

THE MEXICAN STATE AND TRANSMIGRANT ORGANIZATIONS:

Negotiating the Boundaries of Membership and Participation*

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Abstract: This article examines relations between the Mexican state and transmigrants through an analysis of migrant- and state-led transnational practices and policies. It addresses discussions of the strength and extent of Mexican state control and hegemony as well as debates in the transnationalism literature on the potential autonomy of transmigrant groups and the role of subnational linkages. The analysis is based on information on transmigrant organizations and Mexican political authorities in Los Angeles and Mexico and focuses on Zacatecas. Mexican transmigrant organizations predate current state initiatives aimed at Mexicans in the United States, but state involvement has been crucial to the institutionalizing of transnational social spaces. The state's hegemonic project involves the largely symbolic reincorporation of paisanos living abroad back into the nation but depends on provincial and municipal authorities and transmigrant organizations for implementation. Because these vary, the project has been implemented unevenly. The complexity of these processes can be captured only by examining transnational social spaces at a subnational level. The case of Zacatecas shows how a corporatist and semi-clientelist transmigrant organization has managed to gain concessions that broaden opportunities for participation. It remains to be seen whether and how promises of political representation will be fulfilled.

Until the 1990s, most contemporary accounts of the post-revolutionary Mexican state characterized it as centralized, hegemonic, corporatist, clientelist, and fused with the ruling party. The 1990s brought about significant changes "on the ground" as well as in the way analysts viewed the institutions, relations among ruling networks, ideologies, and practices that make

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up what is called “the Mexican state” (compare Sayer 1994; D. Smith 1990). Jonathan Fox and others have suggested that patterns of centralized political control were breaking down or were never as strong or ubiquitous as was once thought. Fox’s review article (2000) and recent work by others on the Mexican state and state formation¹ have drawn attention to the unevenness of central control and the importance of subnational political authorities in exercising rule and regulation. In so doing, these analysts have generated a lively debate on hegemony, the counter-hegemonic potential of oppositional social movements and parties and their opportunities, and state-society relations in general.² Defeat of the presidential candidate of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in July 2000 underscores the importance of continuing these discussions. This article seeks to contribute to the debate by focusing on a sector of Mexican society largely overlooked in contemporary analyses of Mexican state-society relations: Mexicans living in the United States.³

Several reasons can be cited for including Mexicans living in the United States (and other places outside the national territory) in analyses of contemporary relations between the Mexican state and society. In the early 1990s, the Mexican government began to pay overt attention to the country’s “diaspora” (González Gutiérrez 1993; Shain 1999), starting with various programs to assist migrants and “Mexican communities” organized as hometown and homestate organizations in the United States. It soon became apparent that the Mexican state had embarked on a project to redefine and reincorporate Mexicans living abroad as members of the nation (Dresser 1991, 1993; Goldring 1998a, 1998b; Guarnizo 1998; R. Smith 1998, 1997). This political and economic project involved a range of programs and policies, including a constitutional amendment legislating that Mexicans living abroad would not lose their nationality (Ross Pineda 1999; Calderón 1998).

This state-led extraterritorialization and transnationalism became a counterpoint to migrant-led transnationalism,⁴ which predated the new

1. For example, see Cornelius, Craig, and Fox (1994); Joseph and Nugent’s (1994) collection on everyday forms of state formation; Rubin’s (1994, 1997) challenge to “classic” readings of centralized hegemonic control; Cook’s (1996) analysis of shifting political opportunities in the case of the dissident democratic teachers’ movement, the Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (CNTE); Fox (1994, 1996) and Fox and Aranda’s (1996) discussion of the possibilities for “islands” of democracy to emerge; and Cornelius, Eisenstadt, and Hindley’s (1999) volume on subnational politics. For a more comprehensive review of the literature on the Mexican state, see Fox’s (2000) review essay, “State-Society Relations in Mexico.”

2. For example, in contrast to Cornelius, Craig, and Fox (1994), a volume edited by Aitken, Craske, Jones, and Stansfield (1996) included articles by Aitken and by Craske that perceived more continuity than change in Mexican state-society relations. Craske (1996) characterized this process as “the retrenchment of corporatism.”

3. Early exceptions to this generalization include Dresser (1991, 1993) and González Gutiérrez (1993).

4. While analytically distinct, migrant-led and national-state-led transnationalism are both

policies. *Migrant-led transnationalism* refers to migrant-initiated practices and institutions that foster transnational social spaces. Examples include having immediate family members living on both sides of the border; maintaining kinship and social networks across borders; sending remittances or depending on remittances, money changers, *coyotes* (smugglers), or increasingly dollarized economies; returning for increasingly dollarized patron saints' day celebrations; and participating in return migration, collective community projects, and hometown organizations. The pervasiveness and historical depth of Mexican migrant-led transnationalism provide a further rationale for analyzing state-transmigrant relations (Massey, Goldring, and Durand 1994). Rather than making a permanent exit and break with Mexico, many Mexicans continue to be involved one way or another with their localities and country of origin.

Perhaps the strongest argument for studying state-transmigrant relations is the increasing politicization of transnational social spaces and state-transmigrant relations and the participation of a broader set of actors in these spaces. Notable examples of these processes include the U.S. campaign tour by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas before the 1988 Mexican presidential election; visits since the mid-1980s by governors of several Mexican states including Oaxaca, Zacatecas, Puebla, and Guanajuato; similar visits by municipal presidents from several states that were sponsored by the federal government (since the mid-1990s); the 1998 campaign tour of gubernatorial candidate Ricardo Monreal of Zacatecas; the lobbying efforts of various groups (including a binational coalition) advocating the right of Mexicans abroad to vote for president of Mexico; and the U.S. campaigns of the main opposition candidates in the 2000 presidential race.⁵ These undertakings can be seen as Mexican state and opposition party responses to the growing importance and political relevance of transmigrants and their organizations. Although increasing politicization of transmigrant-state relations and Mexico-U.S. transnational social spaces is evident, questions about the kinds of politics and state-society relations being negotiated and their implications have only begun to be investigated.⁶

crucial elements of state-mediated transnational spaces. On the importance of state policies in maintaining Mexican transnational spaces, see R. Smith (1995, 1997, 1998, 1999), Boruchoff (1998), Guarnizo (1998) and Goldring (1997, 1998a, 1998b, 2001). On migrant-led processes, see Goldring (1996) and R. Smith (1995); for broader discussions, see Glick Schiller (1998) and Guarnizo and Smith (1998).

5. Another recent example was the Zedillo administration's cancellation of a controversial car-deposit policy at the end of 1999 in response to pressure from hometown associations and binational coalitions advocating extraterritorial voting rights (Leiken 2000).

6. Early work on the politicization of transnational spaces, such as Dresser's (1993) key article, focused on the transboundary implications of Mexican party politics. Subsequent work focused on national policy (Guarnizo 1998; R. Smith 1997; Sherman n.d.). More recent studies have centered on transmigrants and their organizations (Moctezuma 1997; Boruchoff 1998;

This article will address the general question of how to understand Mexican state-transmigrant relations during the administrations of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988–1994) and Ernesto Zedillo (1994–2000), particularly the period from 1993 to 1999. I will also examine recent developments to gain a better understanding of the role played by migrant organizations, federal initiatives, and state and municipal actors in the increasing recognition of migrants and transmigrants as political actors. I also investigate the growing politicization of relations between the Mexican state and transmigrants to learn more about the power dynamics of these relations. Are state-migrant relations in this period best understood as top-down, centralized, hegemonic, and co-optive? Did they reflect the PRI's attempt to extend the party's reach across the border in a bid to court and control Mexicans in the United States for political and economic ends? A high-ranking staff member of the opposition mayor's office in Jalpa, Zacatecas, described the *Dos por Uno* program as "nothing more than the tentacles of the PRI reaching out across the border."⁷ Or can a more complex reading of these processes be constructed, informed by recent interpretations of state-society relations as well as such changes in Mexico's political landscape as the erosion of PRI control and the rise of opposition parties and popular movements?

The next section will define concepts and outline relevant debates.⁸ The following section provides an overview of migrant- and state-led dimensions of Mexico-U.S. transnationalism.⁹ In the subsequent section, I look more closely at the transnationalization and politicization of state-migrant relations in a subnational context, drawing on the case of Zacatecas and the 1998 gubernatorial race. The final section will offer concluding remarks about the give-and-take in state-migrant relations.

DEFINITIONS AND DEBATES

Brought together here are strands of discussions that are normally carried out in separate literatures. One aim of this section is to "transnationalize" work on relations between the Mexican state and Mexican society. A second is to ground the work on state-migrant or state-transmigrant rela-

R. Smith 1998, 1999; Goldring 1997, 2001) and the movement advocating voting rights for Mexicans abroad (Calderón 1999; Martínez 1998c; Ross Pineda 1999).

7. Author's interview, 29 Jan. 1997, Jalpa. To ensure the anonymity of respondents, I normally provide minimal identifying information about my interview sources. Here I will cite the date and sometimes the location of the interview or the position held by the respondent. When several respondents offered similar information, I grouped them together by category of respondent.

8. For descriptions of the methodology, see Goldring (1999a, 2001).

9. The question of whether a positive or negative relationship exists between transmigrant participation in Mexico and in the United States is beyond the scope of this article. On this topic, see Zabin and Escala (1998) and Goldring (1999a).

tions that is developing in the literature on transnational migration in the context of a specific case (Mexico) that also introduces the complexity of subnational politics. A third objective is to “transnationalize” discussions of citizenship, although less comprehensively.

The literature on transnational migration is providing new conceptual tools and vocabulary for examining long-term processes of cross-border migration (Kearney and Nagengast 1989; Rouse 1991; Basch et al. 1994; Guarnizo and Smith 1998; Mahler 1998). Scholarship in this area has stressed the importance of analyzing migration and a number of related processes that include nation building, class formation, political struggles, gender and gender relations, racialization, identity formation, and immigrant settlement from a perspective unbound by national borders (Basch et al. 1994). This perspective conceives of persons who migrate as social actors who, within certain limits, participate in constructing transnational social spaces and institutions. As a result, questions arise about classic nation-bound conceptions of national membership, citizenship, and identity as well as orthodox approaches to immigrant incorporation and settlement.

Before outlining relevant conceptual debates, definitions are in order because usage of key terms and concepts varies among those working from a transnational perspective. I follow Linda Basch et al.’s (1994) use of *transmigrants* to describe those who, as part of their everyday lives, help construct and maintain social institutions, organizations, and practices spanning national borders.¹⁰ The term thus can include persons who appear to be “settled” and would normally be termed *immigrants*. A key argument of this perspective is that migration and settlement are not necessarily unidirectional or definitive. Rather, significant numbers of persons (transmigrants) orient their lives around more than one nation-state on a systematic basis.

To deal with confusion about units and levels of analysis, I distinguish between transnational communities and transnational social spaces or fields. *Transnational communities* are multi-sited forms of transnational social organization linked to particular localities or “small” regions of origin, in which members’ shared geographic origin is a key element of their individual and collective identities (Goldring 1996, 2001). This socially constructed form of organization and identity has relevance for most of the people involved, including nonmigrants (Mahler 1998). I also use *transnational*

10. Portes et al. (1999) argue against using the term *transmigrants* because it does not describe a new phenomenon (that is, existing terms such as *migrant* are adequate) and because it is difficult to define and measure systematically who is a transmigrant and who is not. These points are well taken, but the term *transmigrant* does serve to draw attention to the potentially equivocal or multivalent and transnational frames of reference that some migrants draw on in the regular course of their lives. Given the lack of better semantic options, I use *migrant* in most cases but occasionally use *transmigrant* to underscore the transnationality of certain practices or relations.

communities to emphasize collective transnational practices, as I am not focusing on individual-level transnationalism such as entrepreneurship (compare Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt 1999). I use *transnational social spaces* (Pries 1999, 2000), *fields* (Basch et al. 1994; Glick Schiller et al. 1995), or *social formations* (Guarnizo 1998) to denote broader processes and arenas of practice that include transnational communities as well as other social actors, organizations, and institutions (the national state, political authorities, political parties, and nongovernmental organizations). Finally, I distinguish between *transmigrant-led* and *state-led transnational processes* to draw attention to the analytically distinct roles of transmigrant networks and agency in producing and reproducing transnational communities versus federal policies in maintaining transnational social spaces.¹¹

Researchers who use a transnational approach are also reworking it, stimulated in part by critiques from inside and outside the ranks of its proponents. Key areas of debate include the alleged newness of transnational processes (Foner 1999; Glick Schiller 1998); the definition and measurement of transnationalism or transnational practices (Portes 1996; Portes et al. 1999); inadequate analyses of gender in transnational processes (Mahler 1999, 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997); and questions about whether transnational practices reproduce or challenge established hierarchies of power in terms of class, gender, race, and political control (Basch et al. 1994; Kearney 1994; Mahler 1998; Guarnizo 1998; Goldring 1998b, 1999a; R. Smith 1998).

With respect to the last question, the literature addressing issues of political power and control in the context of Mexico-U.S. transnationalism offers conclusions at both ends of a spectrum. At one end are “optimistic” analyses that frame transnationalism as a path toward less control by the Mexican state and greater autonomy (Nagengast and Kearney 1990; Kearney 1994).¹² Michael Kearney’s work from the early 1990s on Mixtec indigenous transmigrants presented their transnationalism as a basis for building pan-ethnic solidarities that offered a way to evade or challenge the state’s authority and control.¹³ At the other end of the spectrum, others have ar-

11. Guarnizo and Smith (1998) made the useful distinction between transnationalism from below versus transnationalism from above to signal differences in power, scale, and resources available to transnational social actors. Kin-mediated or transmigrant-led transnational practices exemplify transnationalism from below, which can also include the activities of small-scale grassroots movements. Similarly, national-state-mediated transnational social fields are a common type of transnationalism from above, although the activities of international NGOs, some political parties, and transnational corporations also fall into this category.

12. For a similar argument, see Rodríguez (1996).

13. Recent analyses of the movement claiming extraterritorial voting rights for Mexicans in the United States (such as Calderón 1999) tend to be consistent with the optimistic reading of transnationalism. The development of established transnational communities is viewed as an important condition, along with changes in the profile of Mexican migrants (more educated, urban, and legalized through IRCA) and political opening in Mexico, which makes this demand possible (but see Fitzgerald 2000).

gued that transnational practices reproduced PRI and Mexican state control (Sandoval 1997; Guarnizo 1998). For example, in comparing Dominican and Mexican state responses to migration, Luis Eduardo Guarnizo (1998) argued that Mexican state policies and economically successful (mestizo) transmigrants reproduced ruling-party power and control as well as class and gender hierarchies.

Divergent conclusions like these may result from differences in theoretical approach, methodology, period effects, and variation among the groups being studied. Similarly, Kearney focused on migrant-led transnationalism while Guarnizo and Sandoval's work emphasizes state-led initiatives. Recent work conducted in various parts of Mexico suggests that there is more to the issue of state-transmigrant relations than these positions have suggested.¹⁴

INCREASING POLITIZATION OF MEXICO-U.S. TRANSNATIONAL SPACES: TRANSMIGRANT-LED AND STATE-LED PROCESSES

Overview of Transmigrant-led Transnationalism

Mexicans in the United States have been laying the bases for and building transnational circuits and communities since the border was established in the mid-nineteenth century (Rouse 1991, Goldring 1996). The literature on migration recognizes the way families and communities have extended across "the line" in numerous case studies tracing the history of migrant networks from specific Mexican villages and regions (Mines 1981; Massey, Alarcón et al. 1987; Durand and Massey 1992; Massey, Goldring, and Durand 1994). This migrant-led and kin- and fictive-kin-mediated transnationalism is not inevitable but has developed in many rural areas in "traditional" sending states such as Michoacán, Jalisco, Zacatecas, Guanajuato, and Oaxaca. Transnationalized localities have also emerged from "recent" sending areas including Puebla, Guerrero, Durango, and Veracruz. Manifestations of this form of transnationalism include families spread across various sites in transnational communities; the celebration of "local" patron saints' day fiestas in more than one site of a transnational community; travel between sites in such communities to mark life-cycle events and holidays or for business or other purposes; circulation of goods, artifacts, and money; businesses in the United States and Mexico that depend on migration in one way or another; and travel by priests from Mexico to the United States to visit their paisanos (see the studies by R. Smith and by

14. Authors who have examined Mexican state-transmigrant relations through fieldwork in different parts of Mexico include R. Smith (1995, 1997, 1998, 1999) in Puebla and Zacatecas; Goldring (1992, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1999a, 2001) in Zacatecas; Boruchoff (1998) in Guerrero; Rivera-Salgado (1997, 2000) in Oaxaca and Michoacán; Moctezuma (1998) in Zacatecas; Besserer (1997) in Oaxaca; and Castañeda (2002) and Fitzgerald (2000) in Michoacán.

Goldring; Boruchoff 1998; Martínez 1998a, 1999; Ross Pineda 1998; Espinosa 1998).

While the social networks that underlie transnational communities are not new, several processes are contributing to their proliferation and maintenance. The literature on transnationalism has emphasized the role of changes in technology that have made it easier and cheaper to keep in touch with relatives and friends in Mexico (R. Smith 1998), thus facilitating remaining actively involved in community life in one's place of origin. At the same time, globalization of political and economic relations has contributed to a series of economic crises and policy shifts in Mexico that have left increasing numbers of individuals and communities dependent on dollar remittances.¹⁵

Migrant-led transnationalism takes on a tangible and supra-familial form via hometown and homestate umbrella associations.¹⁶ These voluntary associations raise money to finance projects in "home communities" and may also involve cultural, educational, social, and sports activities in the United States (Zabin and Escala 1998; Imaz 1995). This article focuses on transmigrant organizations because they represent a well-established formal and collective public expression of migrant-led transnationalism.¹⁷ Perhaps more important, they have been a key target and element of the Mexican state's efforts to redefine membership in the nation.

Mexican voluntary associations have existed for decades in cities like Los Angeles, where Mexican settlement has a rich history. Many began as small and independent hometown mutual-aid societies that helped pay for funeral expenses or repatriating the dead for burial in Mexico. The Comité de Beneficencia Mexicana, the oldest formal Mexican organization in Los Angeles, was established in the 1930s with the help of the Mexican consul to assist Mexicans affected by Depression-era deportations (González Gutiérrez 1995; Balderrama 1982). Hometown clubs were also formed to build or improve churches in the places of origin and to organize and finance patron saint celebrations. With this experience, groups turned to other community projects such as building schools, community halls, clinics, and sports

15. Efforts to estimate the amounts, uses, and economic impacts of migrant remittances in Mexico have generated a sizable literature (see Lozano 1993). It lies beyond the scope of this article, but recent data indicate that between 6 and 7 million Mexicans in the United States send home nearly 8 billion dollars a year to more than 1.1 million households. This level makes remittances more important to foreign exchange than agricultural exports and tourism and second only to oil revenues. See "Mandan paisanos 8 mil millones de dólares al año," *Reforma*, Infotel Noticias, 20 Mar. 2000, at <www.infotel.com/noticias/nota/20000320/097162.htm>.

16. I use *hometown associations* as a generic term for both locality-based clubs and state-level umbrella organizations, distinguishing between the two when necessary.

17. In spite of their collective dimension, certain actors are generally overrepresented in the leadership of transmigrant associations, such as men with legal status, often small business owners (compare Levitt 1997; Guarnizo 1998; Goldring 2001).

fields, drilling wells, installing drinking-water systems, and paving roads. In many cases, sports teams and leagues helped lay the organizational base for hometown associations (Goldring 1992, 1996; González Gutiérrez 1995; R. Smith 1995, 1998; Imaz 1995; Fitzgerald 2000).

Over time, some organizations shifted their orientation to include legal aid and cultural programs in the United States. Others developed ties with local politicians, governments, and Mexican-American and community organizations. But most hometown associations did not have close ties with Mexican-American or later Chicano and Latino organizations such as LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens), MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense Foundation), and the NCLR (National Council of La Raza) (Zabin and Escala 1998). Although *mexicanos* and Mexicans of subsequent generations may face similar processes of racialization,¹⁸ hometown groups and Latino organizations often had divergent political agendas. Latino groups emphasized electoral politics and civil rights as means of political empowerment in the United States. They had little in common with and limited incentive for reaching out to the overwhelmingly first-generation hometown and homestate organizations, which were usually made up of homeland-oriented noncitizens.¹⁹

The number of hometown associations and state, regional, or ethnic umbrella organizations registered with the Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles increased dramatically in the early 1990s, when consulates began to foster their development. An enthusiastic program officer at the Los Angeles consulate facilitated the formation or regrouping of many hometown associations during this period. According to Zabin and Escala (1998), more than 170 hometown associations from eighteen Mexican states were active in 1998 in the Los Angeles area, most incorporated as nonprofit groups. An unknown number of clubs were not registered with the Consulate (Zabin and Escala 1998). The Los Angeles figures indicate the importance of this form of organization.²⁰ More difficult to gauge is the number of active members, given that many clubs are run by a core group. Yet large turnouts at fund-raising events and the amounts of money mobilized for projects indicate that many Mexicans are involved in these groups, at least indirectly.

18. Winant (1994) defined *racialization* as “the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group.” I use the concept here to draw attention to the process whereby Mexicans and persons of Mexican origin (as well as other Latin Americans and their descendants) are grouped together through stereotyping and racial and ethnic labeling.

19. In a marked departure from the overall pattern, the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) has initiated an outreach program for hometown associations. Jorge Hinojosa, telephone conversation, June 2000.

20. The pattern of accelerated hometown-association growth also took place in other areas with high concentrations of Mexican-born immigrants, such as Chicago, New York, Houston, San José, and Dallas, cities that also witnessed active consular outreach programs.

The homeland orientation and types of community projects typical of most hometown associations underscore the importance of the place of origin (*el terruño*) or in some cases the region or state of origin as a basis for collective identity and action. Without glorifying the term *community*, it is worth keeping in mind that a sense of membership in a multilocal and transnationalized “community” underlies the claims of substantive membership and citizenship expressed in most hometown association projects. I use *substantive membership* and *citizenship* here to refer to de facto forms of participation and membership claims not limited to formal political citizenship. Claims involving national identity may well accompany the subnational identity and affiliation, but participation in hometown associations’ fund-raising and projects is based largely on membership and identities that are constituted as more “local” than national and more substantive than formal.

Transmigrant hometown associations are not the only or the most important form of organization or arena of participation for first-generation Mexicans in the United States. Formal labor unions, informal workers’ unions, neighborhood or community associations, religious groups, and various other voluntary associations oriented toward their lives in the United States have also been significant. Yet without romanticizing them, it is safe to say that for Mexicans maintaining strong ties to their places of origin, more or less formal versions of hometown clubs have become a common vehicle for giving collective and focused expression to their claims of substantive membership in their place and country of origin.²¹ Until the late 1980s and early 1990s, these activities were conducted largely outside the sphere of influence of the Mexican state.

Overview of Mexican State-led Transnationalism

State-led transnationalism describes national policies that foster or maintain transnational social spaces. Building on the work of Guarnizo (1998) and Robert Smith (1997), the phrase refers to institutionalized national policies and programs that attempt to expand the scope of a national state’s political, economic, social, and moral regulation to include emigrants and their descendants outside the national territory. As Smith (1997) has argued, transnationalism led by the Mexican state has been key in establishing what may be relatively long-lasting transnational fields. Specific forms of state-led transnationalism vary and may include efforts to monitor and facilitate remittance transfers; policies aimed at creating incentives for investment, funding, and promotion of cultural and educational exchange

21. The binational coalitions that developed to promote the 2000 vote abroad expressed related claims of membership. But they focused on formal political citizenship rights as an indicator of national membership.

programs aimed at emigrants; promotion of home-country tourism among emigrants or their descendants; public statements by political authorities about the importance of emigrants to the country; and laws permitting double nationality, dual citizenship, or both.

Transnational initiatives led by the Mexican state were limited before the late 1980s, when a series of new policies and programs marked a turning point in national policy toward Mexicans living abroad. Guarnizo (1998) described Mexican policy before the late 1980s as providing limited consular protection to Mexican nationals, focusing on repatriation, and promoting cultural nationalism among Mexicans in the United States. This characterization is consistent with what Rachel Sherman (1997) called "a period of national introversion," when the Mexican state largely ignored those who left the national territory except for those in the Bracero Program, periodic efforts at repatriation, and various ad hoc responses to U.S. immigration policy.²² Manuel García y Griego (1998) summed up the Mexican state's position on migrants during the 1970s and 1980s as "a policy of having no policy." This lack of policy is particularly clear in the Mexican government's refusal to take a stance on the 1983 Simpson-Mazzoli Bill and the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). Regardless of the label used to describe the period preceding the late 1980s, scholars agree that Mexicans who left were considered by political authorities to have exited the imagined national community. Ad hoc assistance and efforts to encourage nationalist loyalty among Mexicans abroad appeared to be minor gestures not aimed at including them in the ongoing process of nation building.

During the late 1980s, the Mexican government began to reach out to Mexicans abroad in an effort to establish a new relationship with the Mexican diaspora. The reasons for this shift have been well documented and include several related processes. Chief among them were domestic challenges to the PRI's hegemony and the support received by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in his campaign tours in the United States prior to the 1988 presidential elections, which prompted strategies to improve the PRI's legitimacy abroad. A second factor was the legalization of nearly three million Mexicans through IRCA and the family reunification accompanying this process, which created a large cohort of persons who considered themselves Mexicans but had a secure legal position in the United States. A third factor was the government's desire to create a pro-NAFTA and generally pro-Mexico lobby among newly legalized Mexicans as well as professionals and entrepreneurs of Mexican origin. A final manifestation was the interest in foster-

22. Martínez (1999b) provided another example of ad hoc Mexican government intervention in the lives of emigrants in noting that during the Porfiriato, Mexican consulates throughout the U.S. Southwest gathered information on groups of immigrants opposed to the regime and worked to repress or disband them.

ing or maintaining close ties with Mexicans and those of Mexican descent as a way of maintaining remittances and promoting investment (Dresser 1991, 1993; González Gutiérrez 1993, 1995; Guarnizo 1998; R. Smith 1997, 1998; Ross Pineda 1999; Goldring 1997; Espinosa 1999). Growing anti-immigrant hysteria and legislation in the United States, particularly in California, later reinforced the Mexican government's rationale for increasing the profile of Mexican consuls and consulates and for starting to encourage naturalization as a way for Mexicans to defend their rights (Martínez 1998a; Guarnizo 1998).²³

The new strategy began under President Salinas de Gortari with a set of policies and programs to promote closer social, cultural, and economic ties with various sectors of the Mexican and Mexican-origin population in the United States. Most of the programs were aimed at Mexican-born persons with strong ties to their places of origin: those who returned periodically or sent money back home or both. This target group included the newly legalized as well as sectors of the undocumented and permanent resident population. These federal programs included the Programa Paisano, which was supposed to improve the treatment received by returning Mexicans at the hands of customs agents and police (Guarnizo 1998), and the Programa para las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Extranjero (PCME).

The PCME represented a major element of the Mexican state's efforts to redefine the relationship with Mexicans abroad, especially those in the United States.²⁴ The program operated under the Secretaría de Relaciones Extranjeras (SRE), directed by ministry staff who also worked with personnel in the Mexican consulates and Institutos Culturales Mexicanos. The PCME was organized around thematic areas such as education, culture, sports, business, health, communication, and communities. The communities program in the PCME carried out the mandate of fostering closer ties between Mexicans in the United States and their places of origin. To this end, its designers built on the existing practices and objectives of hometown clubs: their efforts to implement small projects in hometowns, donate equipment, or otherwise help their communities of origin. The communities program also promoted the creation of new hometown clubs and umbrella organizations.

Between 1993 and 1995, the communities program worked with Solidaridad Internacional, the short-lived international counterpart to PRO-NASOL (Salinas's anti-poverty program) to plan, finance, and implement community projects. Following the domestic Solidaridad model, the "international version" established a federal funding program that matched every dollar raised by a U.S.-based hometown club with two dollars, one

23. Interviews with the staff at the Secretaría de Relaciones Extranjeras, July and Oct. 1996.

24. For further discussions of the PCME and related programs, including the Dos por Uno, see R. Smith (1995, 1997, 1998), Guarnizo (1998), González Gutiérrez (1995), Boruchoff (1998), Goldring (1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1999a), Moctezuma (1998), Espinosa (1999), and Leiken (2000).

from the federal government and one from the appropriate state government (hence it was named the *Dos por Uno* program). To implement this national program in Mexican states with high rates of migration to the United States, federal authorities needed cooperation from state and municipal authorities as well as from groups in local communities. Paving a road, building a drinking-water system, or establishing a baseball field in dispersed villages required equipment, materials, negotiations, and especially local knowledge, none of which were at the disposal of the PCME or *Solidaridad Internacional* staff in Mexico City. Uneven interest or capacity on the part of these subnational authorities, combined with employee turnover at *Solidaridad Internacional* and the financial crisis of January 1995, left the organization in disarray and without a budget. The "Two for One" program continued in limited form in some places but on an ad hoc basis. Only in Zacatecas did it continue in an institutionalized manner through special agreements between successive governors, the federal government, and the *Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos*.

With the erosion of *Solidaridad Internacional* and the budget crisis, the PCME attempted to devolve and institutionalize the communities program at a subnational level by trying to get the governors of sending states who had not already done so to establish closer ties with migrants. As part of this strategy, the communities program also encouraged and helped finance municipal presidents' travel to the United States to visit their constituents. Here too the PCME took the lead from existing practices in some states and municipalities and attempted to generalize the processes.²⁵

The outreach programs continued under the Zedillo administration, but the strategy of fostering ties with Mexicans and people of Mexican origin shifted to become more universalistic, explicitly extraterritorial, and perhaps more rhetorical. This change in orientation began through an official redefinition of the Mexican nation to include Mexicans living outside the national territory (PEF 1995; Guarnizo 1998; R. Smith 1997, 1998, 1999; Goldring 1998b, 1999a). State-migrant relations continued to be renegotiated through constitutional changes that reaffirmed the distinction between citizenship and nationality²⁶ by establishing that Mexicans who obtained another citizenship would not lose their Mexican nationality and permitting the recovery of Mexican nationality by the foreign-born children of Mexicans. These laws were approved in 1996 and went into effect in 1998.

Another change approved by congress in 1996 eliminated legal restrictions on the right to vote by nonresidents (Ross Pineda 1998, 1999;

25. Interviews at the *Secretaría de Relaciones Extranjeras*, July 1996 and Jan. 1997.

26. Mexican citizenship is neither automatic nor synonymous with nationality. Rather, it can be acquired by those who satisfy certain requirements when they reach the age of eighteen. I am grateful to Jesús Martínez and Leticia Calderón for pointing out this fact.

Martínez 1998a, 1998b, 1998c; Calderón 1998; Faret 1998). In 1998 a special commission established by the Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE) concluded that no logistical impediments blocked voting by Mexicans abroad, and it outlined several scenarios for this process.²⁷ Passage of these legal changes indicated broader changes in Mexican politics: the PRI did not control the Cámara de Diputados, and the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD) became a strong force in the negotiations that led to the legislative changes allowing the extraterritorial vote. Measures that would have made the extraterritorial vote for the 2000 presidential elections a reality, however, were blocked in 1999 in the PRI-dominated Senado (Garza 1999).

The contemporary period of active transnational outreach by the Mexican state was prompted by conjunctural political conditions that led elements of the PRI to seek closer ties with emigrants and persons of Mexican origin in the United States. Through the *Dos por Uno* and related PCME programs, the Mexican state was building on the nationalist sentiment and loyalty of *paisanos* and using their desire to help their communities of origin to become a facilitator and partner in this process. In this effort to reframe state-society relations with emigrants, the state extended the Salinas-era model of state-society “partnership” or solidarity across the northern border, replacing local community committees with migrant organizations and fostering the proliferation of hometown associations. Following a populist version of neoliberalism (see Dresser 1991), federal and state funding was allocated to groups that raised their share of money for projects. The shared financing was designed to enhance opportunities for local communities (in this case, transmigrant organizations) to be involved in community affairs. These partnerships were supposed to help reframe state-society relations by reducing state paternalism and clientelism and improving transparency and accountability.

But these programs also signaled the state’s attempt to construct transmigrants and their organizations as one more in a series of corporate groups that the Mexican state could co-opt by engaging them in corporatist and clientelist relations (Guarnizo 1998). These initiatives and the amended nationality legislation could be interpreted as part of a top-down political project to improve the ruling party’s image among a disaffected sector of the population and to bring those Mexicans into the symbolic fold of the national community (compare Dresser 1993). They included channeling government money into state-approved hometown associations, facilitating the travel of municipal presidents to meet with their constituencies in the United States, supplying consulates with Mexican textbooks to distribute, arranging sports and educational exchanges, providing outreach and information on AIDs and other health issues, and attempting to improve the reception of returning Mexicans.

27. “El voto de los mexicanos en el extranjero,” *La Jornada*, Perfil, 16 Nov. 1998.

Although Mexicans abroad were brought into the national imaginary more explicitly and universalistically, these policies and programs did not signify that their incorporation was substantive. In practical terms, the non-loss of nationality has meant that Mexicans living abroad have the property rights of nationals without the political rights of citizens. Raúl Ross Pineda has interpreted this outcome as a Mexican government strategy to encourage investment and continued remittances by Mexicans who decided to become U.S. citizens and Mexican-Americans (1999).²⁸ The absence of political rights and the significant political opposition to the extraterritorial vote within the PRI and elements in the PAN (Partido Acción Nacional) lead me to characterize the state's activities as extending a limited and symbolic form of membership to migrants, transmigrants, emigrants, and their descendants. Such membership is limited because it does not include political rights and symbolic because it does little to alter the benefits or duties associated with membership in the nation.²⁹

Borrowing from Veronica Schild (1998), I call this relationship "market membership" because it is based on a neoliberal model of state-society relations in which individuals obtain goods and services through the market, presumably with little state intervention.³⁰ State intervention is rendered less visible through policies that emphasize local cost-sharing and responsibility and claim to reverse state paternalism. Political membership is defined in terms of market-readiness, that is, remittances, investment, and consumption. This offer of membership depends on transmigrants' affective ties and nationalist sentiments to mobilize and maintain financial contributions and remittances, but it provides no formal mechanisms for political participation or representation.

The discussion thus far might lead one to conclude that despite the long history of migrant-led transnationalism, the Mexican state has held the balance of power and set the terms of reference for the relationship with transmigrants, terms that have severely limited the scope of transmigrant autonomy, power, and participation. This conclusion would "transnationalize" the interpretation of the Mexican state as centralized, hegemonic, and co-optive. While not entirely inaccurate, such a reading is problematic

28. Raúl Ross Pineda, "El voto incómodo," *La Jornada*, Masiosare (supplement), 13 Sept. 1998, at <<http://serpiente.dgsca.unam.mx/jornada/1988/sep98/980913/mas-ross042.html>>.

29. Before these legal changes, many transmigrants bought property or made improvements on existing property for reasons that had less to do with legal status than with social status. Whether significant investment would be attracted by this apparent improvement in property security remains to be seen.

30. Schild (1998) has used the term *market citizenship* to describe the redefinition of citizenship in neoliberal terms, emphasizing the "autonomy, self-sufficiency and discipline" of market-ready citizens. The concept underscores the relationship between market position and one's capacity to exercise claims and rights associated with citizenship. In an earlier piece (Goldring 1998b), I used *market citizenship* but am using *market membership* here because it is more consistent with the lack of formal political rights for migrants.

because it is partial. This interpretation misses the crucial role of transmigrants and their organizations in renegotiating their relationship with the national state. It also overlooks the dynamic arena of state and municipal relations with transmigrants.

The Intersection of State-led and Transmigrant-led Transnationalism: Zacatecan Organizations in the Los Angeles Area

Drawing a distinction between state-led and transmigrant-led initiatives that generate or institutionalize transnational spaces is analytically useful. But emphasizing transmigrant-led initiatives plays down the role of the national state, while stressing state-led initiatives gives too much weight to state policies. Moreover, this distinction can become fuzzy when examining specific cases.

Zacatecan organizations in the Los Angeles area stand out in several ways.³¹ They have a long history and much experience, a well established and institutionalized umbrella organization, and a disproportionately large number of hometown associations. The umbrella organization has achieved a close relationship with successive Zacatecan state governors and a number of mayors and served as a key financial partner in the two-for-one matching-funds program. The following discussion demonstrates the importance of viewing the relationship between transmigrant-led and state-led forms of transnationalism as dynamic, and it begins to develop the argument for examining national state-transmigrant relations at a subnational level.

Brief history / Several Zacatecan hometown clubs operated in Los Angeles in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1972 eight clubs from Zacatecas formed the first homestate or regional grouping: the Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos (Gonzalez Gutiérrez 1995). Soon clubs and associations from other states joined them, and the organization became the Federación de Clubes Mexicanos in 1980. But according to several Zacatecanos, those from Zacatecas were always the most numerous and active members. In 1985 the organization became the Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos Unidos once again. Most clubs from other states in Los Angeles continued to operate separately, but less actively than the Zacatecanos. The number of clubs in the federation grew from six in 1986 to twenty-two in 1989, and to approximately forty by 1996 (González Gutiérrez 1995).³² The little information available on Zacatecan organizations during the first half of the twentieth cen-

31. For more on Zacatecan organizations in California, see R. Smith (1997, 1998, 1999), Moctezuma (1997, 1998), Goldring (1992, 1997, 1998a, 1999a, 2001), and Zabin and Escala (1998).

32. Author's interviews in Los Angeles with leaders of the Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos, 16 June 1996, and club leader from Jalpa, 19 Nov. 1996.

tury indicates that in this case, the umbrella organization predated the interest of Presidents Salinas de Gortari and Zedillo in developing ties with Mexicans abroad. Yet the number of hometown associations increased dramatically after the Mexican state began to promote their development through the PCME.

The hometown associations that made up the Zacatecan and Mexican federations were usually formed as social clubs that held events like dances to raise funds for projects in their communities of origin. Many early projects involved improvements for churches and celebrations of patron saints' days "back home," but they were often followed by infrastructure and service-delivery projects (such as providing potable water, clinics, and paved roads) and projects associated with status and leisure (like rodeo rings and plazas). Most of these projects were carried out without federal government involvement, although municipal governments made in-kind contributions in some places. Such a history is common to most long-standing hometown associations, whether they belonged to an umbrella organization or not and regardless of state of origin. Membership in the Zacatecan federation, however, meant help with fund-raising. Members went to each other's events, and new members learned from the expertise of established leaders, some of whom had participated in the *Comité de Beneficencia Mexicana*. For example, they learned how to hold fund-raisers, obtain a temporary liquor license for their events, and advertise as well as how to assess the pros and cons of becoming a nonprofit organization.³³

Organization and institutionalization / The *Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California (FCZSC)*, as it is now called, is one of the most institutionalized of the Mexican hometown-association umbrella organizations. During the middle to late 1990s, it included thirty-five to forty-five dues-paying hometown clubs, each having three elected representatives who could cast votes in federation meetings. The organization established statutes, elected officers, and held regular meetings. Many clubs were incorporated as nonprofit organizations. Some members have served in positions of leadership for more than one term, but elections also brought about alternation of power between different groups. While I was observing federation meetings, they were run efficiently by moderators who kept a speaker's list. Votes on key decisions were often preceded by periods of debate in which participants articulated different positions.³⁴

33. Interview with federation leaders, 16 June 1996; club leader from Durango, 16 Nov. 1996; and club leader from Puebla, 3 Oct. 1996.

34. The day-to-day running of federation business was fairly participatory and transparent. But this appearance of democracy may be compromised in several ways. Active participation involves a heavy commitment of time, so that in practice, members with flexible schedules and relatively good incomes (such as small business owners) are more likely to

Numbers and institutionalization / The Zacatecan federation boasted the most affiliated clubs in the Los Angeles area, despite estimates indicating that Zacatecos ranked third (rather than first) in the share of population by state of origin (see table 1). The first column in table 1 estimates the proportion of Mexicans by state of origin. Because U.S.-based large-scale survey data sets contain no information on the state of origin of Mexicans, it is difficult to determine the relationship between the number of clubs from a state and its share of the emigrant population.³⁵ Starting in the early 1990s, however, Mexican consulates began to collect this and other information from people who applied for *matrículas* (identification cards).³⁶ Although these data are also problematic, *matrículas* provide an estimate of the Mexican population served by consulates, by state of origin. According to these data, 10 percent of Mexicans in the Los Angeles area came from Zacatecas, compared with 29 percent from Jalisco and 15 percent from Michoacán. These three states accounted for 27, 18, and 4 percent of the hometown associations, respectively, and only the first two had institutionalized umbrella organizations. The information in table 1 demonstrates that a consistent and positive relationship did not exist between the proportion of Mexicans from a particular state of origin and the number of organizations registered with the consulate or the presence or absence of an umbrella organization. This finding is one reason for examining the history and role of hometown associations and umbrella organizations at a subnational level.

Range of activities / The Zacatecan federation and some of the affiliated clubs have been involved in an array of activities that vary in geographic orientation, contact with U.S. versus Mexican political authorities, and degree of contact with political authorities. They have participated in U.S.-based ini-

take on leadership positions. Participation in the federation is also a gendered process: men dominate the organization (Goldring 2001). Finally, behind-the-scenes deals with political authorities in Mexico may help determine the funding or priority attached to particular projects.

35. Surveys conducted along the border or in Mexico may ask what state a person came from and where he or she plans to travel, but they do not provide accurate information on the proportion of persons coming from a given state of origin to a specific locality in the United States.

36. These cards were used in dealings with consulates and in returning to Mexico. As far as I know, they began as an "invented" migrant identification card in that they are not part of the array of valid identifications used in Mexico. In 2001 they started to gain currency as a valid form of identification, especially for undocumented persons. Some banks (Wells Fargo) and authorities in certain cities (San Francisco) and counties (Orange County) now accept them. See Leticia García-Irigoyen, "Crece la demanda de matrículas consulares: Ocurre después de que las autoridades policiales del condado de Orange anunciaron que reconocerán dicho documento mexicano como identificación válida," *La Opinión*, 10 Nov. 2001; and Pedro Pulgar, "Wells Fargo reconoce la matrícula consular: Los mexicanos podrán hacer gestiones bancarias con ese documento," *La Opinión*, 8 Nov. 2001.

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TABLE 1 *Mexicans and Hometown Associations in Los Angeles and Offices for Migrants in Mexico, 1994–1996*

<i>State of Origin in Mexico</i>	<i>Est. % of Mexicans in LA^a</i>	<i>Hometown Associations in LA, 1994</i>	<i>Hometown Associations in LA, 1996</i>	<i>Statewide Umbrella Orgs. in LA</i>	<i>State Office for Migrants in Mexico, 1997^b</i>
Aguascalientes	1	1	1	no	no
Baja California	3	1	1	no ^c	no
Chihuahua	2	5	4	no	no
Colima	1	2	2	no	no
Durango ^d	4	10	11	yes	yes ^e
Districto Federal	5	0	0	no	no
Guanajuato ^d	5	3	1	no ^c	yes
Guerrero	3	1	1	no	yes
Jalisco ^d	29	31	30	yes	yes
Michoacán ^d	15	7	6	no ^c	yes ^e
Nayarit	3	22	27	yes	no
Oaxaca ^d	2			yes ^f	yes ^e
Puebla	3	6	9	no	yes ^e
San Luis Potosí ^d		5	11	yes	yes
Sinaloa	4	10	12	yes	no
Sonora	1	1	1	no	no
Tlaxcala		4	1	yes	no
Yucatán		6	2	no	no
Zacatecas ^d	10	44	45	yes	yes
Others	<9			no	no
Total	100	159	165	8	9

Sources: Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles; interviews with the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores and consular staff.

- ^a Estimates are based on consular data for 1992 and data in Zabin and Escala (1998).
- ^b Guerrero had an office for migrants, but no hometown associations from Durango existed in Los Angeles in 1996 (one was formed the next year). Most Guerrero hometown associations were in Chicago.
- ^c The name of one hometown association implied a statewide membership, but in practice it was not an institutionalized umbrella organization.
- ^d Municipal president visited Los Angeles between Sept. 1995 and Oct. 1996.
- ^e The state office was either very new or staff had been assigned to deal with migrants but not in a consistent fashion. Although the numbers add up to nine, in practice there were eight, as the one in Durango existed mainly on paper.
- ^f Oaxaca had three regional organizations made up of village-level hometown associations. The regional associations were registered with the consulate, but not the hometown associations.

tiatives that may or may not require contact with U.S. authorities, such as sponsoring soccer teams and playoffs in the United States and scholarships for Zacatecan students in the Los Angeles area or working with other organizations and some politicians in the movement against California Proposi-

tion 187.³⁷ The federation and clubs have also participated in California-Zacatecas projects, including sponsoring or cosponsoring student exchanges, some teacher exchanges, and sister-cities projects. In recent years, some members of the federation began to develop ties with Latino politicians and organizations and formed a separate organization for political activity in the United States and Zacatecas (Goldring 1998b). Most of the time and resources of the federation and affiliated hometown associations, however, have been devoted to fund-raising for hometown projects and lobbying Mexican political authorities at various levels. Such lobbying has represented a process of negotiating the relationship between these authorities and federation leaders and members, including benefits associated with federation membership, such as the terms governing two-for-one matching and discounted access to the Mexican health insurance system (see Goldring 1998a).

To finance community projects in their hometowns, clubs affiliated with the Zacatecan federation raise money through dances, raffles, or collections. The funds are then leveraged through the Mexican government matching-funds program. Receiving these funds is contingent on federation membership. Each year in November, the federation organizes the annual Día del Zacatecano, when a prominent member of the community in the United States (usually a businessman) is honored with the title of Zacatecano del Año. The governor of Zacatecas usually goes to Los Angeles for this event. Since the mid-1990s, these visits have included a “work meeting” held at the consulate with club leaders affiliated with the federation as well as meetings with entrepreneurs to promote investment in Zacatecas. The work meeting involves a presentation of past and planned projects funded through the matching-funds program and may include club leaders asking the governor to follow up on or help initiate a project. Mayors from *municipios* with active clubs also attend the work meeting. The governor also crowns the winner of the annual Miss Zacatecas contest (FCZSC 1998–1999). The day after the dance, the governor attends a picnic where Zacatecanos can talk with him informally.

37. In November 1994, California voters passed Proposition 187, which would have cut off some health and social services (including public education) to undocumented persons and their children. The initiative was ruled unconstitutional by a U.S. district judge in 1998. The following year, California Governor Grey Davis took measures that “voided the most controversial provision” of the proposition. See Anthony York, “R.I.P. Prop 187: California Gov. Grey Davis’ Flip-Flop Marks the End of Immigrant Bashing as a Viable Political Tactic,” *Salon News*, 30 July 1999, at <<http://www.salon.com/new/feature/9999/07/30/immigration/>>. Although legally dead, the measure provoked heated debate, laid the basis for subsequent federal legislation curtailing services for immigrants, and appeared to lead to a sharp rise in naturalization applications among Latin American permanent residents.

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TABLE 2 *Zacatecas and Total Expenditures for Dos por Uno Matching-Funds Programs, 1993–1997*

<i>Expenditure</i>	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Zacatecas Dos por Uno	1,877,428	3,769,190	3,905,354	7,066	16,826
National Dos por Uno, Solidaridad Internacional	6,497,466	10,544,518	9,798,000		
Zacatecas Share of Total	29%	36%	40%		

Sources: Zacatecas data taken from the state's Secretaría de Planeación y Finanzas (1998). The national data are from SEDESOL (n.d.). These figures were in unadjusted pesos (*nuevos pesos*). Data for 1998 are not included, as they were based on projected expenditures, many of which did not occur due to the gubernatorial turnover.

Note: SEDESOL (n.d.) cites slightly different totals for Zacatecas. According to this source, Zacatecas's share of national total would have been 36% in 1993 and 46% in 1994.

The Dos por Uno and political clout / The Zacatecan federation and political authorities in Zacatecas are not the only actors to raise funds for or promote community projects in Mexico.³⁸ Transmigrant groups from Jalisco and San Luis Potosí have also worked with state and municipal political authorities on community projects in Mexico.³⁹ Groups from Puebla, Michoacán, and Guanajuato have carried out projects in Mexico in a more ad hoc manner, with or without Mexican authorities.⁴⁰ Oaxacan organizations are also active in community projects on both sides of the border, although usually without state involvement.⁴¹ Yet Zacatecas remains the state with the most institutionalized mechanism for carrying out community projects, namely the matching-funds program.

38. Again, my focus is on mechanisms for carrying out collective projects rather than on individual investments (Goldring 1999b). Some states, notably Jalisco and Guanajuato, have focused on promoting such investments.

39. Author's interviews at the Dirección de Atención a Jaliscienses, 4 July 1996, 30 May 1997, 9 June 1997; meeting of Jalisco mayors and the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 21 Jan. 1996; visits and interviews in thirteen localities in Jalisco between 31 May and 9 June 1997; with Jalisco club leaders, 14 June 1996; with club leaders from San Luis Potosí, 25 Nov. 1996, 27 Nov. 1996 (2 interviews), 19 May 1997, 22 May 1997; and governor's representative in San Luis Potosí, 2 Mar. 1997.

40. Interviews with Puebla club leaders in Los Angeles on 3 Oct. 1996 and 22 Oct. 1996; with Puebla government representatives on 17 and 19 Dec. 1996; visits to municipalities in Puebla on 18 Dec. 1996; with a Guanajuato state representative on 4 July 1996; with Guanajuato umbrella organization leaders in Los Angeles on 17 June 1996 and 16 Nov. 1996; and with Michoacán club leaders in Los Angeles on 30 Sept. 1996 (2 interviews), 2 Oct. 1996, and 15 Oct. 1996. On Puebla, see also R. Smith (1995, 1998), Macías and Herrera (1997), and López Angel and Cedeström (1992), and López Angel (2000).

41. Interviews with Oaxacan leaders in the United States on 14, 17, 22, and 25 May 1997; and with a former Oaxacan state representative in Mexico on 28 May 1997. Compare Rivera-Salgado (2000).

This institutionalization is reflected in levels of expenditures. Between 1993 and 1995, the federal matching-funds program run by the PCME and Solidaridad Internacional operated in six states including Zacatecas. Zacatecas consistently ranked highest in state-level expenditures (SEDESOL n.d.). Table 2 shows that the Zacatecas share of expenditures rose over the lifetime of the program (SEDESOL n.d.; Zacatecas Secretaría de Planeación y Finanzas 1998). Because the federal program ended in 1995, similar data for subsequent years are unavailable. It is clear nonetheless that total nominal spending under the Dos por Uno in Zacatecas continued to rise.

Participation in the Dos por Uno matching-funds program was a main reason cited by club leaders for wanting to join and being willing to pay dues to the Zacatecan federation.⁴² Club leaders also said that political authorities in Mexico (and in the United States) paid more attention to them because they were part of the large umbrella organization than if they were on their own. This opinion was echoed by their counterparts in Zacatecas. The attractiveness of the Dos por Uno for club members came from the program's ability to allow them to leverage U.S. earnings and translate them into "works that are good for the community." Carrying out projects enhanced the social status of participants (Goldring 1998a) and allowed them to exercise substantive citizenship, which contributed to their ability to enter into a negotiation with Mexican political authorities that enhanced their power vis-à-vis these authorities (Goldring 1998b).

Zacatecan exceptionalism: Founding stories, governors, and the importance of the subnational in the transnational / Why has the matching-funds program succeeded so well in Zacatecas? And does its success exemplify the Mexican state's ability to extraterritorialize its co-optive, clientelistic nation-building projects and strategies or rather transmigrants' efforts at grassroots, semi-independent organization? Abundant evidence supports the first interpretation. The corporatist nature of the relationship between the Mexican state and the federation can be perceived in the institutionalized pattern of relations between political authorities in Mexico (at the federal, state, and municipal levels) and federation leaders and also in the prerequisite of federation membership for hometown associations wishing to obtain matching funds. Corporatism alone does not necessarily imply clientelism, patronage, or a lack of autonomy, however, although they have tended to go together in Mexico. The case of the Mexican state and the Zacatecan federation contains nevertheless several elements that support an interpretation of clientelism, patronage, and lack of autonomy. The fact that the PCME was launched at least partly in response to Cárdenas's popularity in the 1988 presidential election suggests that defusing political support for the opposition was on the agenda of the program's planners, even though the issue of the extra-

42. Interviews with nineteen club leaders in the United States in 1996 and 1997.

territorial vote had not yet been widely discussed (see Dresser 1991, 1993). The lack of transparency in *Dos por Uno* decision making at the state level was another indicator of state control and lack of autonomy. Additional evidence was the fact that the federation's office rent was paid for by the governor of Zacatecas.

Yet an accurate characterization of Mexican state-transmigrant relations is not so straightforward. The issue of clientelism emerged during Ricardo Monreal's campaign for governor of Zacatecas, when the federation president was quoted in a Zacatecas newspaper as supporting Monreal. Unfortunately, this endorsement came before the PRI announced its candidate, who turned out not to be Monreal. The "mistake" was fixed the next day when the federation president rescinded his support. This debacle caused a critical split in the federation between those who supported outgoing Governor Arturo Romo Gutiérrez, the PRI, and the "old" (clientelist) ways of doing things and those who supported Monreal because they viewed him and their backing of him as an opportunity to renegotiate relations with the state and to operate more independently. What began as clear evidence of clientelism ironically ended up opening opportunities for negotiating greater autonomy.

Looking more closely at Zacatecanos' accounts of how the *Dos por Uno* program began and their relations with subnational authorities further complicates the picture. In 1986 the governor of Zacatecas, Genaro Borrego, established closer ties with the Zacatecan federation through an agreement to develop a matching-funds program for community projects. According to federation leaders, this agreement was prompted by an offer of "fresh money" (*una entrada de dinero fresco*) from the federation's clubs.⁴³ In 1992 Borrego worked with SEDESOL Director Luis Donaldo Colosio to structure the program so that the two government dollars were split between the federal and state levels.⁴⁴ This cost-sharing formula became the model for the federal-level *Solidaridad Internacional* (1993–1995). When that program folded, the *Dos por Uno* program continued in Zacatecas but only on an ad hoc basis in other states. The close ties and the matching-funds projects continued under Governor Romo, who set up an office for migrant affairs in the *Secretaría de Planeación y Finanzas*. The next governor, Ricardo Monreal, created a cabinet-level position to link him to migrants and continued the matching-funds program in modified form.

Whether or not it is true that the idea for the matching-funds program came from the federation, it has become part of the accepted history of the *Dos por Uno* within the organization. Members had an evident sense of ownership of the program. This feeling was invoked by a faction in the federation who argued that the organization's crucial role in creating the

43. Interview with federation members, 15 June 1996.

44. *Ibid.*

program was evidence of their autonomy and that they should revive and strengthen their independence from political authorities in Mexico. The theme of autonomy recurred in other contexts as well. One of them concerned debates about whether club funds should be deposited in the state treasury or in bank accounts controlled by club representatives in the hometowns. Another example was a contentious discussion over whether to challenge Governor Romo about the terms of a new agreement with the federation that involved the New Federalism decentralization program.

Thus in claiming ownership of the *Dos por Uno* program, Zacatecan transmigrants were also making claims about their political leverage and at least partial autonomy from the governor and the federal government. These claims blur the distinction between transmigrant-led and state-led transnationalism by highlighting interaction between the two. They also show that beneath the appearance of corporatism and clientelism may lie a great deal of negotiation. While this finding does not constitute evidence of full autonomy, it certainly complicates the characterization of Mexican state–transmigrant relations as top-down, co-optive, and clientelistic.

SUBNATIONAL VARIATION, NEGOTIATION, AND TRANSNATIONALISM

This section examines transnationalism in a subnational context in three ways: by locating Zacatecas in the context of other states' programs and relations with transmigrants; by examining the New Federalism under the previous governor of Zacatecas (Romo); and by analyzing the 1998 election of Ricardo Monreal and accompanying changes in the *Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos* in Los Angeles.

Zacatecas and Other States

Outreach programs for migrants and legislative changes concerning nationality and voting rights were national initiatives aimed at all Mexicans abroad. Unlike these abstract and universalistic legal changes, initiatives like the PCME and its communities program require the cooperation of subnational political authorities and their staff members to be implemented. To complicate matters, these programs are aimed at individuals from regions that differ in numerous ways: in their histories, resource bases, levels of poverty, relationships to the national state, ethnic compositions, governing parties, and parties in power at the municipal level. Factors like these, together with differences in the priority given by state governments to reaching out to migrants, have yielded diverse outcomes in the Mexican state's efforts to incorporate transmigrants into the nation and in the actual workings of state–transmigrant relations at the state and municipal levels. A comprehensive analysis of these factors is beyond the scope of

this article, but a preliminary examination will be made of relations among governors, transmigrants, and the central state.⁴⁵

During 1996–1997, when I carried out most of my fieldwork, several state governments had one or more staff members responsible for maintaining ties with migrants (see table 1). I was able to speak with staff from seven out of the nine state offices in Mexico (except Durango and Guerrero) and with government staff in Tlaxcala, where the governor's office was setting up contacts with an umbrella organization based in southern California.⁴⁶ Staff members in each state office reported that their mandate was to maintain contact with Mexicans in the United States, make them feel that their interests and problems were being attended to, and encourage their long-term contact with Mexico. In most cases, the representatives displayed familiarity with the economic and social situation of their paisanos in the United States and were involved in gathering information on the distribution of Mexicans from their state in the United States. They also knew individual leaders from hometown clubs and umbrella associations and had met with them several times in the United States or Mexico.

Despite these similarities, four of these offices stood out in terms of their apparent institutionalization: Zacatecas, Jalisco, Guanajuato, and San Luis Potosí. Of these, the Zacatecas office had the most established and widely used programs. These four governors' representatives had a clear mandate to maintain contact with their respective paisanos in the United States and could count on financial and logistical support to do so. These representatives also encouraged mayors to travel to the United States. In contrast, the offices for migrant affairs in the other states had unclear mandates, inadequate resources, and high staff turnover and did not work with mayors.

One way to analyze differences in institutionalization is to consider the intersection of three dimensions or factors. The first involves the strength of the governor's interest in maintaining ties with migrants, as indicated by resources and programs dedicated to this purpose. The second dimension

45. The history, internal organization, leadership structure, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and other aspects of hometown associations and their members in the United States are another set of factors that lead to different outcomes in implementing national-state-led projects such as the PCME. Compare Zabin and Escala (1998, 15–21), Goldring (1997, 1999a), R. Smith (1998), and Rivera-Salgado (2000).

46. Author's interviews with state-level liaisons as follows: in Michoacán on 2 Aug. 1995; in Tlaxcala on 25 June 1996; at the Dirección de Atención a Jaliscienses on 4 July 1996, 30 and 31 May 1997, 5 and 9 June 1997; with a Guanajuato state representative on 3 July 1996; with the Zacatecas governor's representative on 8 July 1996, 31 Jan. 1997, and other dates; with Puebla liaison in June 1995 and on 17 and 19 Dec. 1996; with governor's representative in San Luis Potosí on 2 and 3 Feb. 1997; and with a former Oaxacan state representative on 28 May 1997.

concerns political consistency between the governor's party and the central government and the transmigrant leaders and their organizations as well as whether they were affiliated with the PRI. The third dimension describes the focus of the migrant outreach program advocated or implemented by the governor's office for migrants. Using this model, Zacatecans are situated at the extremes of each dimension, with strong gubernatorial interest, resources to support outreach programs, and apparent political consistency between governors and transmigrants, at least until 1998; PRI affiliation for all parties until 1998; and matching funds programs for collective projects. My preliminary examination will show that none of the other state offices exhibited the same combination of positions along these dimensions.⁴⁷

Jalisco and Guanajuato had PAN governors at the time of my research. The governors' liaisons in these two states articulated as their priorities individual migrant investment, tourism, and the tasks of maintaining the flow of remittances and reducing the costs of sending remittances. Their outreach activities focused on facilitating individual profit-making ventures (like maquilas) and charitable investments or donations to state-wide funds. Such investments would not necessarily benefit recipients in the donor's community of origin. Neither state had institutionalized collective community projects. Representatives in both states cited the relatively short history of their programs to explain the lack of systematic data. Guanajuato emphasized trade and entrepreneurship as well as formation of community groups through the network of Casa Guanajuato in the United States. In Jalisco a program was being developed to facilitate the transfer of remittances through a state-run fund. Both representatives cited their governors' strong commitment to maintaining ties with migrants, which mitigated problems associated with the lack of political consistency between these two states and the federal government. The question of political consistency between the state governments and transmigrant leaders was more difficult to gauge in these cases. The Guanajuato organizations in the Los Angeles area were not well organized and lacked good relations with the state liaison. Jalisco clubs in the area were numerous, but the state government did not aim its programs at the umbrella organization.

In San Luis Potosí, a few large projects (road paving and drinking water systems) had been carried out on an ad hoc basis. The governor's representative emphasized the importance of acquiring rights in the United States as the only way migrants were going to improve their situation there. Considerable political agreement appeared to exist between leaders of Potosino organizations in Los Angeles and the governor's office.

Oaxacan-U.S. transnational relations have a long history of dense

47. A more comprehensive analysis would also take into account characteristics of the migrant organizations, such as whether they relied on a charismatic leader or were more institutionalized, the breadth of their appeal, and degree of political fragmentation.

social, economic, and political relations (Nagengast and Kearney 1990; Smith 1998; Rivera-Salgado 2000). But they do not exhibit the kind of institutionalization or widespread state involvement evident among Zacatecanos. A history of Oaxacan governors visiting the United States has not translated into coherent migrant outreach programs. Oaxaca-U.S. transnational relations involve the clearest case of political difference between transmigrant organizations and successive (PRI) state governments. Although some groups supported the ruling party and the governors, most of these indigenous groups (such as the Frente Indígena Oaxaqueño Binacional or FIOB) opposed the PRI. There have also been political differences among transmigrant groups critical of the state government. The outgoing liaison for migrants who had worked with two governors of Oaxaca (Heladio Ramírez López and Diodoro Carrasco Altamirano) noted the challenge of working with groups having political differences among themselves and in relation to the governor. He emphasized the importance of maintaining cultural traditions. Although he also spoke about the important role migrants played in community projects, they were carried out independently in an ad hoc manner and without a formal government program.

At the time of my research, the "migrant portfolio" in Michoacán had not been fully institutionalized but was being covered by someone with a temporary assignment. No institutionalized program existed for attracting migrant funds. Instead, the representative emphasized the importance of Michoacanos in the United States being able to participate in politics back home. It was unclear to what extent this view was part of a personal political and career agenda versus a position endorsed by superiors. It is likely that 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 organizations. Yet one must look beyond the case of Los Angeles to capture the significance and strength of clubs from Michoacán. Numerous groups have become active in the Chicago area over the last few years, have conducted several important community projects, and formed a federation in 1997 (Espinosa 1999).

Although I was unable to interview Durango state representatives, club leaders in Los Angeles reported that the Durango state government focused on tourism. These clubs were relatively new and had no experience of collective or individual investment. In Chicago, however, Durango clubs had built some community projects on an ad hoc basis.

The office in Puebla shared most of its activities and contact with Poblanos in New York and emphasized individual migrant investment as a way of generating employment in Puebla. Although Puebla had a PRI governor, no systematic program for collective projects had been created. Significant staff turnover, at least between 1995 and 1997, may have hampered efforts to work more consistently with transmigrants.

Thus Zacatecas has been the only state to emphasize community

projects and also has the oldest and most institutionalized process for carrying them out.⁴⁸ It had the highest expenditures under *Solidaridad Internacional* (as shown in table 2) and was the only state to continue an institutionalized matching-funds program after the federal program ended. While the Zacatecas state government has also pushed “productive” investment projects, they have had comparatively smaller budgets and little success. I attribute this outcome to problems that emerged when the state government tried to use transmigrant clubs (not individuals) to foster projects that involved individual profit as opposed to collective benefits (Goldring 1999b).

Until the current governor’s election as a PRD candidate, Zacatecas was considered an unwavering bastion of PRI support. Despite political differences, both Governor Borrego and Governor Romo had close ties with the central PRI. During these two administrations, consistency was evident between the federation’s political position and the state government. Monreal’s victory led to the first major public political split within the federation and thus to inconsistency in political support for the governor. A combination of strong ties between the federal and state governments and strong interest on the part of governors undoubtedly contributed to the political and economic support necessary to institutionalize a matching-funds program in Zacatecas. Once established, it is difficult to eliminate, despite political differences.

The *Dos por Uno* program has strengthened ties between the federation and its clubs on one hand and between Zacatecan governors and many mayors on the other. The strong relationship between these parties contributed to continuation of the matching-funds program. A few club leaders complained about the structure or leadership of the federation or certain federation requirements (having to participate in the *Miss Zacatecas* contest or having to belong to the federation to be included in the *Dos por Uno*) or about the implementation of some projects. But most club leaders I spoke with believed that the projects they carried out and the enhanced political clout derived from working through the federation provided enough benefits to outweigh any problems. From the perspective of staff members close to recent governors, the strong ties established with Zacatecanos in the United States contributed to sustaining remittances and political good will. Community projects were viewed as an instrument in this process rather than an end in themselves.⁴⁹ Thus although the relationship between the feder-

48. An evaluation of “productive micro-projects” in three states with high rates of U.S. migration found that state government efforts to stimulate migrant-financed productive projects have been ad hoc, limited, and unsuccessful in Guanajuato and Michoacán but more successful in Zacatecas (García Zamora 1999). The projects listed in the evaluation included community infrastructure projects. Leiken (2000) also noted the success of Zacatecas in this regard.

49. Author’s interviews with Zacatecas finance minister on 12 June 1997; with former Borrego assistant on 4 Feb. 1997; and various conversations with the liaison under Governor Romo.

ation and state and municipal authorities has involved conflicts, it has also benefited all parties.

Further comparative research is needed to confirm these findings. Five factors, however, help explain the unique trajectory of the Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos and greater institutionalization of subnational state-transmigrant relations: governors' political or economic interest in establishing links with migrants; the type of migrant outreach strategy (whether it involved collective projects and matching-fund schemes); political consistency between the governor and transmigrant organizations; political consistency between these two and the federal government; and the presence of institutionalized U.S.-based transmigrant organizations. These conditions obtained in the case of Zacatecas. Overall, in contrast, ad hoc collective projects, promotion of business-oriented investments, non-PRI governors, political opposition between the governor and transmigrant organizations, and transmigrant organizations that depended on a particular leader rather than on an established organizational structure were associated with less-institutionalized state-transmigrant linkages at the subnational level.

The New Federalism and the Dos por Uno: Between Clientelism and Autonomy

This section will examine the critical links between subnational contexts and transnational processes and organizations through a brief analysis of the Mexican government's federal decentralization program known as the Nuevo Federalismo. It varied somewhat from state to state, but its overall objective was to transfer administrative and fiscal responsibility to lower levels of government—states and municipalities. The World Bank (1994) framed this decentralization program as a way of reducing the federal government's high degree of centralization and built it into World Bank anti-poverty loans in the mid-1990s. The Nuevo Federalismo became particularly relevant to state-transmigrant relations in 1996–1997 because it changed the process for implementing Dos por Uno projects in Zacatecas. This federal initiative intersected with transmigrant project planning, municipal planning, and relations between states and migrants in ways that generated a new context for negotiating migrant membership and participation.

Projects carried out through Mexico's Programa Nacional de Solidaridad (PRONASOL), Solidaridad Internacional, and the Dos por Uno program all exemplify decentralization and devolution strategies that transfer costs to participants. These initiatives 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 (as in price supports and subsidies) and expanding the scope of market forces. Such cost-sharing programs may be potentially empowering and offer opportunities for local control (Fox and Aranda 1996), but states generally continue to exert strong regulatory powers over the lives of program participants by setting the

terms of access to programs and establishing their rules. I call this situation “the double-edged sword of neoliberalism.” Participants remain in a clientelist or semi-clientelist relationship to the national state in four possible ways: to the extent that overall funding decisions are made strategically by central, nonlocal actors for political ends (see Dresser 1991; Cornelius, Craig, and Fox 1994; Fox 1994); or participants lack the skills necessary to plan, manage, or implement projects on their own; or participants have the skills but run up against more powerful actors and institutions that limit their activities; or programs continue to be viewed as government gifts (with political strings attached) rather than as rights or entitlements (Vandergeest 1991; Fox 1994).

Examination of how the *Dos por Uno* program was negotiated in the context of the New Federalism during 1996–1997 highlights the contradictory tensions that permeated the apparently corporatist relationship between the *Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos* and political authorities in Zacatecas. On one hand, the federation could be viewed as a corporate group because clubs were required to pay membership dues to the federation if they wanted to submit projects under the *Dos por Uno* program, and all such proposals were channeled through the federation. The subordinate and clientelistic position of the federation and its clubs in relation to the central and state governments can be seen in the fact that the *Dos por Uno* program was regulated by these two levels of government, which together contributed two-thirds of project costs. Obtaining this share of a project’s price tag was a strong inducement for clubs to participate in the program and meet its conditions. Furthermore, projects required final approval by the governor’s office. This process was highly discretionary in that no norms established the criteria for project selection, nor was there an announced budget ceiling. This form of clientelism was challenged in 1997, when a group within the federation tried unsuccessfully to modify the *convenio* governing the program. Their efforts became one of several disputes that led to a serious cleavage within the federation.

In spite of a structurally subordinate position vis-à-vis political authorities in Mexico, transmigrant leaders argued that state and municipal authorities wanted or needed the *paisanos* to keep contributing money for projects. As several club leaders told me, “They can’t say no to the entrance of fresh money!” Club projects stretched municipal operating budgets and kept migrants connected to their places of origin, which was assumed to keep remittances flowing south. The idea that migrants could be an indirect source of political support for particular candidates and parties also became an issue in recent years as municipal elections became more competitive. Combined with the widely held belief that the *Dos por Uno* was created thanks to the federation’s offer to fund community projects, these factors gave the federation some economic and increasingly political legitimacy and leverage in negotiating with state and municipal authorities.

Under the New Federalism, the *Dos por Uno* was modified so that the matching dollar that came from the federal government would be channeled through the municipal government and the state government would continue to contribute its share. Clubs were supposed to go through the new municipal planning process that included oversight by the newly established *consejos municipales*, which were separate from existing councils. Starting in 1995, transmigrant club proposals for projects were supposed to get the approval of the municipal president and the consejo to obtain that matching dollar. Projects had to conform to a set of national guidelines for allocating the Ramo 26 (Line Item 26), the one for anti-poverty projects (*superación a la pobreza*).⁵⁰ This budget item included basic infrastructure in communications, health, and education with projects like clinics, school buildings, potable water and drainage systems, and certain kinds of roads and bridges. As with PRONASOL, communities receiving Ramo 26 funds were to contribute their share in labor, cash, or both. Transmigrant club contributions were translated into the community share, but with variations because sometimes clubs wanted projects that were not consistent with the Ramo 26 guidelines.

The new guidelines began to be applied to the *Dos por Uno* in 1996–1997. The delay resulted from several factors: strong resistance from municipal presidents who did not want their funds subjected to so many federal guidelines or to the wishes of persons who no longer lived there on a regular basis; and equally strong resistance from club leaders, who did not want to have to negotiate with municipal presidents to get their projects approved, funded, and built.⁵¹ Because of these difficulties, state-level staff and club leaders concurred that fewer projects were built in 1995 and early 1996 than had been planned.

By the fall of 1996, tensions remained, but municipal presidents, club and federation leaders, and their local representatives were developing patterns for negotiating the *Dos por Uno* in the new policy environment. These negotiations and accompanying power struggles represented spaces in which clientelist patterns were being challenged. I sat in on meetings in six municipalities in Zacatecas where local representatives of the transmigrant clubs met with municipal presidents and their staff and the governor's liaison for migrants. The meetings were designed to prioritize the works that clubs associated with a given municipality might carry out and to get specific finan-

50. This requirement illustrates how the federal government continued to regulate while transferring decision-making power only nominally. Mayors in a few municipalities noted that they got more money from the government, but it came *etiquetado*—already earmarked for specific expenditures. The anti-poverty funding that came under Ramo 26 was shifted to Ramo 33 under Progresá, the Zedillo administration's anti-poverty program.

51. The guidelines that mayors and club leaders often saw as "red tape" were intended to prevent the concentration of funding in *cabeceras* (municipal seats) and to limit spending to basic needs consistent with the anti-poverty agenda.

TABLE 3 Distribution of Matching-Funds Shares by Funding Scheme and Project Type

Share Paid	Dos por Uno with New Federalism (%)	Ramo 26		
		Small Infrastructure, Education (Fondo 1) (%)	Paving Roads (%)	Rodeo Rings, Sports Fields (%)
Migrants ^a	33	20	35	50
Municipio ^b	33	70–80	55	40
Federal	33	0–10	10	10

^a Normally, the local community would contribute this share in labor, kind, or cash. The presence of a migrant club and the intersection of the Dos por Uno with the New Federalism turns the club into “the beneficiaries,” who contribute in U.S. dollars.

^b Before the implementation of the New Federalism, the municipal share of the Dos por Uno came from the federal government. Municipalities could contribute in the form of materials and equipment as well as in funds from their budget.

cial commitments from the parties involved. Recommendations from these meetings would then have to be approved by the new consejos.

In these meetings, I observed heated bargaining among municipal presidents, local committees representing U.S.-based migrant clubs, and the governor’s representative. The negotiations were prompted by each party’s desire to reduce its share of project costs. Table 3 outlines the cost-sharing distribution among transmigrant clubs (or “beneficiaries”), the municipal government, and the state-level government, depending on whether a project was carried out through the Dos por Uno program or the federally financed Municipal Development Fund (Ramo 26). Projects implemented under the municipal funds had different cost-sharing distributions depending on their assigned priority. High-priority projects aimed at “poverty alleviation,” such as potable water, drainage, electrification, schools, and certain kinds of road construction, required the lowest level of contribution from migrants and beneficiaries (20 percent). This share went up for paving existing roads and climbed higher still for low-priority projects such as sports fields and rodeo rings.⁵²

The financing programs also displayed different guidelines regarding the eligibility of projects. The Dos por Uno program did not restrict the type of project a club could propose. Clubs named projects and together with the federation negotiated directly with the governor and his staff to decide which ones would be built. When the New Federalism was implemented, in contrast, Dos por Uno projects were supposed to conform to the

52. Under the category of Pequeña Infraestructura y Educación, projects could be financed under Ramo 26 (Fondo 1) with the municipality paying 80 percent and the state paying nothing, or under a separate fund (Fondo 2) with the state paying 10 percent and the municipality 70 percent. The latter course was supposed to be taken if projects were considered likely to generate significant local employment.

new federal guidelines covering municipal planning for small infrastructure. According to these rules, rodeo rings, churches, and cemeteries were not supposed to be built or improved with Ramo 26 funds. But several rodeo rings initiated before the new guidelines were put in place were continued. Although some federation and many club leaders complained about the lack of transparency under the old system before the New Federalism, they did not consider the new system an improvement. From their perspective, it added a new layer of bureaucratic red tape that could lead to delay or rejection of their projects.

Most of the municipal presidents were trying to stretch their overall budgets with the migrants' contributions. This strategy meant trying to get as many projects financed through the *Dos por Uno* program as possible because it translated into a lower municipal share (33 percent versus 70 percent). At the same time, municipal staff were trying to figure out how much their total share of migrant-funded projects would amount to, as this would reduce the total budget they had to allocate to localities without migrant organizations. They asked the state-level representative repeatedly what the state's budget ceiling would be in order to know how much they had to work with, but no straightforward response was forthcoming.

Meanwhile, the state-level representative was trying to ensure that as many projects as possible were channeled through the Ramo 26 rather than the *Dos por Uno*, which would reduce the state share from 33 percent to 10 percent. In the midst of all this calculation, club representatives were trying to get their projects approved, and because some involved higher shares or did not qualify under the Ramo 26, they were trying to get projects via either avenue, although technically the Ramo 26 meant a lower share for them as well.

These negotiations were confusing. Most of the municipal presidents were familiar with the Ramo 26 norms but had not yet received their total allocations for the following year and did not know what the state government's ceiling for *Dos por Uno* funding would be for their municipio. In some cases, committee members seemed well informed and tried to make sure each of their projects were approved; in other cases they were more compliant. Overall, they seemed to be learning a new way of participating in local decisions. The scope of these decisions may have been limited, but it often involved important changes in their communities. In the few cases where migrant-proposed projects were not the top priority of the local representatives, they simply did not defend them as vigorously. In one such case, club members from the United States spoke with the mayor after a meeting in which they felt their interests had not been adequately represented. This and a few more conversations eventually led to a change, with part of their project going ahead anyway. On another occasion, local representatives believed that the state liaison had left out several of their club's proposed projects. They called their club president in the United States, and

he faxed a copy of their proposals to the mayor's office on the spot, allowing them to be considered during the negotiation.⁵³

The negotiations that took place during the intersection of the *Dos por Uno* program and the New Federalism suggest that a strong trans migrant umbrella organization can give transmigrants and local committee members an opportunity to negotiate with municipal and state authorities and thus participate in civic life in ways probably not possible without the presence of such organizations. Although transmigrants and their organizations did not always participate directly in the local planning process, they had a voice in the discussions and negotiations that led up to making specific project proposals and in the actual implementation of the projects. Some club leaders participated more directly by traveling to monitor projects periodically. Thus although *Dos por Uno* projects were carried out in the context of a seemingly corporatist-clientelist state program, their actual planning and execution opened up possibilities for meaningful participation and negotiation.

Monreal and the Frente Cívico Zacatecano

On 5 July 1998, Ricardo Monreal became the first PRD governor of Zacatecas.⁵⁴ This apparent rupture of PRI hegemony was set in motion when Monreal left the PRI after failing to receive that party's nomination for governor. His defection sparked a support movement that brought together various interests: droves of former PRI supporters left the party with their charismatic leader as did teachers and Barzonistas, a debtors' movement that began in Zacatecas and spread to other parts of Mexico.⁵⁵ Monreal's campaign speeches called for greater democracy and transparency in political processes. The mass rallies accompanying his campaign suggest that his words touched a broad spectrum of Zacatecan society tired of the existing regime and that he was able to mobilize considerable support through his old political networks.

Monreal's campaign and victory are relevant to this discussion for two reasons. First, his campaign brought a longstanding division within the federation out into the open and generated a new Zacatecan organization in Los Angeles with an explicitly political agenda. Second, Monreal actively courted the support of Mexicans in the United States during his

53. Municipal *Dos por Uno* meeting 20 Jan. 1997.

54. Michelle Levander, "Defector's Election Victory Poses a New Threat to PRI: Mexico's Political Machine Shaken by Savvy, Charisma," *San Jose Mercury News*, 10 Aug. 1998, p. 1A.

55. Monreal did not become a formal member of the PRD until after winning the election. He ran as an independent registered with the PRD and with additional support from the Green party (the Partido Verde Ecologista). His defection and slowness in becoming a PRD member earned him initial distrust among some PRD representatives who viewed his move as instrumental rather than ideological.

campaign and has continued to reach out to this constituency after gaining power. These related processes highlight the key roles of subnational identities, loyalties, and social networks in politicizing transnational spaces. They also indicate how transmigrant groups or elements within them may be able to press for greater autonomy in state-transmigrant relations and in the process modify the terms of their membership in the nation.⁵⁶

Carol Zabin and Luis Escala Rabadan have pointed out that the federation's organizational structure, adherence to rules of order during meetings, annual election of leaders, and other institutionalized procedures have contributed to its effectiveness, including the capacity to resolve internal tensions in a democratic manner (1998). In the two years preceding Monreal's victory, however, disagreements flared up persistently between a group who advocated going along with the Zacatecas state government to ensure the continuity of the organization and the Dos por Uno projects (which I call "the status quo group") and a group who argued for greater autonomy (the dissident group).

One area of disagreement between the two factions was whether clubs should deposit their contributions in an account controlled by their representatives in Zacatecas⁵⁷ or put the money in the state treasury, as the governor's liaison was urging them to do. The dissident group advocated the first option, but when it was put to a vote, the status quo group won by a narrow margin. Another area of friction developed over the dissident group's demands for greater transparency in decisions surrounding the allocation of Dos por Uno funds, including a statement of how much would be available from the state budget in advance, rather than having the governor's liaison allocate funds to projects in what some considered an ad hoc and manipulative manner. A third area of contention arose over the state government's insistence on having the clubs conform to the federally mandated decentralization policy, which forced clubs into greater contact and more complicated negotiations with municipal authorities, who also had to take club interests more seriously to leverage their budgets. After an initial negative reaction, most clubs were not too bothered by this change as long as club projects got built. But the dissident group viewed this development as yet another example of government control and added it to their list of changes needed to increase the federation's autonomy.

Tension between the two factions in the federation escalated during the 1997 competition for control of the 1998 executive council (*mesa directiva*). The dissident faction happened to be out of power when the gubernatorial

56. The events surrounding Monreal's election also point to the importance of internal divisions within the PRI in Zacatecas, and among its supporters there and in the United States. These divisions and their fallout support an interpretation of the PRI and the Mexican state as less than monolithic.

57. These Mexico-based club representatives were selected by U.S. club leaders and were often relatives.

race took place in Zacatecas. The coincidence of these two races led to a series of conjunctural events that transnationalized the gubernatorial race, deepened the rift within the federation, and led to the creation of a new Zacatecan organization. When Monreal was passed over by the state-level PRI committee, the current federation president quickly retracted the public support he had expressed for Monreal in the preceding days. This retraction gave the dissident group a means of supporting and rearticulating the claim that the federation's executive council was being manipulated by the state government. Eager for a change of government in Zacatecas that would support their agenda, the dissident group jumped at the opportunity to support Monreal. To back him, they founded a new organization, the Frente Cívico Zacatecano.⁵⁸ It was initially modeled on Monreal's mass-support organization in Zacatecas (the Alianza Ciudadana por la Dignidad y la Democracia), but as it grew, the leaders also planned for it to become a registered political action committee (PAC) capable of supporting politicians and political initiatives in California as well as Zacatecas.⁵⁹

In his campaign, Monreal actively courted Zacatecanos in the United States. During several brief trips to Los Angeles, he gave a few radio interviews on Spanish-language stations and met with the federation, Zacatecan business leaders, the founders of the Frente Cívico, and a few Latino politicians. On one trip, his wife met with the wives of Zacatecan club leaders. Why was Monreal campaigning among those who generally would not be returning to Mexico to vote? Monreal's rhetoric emphasized the importance of familial and cultural ties between Zacatecanos on both sides of the border. He also acknowledged the importance of migrant remittances. Moreover, leaders of the Frente Cívico claimed that they could call home and "tell" their relatives how to vote. Regardless of which combination of reasons accounted for Monreal's campaigning in the United States, he behaved as if migrant support was important to his successful candidacy. This form of cross-border "grassroots clientelism" calls for further investigation.

As part of his campaign, Monreal supported the vote for Mexicans abroad in federal elections. He also stated that he would work to change the state constitution to have at least two representatives of Zacatecanos in the United States in the legislature.⁶⁰ This proposal would be a significant change

58. A separate organization was formed in part because most club and federation leaders incorrectly interpreted the norms regulating the nonprofit status of these organizations as precluding them from engaging in any political activities. In their view, the federation could not engage in political activities, but a new organization might. The difference between political and nonpartisan activities has been either unclear or recognized selectively. This interpretation has been used to defuse potential conflicts ("We can't get into that discussion because it would involve getting into politics"), but it has limited the scope of these groups' political participation in the United States.

59. The Frente Cívico Zacatecano was registered as a PAC in 2000.

60. "Monreal propondrá legisladores en EU," *El Sol de Zacatecas*, 17 Nov. 1998, at <<http://www.oem.com.mx/solzac/1988/Nov98/171198/hot.htm>>.

in offering subnational political citizenship to Zacatecanos in the United States. After winning office, Monreal repeated these promises several times in public, but it was not clear whether and how he would deliver on the promise of state-level representation. In his first few months in office, Monreal announced several initiatives that appeared to respond directly to the dissident group's demands. First, he established a one-million-dollar budget for the *Dos por Uno* program, to be disbursed on a first-come, first-served basis among clubs affiliated with each of the U.S.-based Zacatecan federations. Second, he named one of the dissident group's leaders to a cabinet-level position as his liaison with Zacatecanos in the United States. Third, Monreal announced that clubs would be able to deposit their funds in Zacatecas in accounts controlled by them and their representatives rather than in the state treasury. Fourth, he stated that clubs no longer had to conform to the New Federalism guidelines.⁶¹

These migrant-oriented initiatives looked like a *quid pro quo* to the *Frente Cívico* and its supporters. But Monreal is a consummate politician: he made a point of working with both the *Frente Cívico* and the *Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos*. As part of an agreement negotiated by Monreal and the *Frente Cívico*, the federation would continue to administer the *Dos por Uno* program and would remain nonpolitical, while the *Frente* would take on political issues. Individuals would be free to work with either organization or both. As part of its political activity, the *Frente* made connections with Latino politicians in southern California, supported the vote for Mexicans abroad in the year 2000, and tentatively formed new alliances with other transmigrant groups and binational nongovernmental organizations working on this issue.

The Zacatecan organizations based in Los Angeles gained concessions that may allow them to operate somewhat more independently of the Mexican state and subnational authorities. These concessions, however, were granted in a highly personalistic manner by a charismatic governor who faced serious challenges in economic planning and development for Zacatecas. The way he selected his cabinet-level representative led some club leaders to complain that it was done undemocratically. These events show nevertheless that one group within a corporatist transmigrant organization was able to exploit the conjunctural opportunity created by a gubernatorial race to gain some leverage and autonomy vis-à-vis the state government. The organization negotiated the beginnings of a form of membership that acknowledged its political significance at the state level and offered informal avenues of participation and representation but did not provide formal political rights and representation.

61. Subsequently, the *Dos por Uno* became the *Tres por Uno*, with the three matching parts coming from the federal, state, and municipal governments (compare Leiken 2000).

CONCLUSION

This article has made a case for broadening discussions of state-society relations in Mexico to include analyses of relations between the Mexican state and Mexicans in the United States. It has also argued for contextualizing transnationalism in terms of subnational processes, linkages, and identities. Contemporary research is questioning the paradigm of Mexican state hegemony and extensive control by arguing that the national state's reach was never complete or geographically even and by analyzing examples of the ruling party's loss of authority and power. In the transnationalism literature, a debate is occurring between those who argue that transnationalism offers transmigrants a way to gain autonomy or evade the national state and those who perceive national states exerting co-optive control over transmigrant organizations or the reproduction of social hierarchies in transnational spaces. I have argued that looking primarily at transmigrant organizations might give the impression that they are more independent of the national state than they are, while focusing on national initiatives can produce interpretations that confer the balance of power on a co-optive national state. Examining the dynamics between transmigrant organizations and Mexican political authorities and grounding analyses of the transnational in specific subnational transnational contexts yield a more nuanced analysis.

In response to these debates, I conclude first that corporatist programs like the PCME's matching-funds program can provide opportunities for transmigrant groups to expand their autonomy and institute mechanisms for political participation. Although these practices are not institutionalized and do not involve formal political rights, they offer transmigrants a context in which to continue to exercise substantive citizenship and make their claims of membership in the Mexican nation more real. This substantive participation represents a challenge to the limited and symbolic market membership offered by the Mexican state, although it is not always framed in oppositional terms. These trends also suggest that the process of political transition taking place in Mexico was mirrored to some extent in the transnational arena. These conclusions provide further support for examining state-transmigrant relations in order to take into account relations among the national state, states, municipalities, and various kinds of migrant organizations.

My analysis of migrant-led and state-led transnationalism shows that Mexican transmigrants have been building transnational organizations and social spaces for a long time. Their activities predate the Mexican state's recent efforts to reach out to Mexicans in the United States in a series of programs and legislative changes that officially redefine the Mexican nation to include Mexicans abroad. But most transmigrant organizations do not operate in a vacuum, separate from the national state's sphere of influence. State initiatives consolidated migrant organizations in the past and

are partly responsible for their contemporary proliferation and the institutionalization of transnational social spaces. These initiatives constitute an effort to reincorporate Mexicans abroad based on a model that offers symbolic market membership with limited formal political rights. Yet the outcomes of such efforts are not uniform or entirely predictable. This unpredictability can be seen in the diverse orientations of state governments toward transmigrants in Mexican states with high rates of U.S. migration and in the different trajectories of transmigrant organizations in the Los Angeles area. Evidence of the unpredictability of these efforts is also revealed in the recent demands made by a faction of the Zacatecan federation and in the concessions they gained from the governor of Zacatecas.

One explanation for the diversity at the state level is that Mexican state-led transnational initiatives depend on state and municipal authorities and transmigrant organizations for implementation. Because these organizations have particular histories and experience, considerable variation results in how this national project looks in different states. The case of Zacatecas indicates that the *Dos por Uno* program of the PCME took its cues from practices developed by the Zacatecan federation and a governor. The fact that this program continued only in Zacatecas after folding at the federal level supports the conclusion that subnational identities, spaces, and political authorities play key roles in the constructing and politicizing of transnational social spaces.⁶²

The analysis of the intersection of the federal decentralization program with the operation of the *Dos por Uno* matching-funds program in Zacatecas also underscores the importance of the subnational context for analyzing transnational social spaces. Only in Zacatecas did the *Dos por Uno* program become institutionalized. Consequently, it was the only state where the matching-funds program was implemented in the context of the federal decentralization program. Negotiations held at the municipal level to prioritize projects showed that this intersection created spaces in which migrants could have more voice, although indirectly, in local planning processes in their places of origin. The case of Zacatecas also suggests strongly that without the corporate structure of the *Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos*, transmigrants and their representatives probably could not have engaged as players in these negotiations.

Discussion of the recent gubernatorial race in Zacatecas and its implications for Zacatecan organizations in Los Angeles adds weight to the conclusion that it is best to read state-transmigrant relations as an iterative set of negotiations over the meanings and privileges attached to "membership" in the national or subnational community, in which actors with un-

62. Guanajuato and other states have their own programs for attracting migrant funds. But because they emphasize individual investment or investment in funds that do not necessarily benefit one's place of origin, they appear narrower than the Zacatecas program.

equal power jockey to improve their bargaining position. A faction within the Zacatecan federation managed to gain significant concessions from the newly elected governor, although under conjunctural circumstances that would be difficult to reproduce. Nevertheless, events leading up to and following the new governor's election indicate that transmigrants are considered players in the Zacatecas political arena, even if they lack formal political rights. Once gained or conceded, this power will be unlikely to be given up.

In the case of Zacatecan transnational spaces, a well-established transmigrant organization formed a partnership with Mexican federal and state governments to build community projects. This neoliberal partnership was based on a corporatist and semi-clientelist relationship to the state, but it left the organization with bargaining power. The role of the Mexican federal government has changed over time, and the state government remains the principal connection between these 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 national, state, and local communities to assure the endurance of social and economic ties to Mexico. Yet the experience transmigrants acquire in their organizations and in the process of carrying out projects has prompted them to make demands that propel them into greater political participation. Political authorities in Mexico are recognizing this reality and responding in various ways. Thus neither extreme in the debates over the Mexican state or transnationalism is entirely correct. It makes more sense to frame state-transmigrant 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.

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