:403) claims that

> [s]tates are especially squeezed in the federal fiscal equation, for they cannot effectively raise revenue from the sources reserved to local governments nor from the major federal tax sources–the income and value-added taxes. So they rely on federal revenue sharing.

Specifically, Michoacán began institutionalizing transnational activities later than other states historically known as "sending states," such as Zacatecas. Goldring (2002) observes that there are regional differences that lead to different outcomes in the Mexican national state's efforts to incorporate transmigrants into the nation and in the actual workings of state-transmigrant relations at the state and municipal levels. Areas are different not only historically, but have different resource bases, levels of poverty, relationships with the national state, governing parties, and ethnic composition. Michoacán, unlike Zacatecas, which is an Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) stronghold, has long been a Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) bastion. Goldring believes that the PRI has been interested in sustaining hegemony through programs aimed at broadening the transnational state. "The strength of PRD support in Michoacán may have contributed to the relatively slow development of central or regional state efforts to work with transmigrant organization" (Goldring 2002:81).

The Mexican national government, while intent on reining in its entire nation–including those living within the geopolitical borders of the country and those "*más allá de las fronteras*" (beyond the borders)--must allocate responsibility to the state level to fulfill its own mandates. Another precondition that we cannot forget is that the state government must have been "absent" at some point and is now attempting to

catch up to other groups, such as migrants and even drug traffickers, who have gained

power by doing the job of the government (see McDonald 2005). Michoacano

migrants have a long history of organizing and carrying out projects in their

communities of origin, filling in various levels of governmental shortfalls.

The first michoacano said to have migrated to the Chicago area was Ramón

Sánchez, of Jiquilpan, in 1893. Only a little over three decades later, two men started

the first michoacano organization in Illinois, *Sociedad Cuauhtémoc* (Bada 2003:260).

Nearly three-quarters of a century later, in 1997, 14 clubs formed the FEDECMI, at

the urging of the Mexican consulate in Chicago (ibid.:265, 271). To date, 27 *clubes*

de oriundos (hometown clubs) participate in the FEDECMI. The vision of the

FEDECMI is to

> *promover el bienestar social y el progreso de los Michoacanos que radican*
> *tanto en México como en los Estados Unidos, a través de la promoción de*
> *actividades caritativas filantrópicas, culturales, científicas y educativas entre*
> *los michoacanos y no michoacanos en Illinois y en México* (ibid.).
>
> (promote the social welfare and progress of michoacanos who are as much in
> Mexico as in the United States, through the promotion of cultural, scientific,
> and educational philanthropic and charitable activities, with michoacanos and
> non-michoacanos in Illinois and Mexico).

Involvement in the FEDECMI has allowed michoacanos in the Chicago area to have

closer relations with the state government, helping to "improve support to carry out

projects in their communities of origin" (ibid.272).

Michoacán as a Transnational State

Sociocultural Transnational Activities

Institutionalized sociocultural activities aimed at migrants abroad are important to the transnational state because identity and membership are tied up so tightly in sociocultural processes. If michoacanos, or what is more likely the case, their non-Mexican born children, forget the particularities of what it means to be michoacanos, the state will have no rein over other aspects of their participation. For this reason, Michoacán has implemented activities to promote Michoacanoness abroad. The state conducts binational forums, *Semanas Culturales* (Cultural Weeks), workshops in communities of origin, and distance learning through institutes of higher learning in Michoacán.

Analysis of these programs is limited because the only available data are from the Michoacán government and that is limited in scope and depth of information. Michoacán does not seem as interested in conducting state-sponsored sociocultural activities, compared to political or economic activities. However, it is evident from the state's close ties with federations that Michoacán is working at informing its migrants abroad and at keeping them Michoacanos.

Economic Transnational Activities

One of the primary goals of the nascent Coordinación General para la Atención al Migrante Michoacano (General Coordination for the Attention to Michoacano Migrants, COGAMIM) in 2002 was to fortify the local and regional

economy. To this end, three programs were implemented: Remesas Michoacanas

(Michoacán Remittances), Orientación a Mujeres Familiares de Migrantes

(Orientation for Women of Migrant Families), and Programa de Atención Ciudadana

3x1 (Program for Citizen Attention 3x1, popularly called 3x1 para Migrantes). The

state has provided little data on the first two programs and further research would be

needed to assess the efficacy and outcomes.

The signature economic program aimed at migrants in many Mexican states is

the 3x1 para Migrantes matching program. Michoacán, unlike Zacatecas, which

claims to own the idea of the matching investment programs, began relatively late (in

2002). Projects completed through 3x1 para Migrantes include social infrastructure,

such as *lienzos charros* (rodeo rings); ornamental projects, such park benches and

gazebos; and productive projects, such as greenhouses.

The program, according to COGAMIM, formally began on July 6, 2002, and

in that year completed 64 projects (48 social infrastructure, 4 ornamental, and 12

productive projects). The total budget (sum of migrant, state, federal, and municipal

contributions) for 2002 was 39,222,320 pesos ($4 million, at the average 2002

exchange rate of 9.8 pesos/$1). In 2003, 64 projects were funded, for a total of

30,465,327 pesos ($2.82 million). The program's third year (2004) witnessed a large

growth in the number of projects and total budget: 126 projects were completed, with

a sum total of 69,074,064 pesos ($6.12 million). The last data available are for 2005,

which testified to the growing number of projects and investment. A total of

82,488,000 pesos ($7.57 million) funded 148 projects (Coordinación General para la Atención al Migrante Michoacano 2006a).

Even though Michoacán implemented the 3x1 program only in 2002, it is meeting its development goals with more success than in other states. One of the explicit objectives is to alleviate poverty in marginalized areas. The majority of projects in Michoacán were conducted in areas of medium and high levels of marginalization.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF PROJECTS PER MUNICIPIO
CHARACTERIZED BY LEVEL OF MARGINALIZATION

Year	Very high Marginalization	High Marginalization	Medium Marginalization	Low/Very Low Marginalization
2002	2	29	43	25
2003	3	38	48	11
2004	6	33	46	14
2005	3	42	42	13

(adapted from Burgess 2006:112)

However, this goal does not offset the fact that the state would like to have a greater percentage of productive projects compared to ornamental and social infrastructure projects. Migrant groups tend to be more inclined to participate in social infrastructure ventures, such as building rodeo rings, paving roads, and financing patron saint festivals or ornamental projects such as restoring church frescos or building plaza gazebos, than in developing projects such as greenhouses or other productive projects that would assuage poverty and lessen the need to migrate.

Of the six HTAs interviewed by Bada (2003:278), only two were interested in planning the financing of productive projects.

Michoacán, while attaining migrant buy-in with the 3x1 program, has not channeled the nearly $2.2 billion in remittances it receives each year through the conduits it sees as most important (Migration Policy Institute 2007:8). Even supposing the goal of 3x1 para Migrantes is not the completion of projects but rather the greater sense of unity that is tendered through mutual ventures, michoacano migrants continue to have an upper hand and choose if and how they wish to fund projects. The program is quite regulated, with the state choosing which projects to accept in the matching funds program; however, migrants, in the end, hold the preliminary purse strings. Unfortunately, the primary losers in this migrant-state game are the citizens in the communities of origin.

Political Transnational Activities

One of the defining moments in Mexican political transnationalism is Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' presidential campaign trip to the United States in 1988. This michoacano's visit to supporters of the opposition (Cárdenas ran on the Democratic Revolutionary Party, PRD, ticket) incited politicians at many levels of government to take note of the power of the migrant voice, even when they did not yet have the right to vote from abroad. From the beginning of his term, Cárdenas's son, Lázaro Cárdenas Batel, 2002-2008 governor of Michoacán, promoted greater political rights for michoacano migrants abroad.

The rights to vote and political representation are particularly salient in discussions of transnational political practices. While the Mexican government authorized migrant suffrage in 1996, Mexicans living abroad were not able to vote in presidential elections until 2006. Michoacán has led the way in upholding migrants' political rights. In November 2007, a nominal number of michoacanos will vote in gubernatorial elections, without having to return home from the United States. While the number is small, Michoacán's move toward offering more political rights to migrants is important symbolically. Michoacán now recognizes its migrants as full citizens of the state. Even though less than 1,000 people will vote in the Michoacán gubernatorial election from abroad, the test of this effort will be the coming sexenios and voter turn-out trends in the future.

In 2005, the Michoacán state chamber of deputies appointed the first migrant to a plurinominal seat on the PRD ticket. Jesús Martínez, an academic who lived most of his life in San Jose, California, quickly began working for greater migrant representation in the state government, saying, "We are trying to begin this representation of the michoacano congress and we want Michoacanos to organize…and have concrete proposals and reunions with our *paisanos* (countrymen) wherever they are" (Ollín 2005:2). Although michoacano migrants do not have a permanent seat in the state legislature, the occupation of a plurinominal position was a large step not only for migrants but also for the state as a whole. If the state is to continue to depend heavily on remittances, it would do well to create a permanent position for migrant representation in the legislature.

FIGURE 2: CASA MICHOACAN:
CULMINATING ACTIVITY FOR THE TRANSNATIONAL STATE

Casa Michoacán, Chicago, Illinois (photo by author)

Just southeast of downtown Chicago, near the once busy train tracks, an older

building flanked by light poles with an eagle holding a serpent atop a nopal cactus

hosts foreign dignitaries and English as a Second Language classes. In January 2004,

with assistance from the FEDECMI, the state government of Michoacán purchased

the building located at 1638 Blue Island Avenue for the first Casa Michoacán. This

space has become an exemplar michoacános hope to reproduce in other areas

wherever there is a critical mass of michoacanos, such as Nevada, Texas, and

California.

As a junction where all types of institutionalized transnationalism (sociocultural, economic, and political) meet, the Casa Michoacán embodies the transnational state. The Casa Michoacán is a place where FEDECMI and the state government of Michoacán hope to foster migrant leadership and activism. Several migration reform mobilizations started at the Casa Michoacán. Additionally, the Casa Michoacán is a place where the state government focuses on building permanent dialogue between migrants and governmental authorities to "advance the migrant agenda" (FEDECMI:2007). This space is also home to educational efforts of the state (including distance learning and English as a Second Language), and a migrant welcome center and service provider referral point. On the sociocultural level, Casa Michoacán promotes artistic and cultural expressions of migrant michoacanos in the United States. Finally, this space allows the state government to encourage the articulation of michoacano culture, while also promoting investment, tourism, and development in Michoacán to "diminish migration from…communities of origin" (ibid.). Here Michoacán governs–in a benevolent, yet often ambiguous, way that many migrants had never seen *in* Michoacán–*más allá de las fronteras.*

Conclusion

Despite michoacano migrants' long history of transnational migration, the transnational state of Michoacán is still in its infancy. One may question if it will persist. Its short history of institutionalized activities may cause one to doubt its continuation. While many of Michoacán's transnational policies and programs

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directed at its migrants abroad date to Cárdenas' governorship, this does not mean the state's activities and interest are fleeting or anomalous. In Mexico, the hallmark testimony to any policy or legislation's resilience is if it spans more than one sexenio. Michoacán's current transnational policies not only began before Cárdenas' term, which commenced in 2002, but they have become increasingly more institutionalized, empowered, and far-reaching.

However, there are several aspects of migrant participation that prove Michoacán has not fully established itself in the transnational game. If remittances are a measure of confidence, michoacano migrants may be showing signs of losing confidence in the state. Even though Michoacán continues to receive more than 10 percent of the country's total remittances, the first quarter of 2007 compared to the first quarter of 2006 has witnessed a drastic decrease, over 5 percent, in remittances to Michoacán (Migration Policy Institute 2007:1).

It is possible that the state's focus on economic projects has made its motives too transparent to migrants. Political and sociocultural activities essentially serve to make migrants feel like rightful michoacanos so they will support development in the state by continuing to send money home. The state government highly proclaims the strides of the 3x1 para Migrantes program but glosses over the importance of sociocultural activities.

What does the transnational state of Michoacán mean for michoacano migrants? There are positive and negative implications of the growth of the state's transnational actions. In one respect, the state is taking over migrant-created

transnational social spaces. Migrants who have seen themselves as independent

actors now are faced with the reality that their home government has crossed the

border with them. Migrant innovations, such as matching programs and other

pioneering ways of dealing with living transnational lives, are co-opted by the state

for its own end. So migrants now find themselves entrenched in bureaucracy to carry

out activities that the state had only until recently overlooked.

The transnational state, however, could quite possibly play a greater role in

ameliorating the problems associated with migration. While the Michoacán

government does offer legal aid to michoacano migrants and their families, a more

concerted effort to promote migration and ease the strain of undocumented migrants

is necessary.

Jennifer Gordon (2007) advocates the creation of transnational labor

citizenship. She reviews labor union practices and United States guest worker

programs and offers transnational labor citizenship as a suggestion to reduce the

problem of undocumented immigrants. Aside from addressing the push-factors that

motivate migration, Gordon believes that one way to mitigate the problems associated

with an "oversupply of workers seeking so-called low-skilled jobs in the United

States" is to reformulate how we think of unions and immigration. She proposes a

> new immigration status, "transnational labor citizenship," which would entitle
> the holder to come and go freely between the sending country and the United
> States, and to work in the United States without restriction. The transnational
> labor citizenship regime would be the product of a binational public/private
> collaboration….It would be brought into being and governed by a
> combination of negotiations between the United States and Mexico, unilateral
> regulation by both governments, and the engagement of a network of
> nongovernmental workers organizations operating across borders,

membership in one of which would be precondition for obtaining a visa (ibid.: 563).

These networks' mission would be to demand just workplaces: fair wages and adequate working conditions.

Gordon realizes that such a comprehensive plan would be a drastic change in immigration and labor policy in the United States and offers "micro-experiments" to test the plausibility of transnational labor citizenship. She believes that the Mexican government has the latitude to shape guest worker programs. One way to do this is by state governments taking "direct responsibility for recruitment [of guest workers], eliminating exploitative labor contractors" (ibid.:572).

There is, in fact, a precedent for this type of action. The Mexican federal government is the sole contractor for the Canadian guest worker program. On the state-level, during the Bracero Program, states had a larger role to play in the guest worker recruitment and emigration policy than they do today. However, various state migration institutes have been involved in recruitment recently.

Michoacán would do well to pursue the implementation of Gordon's ideas for transnational labor citizenship. The state would be able to choose those citizens most in need. For example, in choosing migrants for the Canadian guest worker program, Zacatecas chose those with the "lowest education levels, the largest families and the fewest assets" (ibid.:573). Fitting with Michoacán's intentions of looking out for its migrants, the implementation of transnational labor citizenship would allow the state to do more than mere damage control, as it seems to do now.[14] Gordon believes government authority could be exercised

to mandate membership in a transnational labor organization as a prerequisite for applying for a visa through the state agency, on the grounds that the interests of Mexico and its citizens were best served by sending migrants with a watchdog on their shoulder (ibid.).

If Michoacán were to implement this policy, its position as a transnational state would have greater clout with migrants and employers in the United States as well. The state would have a stronger voice in dealing with abuses against its migrants and in salary negotiations. This would certainly be beneficial to the state--as preserving and increasing remittances is a top concern--and migrants.

Migration from Michoacán is unlikely to ever fully stop. A primary goal of the transnational state of Michoacán is to promote transnational activities to further development within the state, in hope of stemming the need to migrate. If Mexican federal policies continue to leave state governments in destitute situations, Michoacán will undoubtedly continue to track its migrants to assuage its state of affairs.

Ultimately, however, the decision is that of the migrants' working and living abroad. Having moved from Michoacán to pursue their own dreams, they can decide if they want to be transnational Michoacán citizens. Partaking of the transnational activities is voluntary and, as things stand now, Michoacán can preside over those who live abroad only if they so choose. If the state government decides, however, to implement a transnational labor citizenship program, more michoacanos may choose to sacrifice their relative autonomy for greater safety, better working conditions, higher pay, and a secure legal status in the United States.

Notes

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[1] López Castro (2003:25) uses the term "diaspora" in a loose sense, claiming that there is a critical mass of michoacano migrants who construct their identities in reference to home. Diasporic culture hinges, he claims, on what is yearned for – "the myth of history wrapped in bright paper, invented traditions, and imagined communities."

[2] Michoacanos' conspicuous use of the image of the migratory monarch butterfly, which winters in the mountainous central region of the state, is striking.

[3] This scenario is based on my personal contacts in Fort Morgan, Colorado, and Sasaki (2006).

[4] Trusted fictive kin. Traditionally, a *compadre* and *comadre* baptize your child(ren); however, today there are *padrinos* for graduations, weddings, and any costly celebration that would benefit from the strengthening of social bonds and spreading cost across a number of people. I have attended a wedding that had more than 50 padrinos (who become the couple's compadres), which effectively bolstered relationships and secured future reciprocity.

[5] "Not from here, not from there." This phrase has been used by various Mexican musicians and artists who have reflected on the ambiguous nature of "belonging" for transmigrants. Examples include the infamous India Maria's comedy film and L.A. corrido-rapper Jae-P's song, both entitled "Ni de aquí, ni de allá."

[6] For a Mexican example, see "*Mexico En La Sangre: Anoranzas De Mi Pueblo*" (Fonovisa, 8 different DVDs). In addition to an array of landscapes, music, and geographically unique festivals, these films feature *presidentes municipals* (Mexican equivalents to something between a mayor and a county commissioner), reminding *paisanos* to not forget their roots and to come back to visit or vacation.

[7] The literature points to Mexico, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Brazil, El Salvador, and the Philippines, as countries that have institutionalized transnational policies to a great degree.

[8] Most scholars usually refer to "transnational states" but to abate confusion, I will refer to "nation-state" when I mean a country's civil government and "state" when I mean the subnational state government, e.g., Michoacán government, Kansas government.

[9] In 1992, Salinas de Gortari instigated agrarian reform, lifting many restrictions on *ejido* (communal) land, which since its inception, in 1917, could not be sold or privately owned. Many farmers have sold their *ejido* land to large agrobusinesses who have the capacity and capital to efficiently utilize the land. Those farmers who have resisted selling their lands are unable to compete with the production of these businesses and have had to consider other options for survival. These other options have included selling the rural *ejido* and migrating to do other agricultural work, migrating to Mexico's cities for nonagricultural work or migrating to the United States (Schulz 1996: 145).

[10] Salinas built on de la Madrid's rhetoric, saying "*La modernización de México avanzará por el camino de la descentralización. La fortaleceremos….para ampliar la democracia*" (The modernization of Mexico will advance by way of decentralization. We will fortify it to extend democracy) (Salinas in Rodríguez 1993: 134).

[11] A defining moment in PRI's relationship with migrants abroad came in 1988. Opposition candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas campaigned in California and gave PRI candidate Salinas reason to believe he might not win. In fact, Salinas's victory was tainted with allegations of fraud.

[12] CONAPO's Migration Intensity Index is a comprehensive measure of Mexico-United States migration that takes into account the percentage of remittance-receiving households, the percentage of households with migrants in the United States, the percentage of households with circular migrants, and the percentage of houses with returning migrants from the United States (all within the last five years).

[13] One cannot discount the importance of "completion" in the Mexican context. In a country where each new sexenio reveals instances of unfinished projects and corruption, citizens rarely trust that politicians or political partie will complete what they claim. Over the last three years, I have been in Michoacán and other parts of Mexico during elections; campaign literature is filled with "*voy a cumplir*" (I will fulfill) rhetoric. Migrants working abroad would have heightened anxiety that the projects that they are essentially funding are not completed.

Michoacán's Instituto Michoacano de los Migrantes en el Extranjero assists with Social Security checks not received, worker rights violations, and the transfer of murder victims.

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