

Mexican Policy & Émigré Communities in the U.S.

David R. Ayón
Senior Researcher
Center for the Study of Los Angeles
Loyola Marymount University
1 LMU Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90045
davidrayon@msn.com

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Abstract:

Mexican policy toward emigration and its Diaspora in the U.S. has changed repeatedly since the Revolution. Initially, Mexico resisted emigration and sought to induce mass repatriation. This objective was fulfilled to a substantial degree during the Great Depression. From 1942-64, however, Mexico worked with the U.S. to channel temporary labor migration back north, and pressed to continue this arrangement. For a decade after it was cancelled, Mexico sought to restore this program. In 1975, however, Mexico renounced interest in any new guest worker arrangement and maintained this position publicly for the next 25 years. During this time, Mexico developed its first significant dialogue and relationship with U.S. citizens of Mexican descent. Since 1990, however, Mexican policy has shifted back to a focus on migrants, but now largely accepting their permanent settlement in the U.S. Mexico today seeks to reinforce its migrants' homeland ties and foster their organizational development. Since 2000 the Fox administration has also renewed Mexico's quest for a guest worker agreement, hoping to restore 'circularity' to future migration.

Resumen:

Las políticas mexicanas hacia la emigración y diáspora en los EEUU
David R. Ayón

La política de México hacia la emigración y su diáspora en EEUU ha cambiado repetidamente desde la Revolución. Inicialmente, los gobiernos mexicanos intentaron frenar la migración e inducir la repatriación de los emigrados. Este objetivo se logró substancialmente durante la Gran Depresión. Pero entre 1942 y 1964, México colaboró con EEUU para canalizar migrantes de nuevo al norte y trató de prolongar este arreglo. Cuando éste se canceló, México buscó su restauración por toda una década. En 1975, México repudió la búsqueda de un nuevo programa migratorio y mantuvo esta postura públicamente por los próximos 25 años. Durante este período, México sostuvo su primer diálogo significativo con ciudadanos estadounidenses de ascendencia mexicana. Desde 1990, el enfoque de la política mexicana se ha concentrado de nuevo en los migrantes, pero ahora básicamente aceptando su permanencia en EEUU. Actualmente, México quiere reforzar vínculos con sus migrantes y promover su organización. Además, desde el 2000, la administración Fox busca de nuevo un acuerdo migratorio, con la esperanza de restaurar la 'circularidad' en la migración futura.

Mexico has repeatedly altered its policy towards the migration of its people to the United States. One way to understand and evaluate this policy today is to examine it against the backdrop of the various ends Mexico has pursued, the means it has employed, and the results it has achieved in the past.

The main objective of Mexican policy after the Revolution was to encourage return migration to the homeland. But after the Great Depression brought about an enormous repatriation, Mexico worked with the United States to facilitate temporary labor migration back north. The Mexican government strived to maintain this program and long pressed for its restoration after the U.S. unilaterally canceled it. In a later turn, however, Mexico developed a relationship with Mexican Americans -- U.S. citizen descendants of its earlier migrants -- and renounced its interest in a migration agreement.

A renewed emphasis on the migrants themselves, their level of organization and their ties to Mexico mark recent Mexican policy. Within this period, the Mexican government has renewed its quest for a bilateral migration agreement with the United States. This background paper covers each of these major policy shifts, with a particular focus on the current period.

Phase I: Identity & Return

Among the main goals of Mexican policy today are to maintain the national identity of Mexican migrants in the U.S., fortify their ties to Mexico and portray them as contributors to their country's *proyecto nacional*. In so doing, the last three Mexican administrations have returned to elements of Mexico's original policy response to the population that migrated north primarily around the time of the Revolution.

After futile attempts by the Venustiano Carranza regime (1917-20) to discourage and block emigration by various means, a new administration came to power that instituted Mexico's first major policy toward its émigrés. In the 1920s, the government led by Alvaro Obregón launched a new effort to reach out to the diaspora in the U.S. through its consulates. *Comisiones Honoríficas*, with their "Mexican Patriotic Committees" and *Comités de Beneficencia*, were formed in expatriate communities that had not previously had them. George J. Sanchez has described how the consul in Los Angeles, for example, working both directly and through these bodies, "emerged as the central organizer of community leadership."¹

Officially, these groups were to help the consulates organize celebrations of Mexican independence and to provide assistance to indigent migrants. But they also had the purpose of serving as the de facto leadership of the migrant community and the Mexican-origin population as a whole. In some cases, this effort placed the designated émigrés in competition with U.S.-born Mexican American or 'Hispano' leaders, which Mexican policy at that time took little note of.

This was the case in 1921 when immigrant leaders backed by the consulate in Los Angeles challenged Mexican American control of symbols of community life.² According to Sanchez, the local, non-immigrant *Sociedad Hispano Americana* had traditionally sponsored a one-day observance of Mexican independence, but this was overwhelmed by a month-long series of events organized by the "Mexican Committee of Patriotic Festivities" that September. This

¹ *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1993), p. 113.

² See Sanchez. *Ibid.*, for background on several of these leaders, pp. 114-15.

subcommittee of the Comisión Honorífica was housed at the short-lived Los Angeles newspaper *El Heraldo de México*.³

The newspaper promoted the consulate-backed committee's elaborate program of activities with a daily front-page story throughout the month. The paper also called on the Sociedad to cede its customary role in the *fiestas patrióticas* to the new committee, calling the former "semi-compatriots, sons of beautiful California," but dubbing the latter "genuinely Mexican."⁴ The consulate and its allies went on to work to establish a number of Mexican schools, modeled on Japanese and Hebrew language schools, and assisted in the creation of a Mexican community library in East Los Angeles.⁵

A general pattern emerged in this period of collaboration between the consulates and an elite class of Mexican migrants, which was especially notable in San Antonio. Unlike Los Angeles, San Antonio's Mexican immigrant leadership and community were strong enough to sustain major projects independently of the Mexican government. Richard A. Garcia has described in detail San Antonio's Mexican immigrant leaders of the 1920s-30s grouped around the newspaper *La Prensa*, its affiliated bookstore and press, the Casino Social Mexicano, and the Club Mexicano de Bellas Artes.⁶

This social circle, whose members considered themselves to be exiles rather than immigrants, projected its influence throughout the state and south into Mexico. It undertook a number of mobilizations for different causes, including the building of an elementary school in Guanajuato and the establishment of a Mexican community health clinic on San Antonio's West Side.⁷

In spite of factional disputes rooted in conflicts in Mexico, convergence developed between the Mexican state and the diaspora elite in San Antonio (whether moneyed or intellectual). Both sides stressed maintenance of Mexican identity 'in exile' and the desirability of a general return to Mexico. The elite exercised its leadership over a working class community, and it allied itself with the Mexican state to resist the effects of public policies of "Americanization" that were in vogue at that time.⁸

There appears to be no evidence that the idea ever took hold among the participants in this alliance that Mexicans could or should try to develop political influence in the United States, as can be seen in their united opposition to acquiring U.S. citizenship.⁹ This attitude contrasted

³ This was the largest Spanish-language newspaper of its time in Los Angeles, and positioned itself as the "Defender of Mexicans in the United States." América Rodríguez, *Making Latino News: Race, Language, Class* (Sage Publications, 1999), p. 16.

⁴ G.J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 108-109, and fn. 3, p. 297.

⁵ G.J. Sanchez, ch. 5; Francisco E. Balderrama, *In Defense of La Raza: The Los Angeles Mexican Consulate and the Mexican community, 1929-1936* (Tucson: U of Arizona Press, 1982).

⁶ R.A. Garcia, *Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class: San Antonio, 1929-1941*. Texas A&M University Press, 1991.

⁷ R.A. Garcia, *passim*, and especially 99-112. *La Prensa* was founded in 1913. See also the various articles on *La Prensa* gathered in *The Americas Review* 17:3-4 (Fall-Winter 1989): 121-168.

⁸ See R.A. Garcia, *passim*; Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, "Ignacio E. Lozano: The Mexican Exile Publisher Who Conquered San Antonio and Los Angeles." *American Journalism* 21:1 (Winter 2004) 75-89; Sanchez, ch. 5, "Americanization and the Mexican Immigrant," esp. pp. 97-107.

⁹ G.J.Sanchez, p. 4; R.A. Garcia, *passim*.

sharply with the outlook of the rising middle class of U.S.-born Mexican Americans who came to be organized in LULAC.¹⁰

Mexican policy at that time cultivated an archetypal feature of diasporic consciousness among Mexicans in the United States, what Michael Jones-Correa has generally called the ‘myth of return.’¹¹ In 1921, the Obregón administration established a “Department of Repatriation” within the Mexican foreign ministry. According to Sanchez, “...a central goal of all programs initiated by the Mexican consulate was the preservation of the cultural integrity of Mexican emigrants through the establishment of institutions to foster Mexican patriotism, with the long-term goal of encouraging return migration.”¹² This policy proved to be in a sense unexpectedly successful when a combination of factors gave rise to a broad campaign to first encourage and then pressure Mexicans in the U.S. to do precisely that – to return to Mexico.

The repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Mexicans (including many of their U.S.-born children) to Mexico in the 1930s, and the role played by the Mexican government in this affair, have been documented by a number of scholars.¹³ Hoffman, Balderrama and Sanchez have described the role of Los Angeles consul (and later ambassador) Rafael de la Colina, in particular, in coordinating plans with local authorities for special county-sponsored trains that transported repatriates to Mexico. Guerin-Gonzalez describes the actions of consuls in promoting and facilitating repatriation in San Bernardino, Riverside and San Diego counties.¹⁴

This episode appears to have been rooted in a conjuncture of multiple circumstances. The main factors included the long-standing agreement on the part of émigré leaders and the Mexican government on the goal of voluntary repatriation. Continued emigration from Mexico was enhanced in the late 1920s, however, by the church-state conflict that produced a flow of refugees from the suppression of the *Cristiada*. Following Obregón’s assassination by a religious zealot in 1928, national reconciliation in Mexico became a dominant political theme. Negotiations led to the creation of the predecessor of the PRI party, new elections, and an end to the Catholic Church’s three-year national strike in 1929. President-elect Pascual Ortiz Rubio called on expatriates to return to Mexico. This message was often echoed in and endorsed by community newspapers such as *La Prensa* in San Antonio and *La Opinión* in Los Angeles, which at that time upheld a highly Mexico-centric viewpoint.

Deteriorating economic conditions in the United States after October 1929 reinforced an initial voluntary flow of repatriates. As the U.S. financial crisis developed into the Great Depression, economic, social and political pressures mounted for all Mexicans to return or be returned to

¹⁰ See R.A. Garcia, *passim* and especially ch. 9; Benjamin Marquez, *LULAC: The Evolution of a Mexican American Political Organization* (Austin: U of Texas Press, 1993); Mario T. Garcia, “In Search of America: The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), in *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, & Identity, 1930-1960* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989), ch. 2. And Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., “*Let All of Them Take Heed*”: *Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910–1981* (Austin: U of Texas Press, 1987).

¹¹ Jones-Correa, *Between Two Nations: The Political Predicament of Latinos in New York City* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1998), ch. 5.

¹² Sanchez, p. 113.

¹³ See Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939* (Tucson: U of Arizona Press), 1974; Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: U of New Mexico Press, 1995); Camille Guerin-Gonzalez, *Mexican Workers & American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1994, chs. 4-5).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-94.

Mexico. Mexican policy was to oppose discrimination and coercion while continuing to encourage voluntary mass repatriation. In many cases, Mexican consuls were simply assisting unemployed and needy migrants who desired to return. In Los Angeles, the consulate-affiliated Comité de Beneficencia Mexicana turned from helping indigent Mexicans survive the depression to paying their train fare to Mexico.¹⁵

The use of pressure, coercion and discrimination by U.S. authorities and citizens aroused controversy and created tensions with the Mexican government. But the Mexican government's own policies were criticized, including by repatriates who found themselves in grave difficulties in Mexico. *La Unión de Repatriados Mexicanos*, apparently formed in Mexico City in 1932, petitioned the government to halt further repatriations.¹⁶ Consul de la Colina's successors in Los Angeles in 1932-33 turned from encouraging repatriation to discouraging it – at least by those who still had jobs.¹⁷

The Lázaro Cárdenas administration (1934-1940), however, renewed the call for migrants in general to return. It established a major new agricultural colony for migrants in Tamaulipas (in addition to the many established by preceding administrations) and in 1937 sent government officials on a lengthy tour of émigré communities to again urge their repatriation.¹⁸ Hoffman describes this and other efforts by officials of both countries to encourage Mexican repatriation in the mid-to-late 1930s as failures -- due to the increasing resistance by migrants.

The considerable hardship and discrimination suffered by many repatriates in Mexico is described by Hoffman, Sanchez, Guerin-Gonzalez, and Balderrama and Rodriguez. Ironically, but not surprisingly, many repatriates struggled for years to 'return' from Mexico to the United States. We can assume that those who succeeded had the effect of reinforcing the views of those in U.S. Mexican-origin communities who resisted repatriation in the first place.

According to Sanchez, the experience of rejecting and resisting repatriation had multiple and lasting effects on the remaining Mexican-origin community in the United States and how it related to both its ancestral and adopted countries. A large segment of the community that was most tied to Mexico, including leaders and activists, was gone. The remaining community's identification with the ancestral homeland was diminished, the Mexican immigrants that stayed were politically silenced, and the consulate's activities in the community were scaled back.

In Los Angeles after 1935, Sanchez writes, "the Mexican consulate would never again play as crucial a role in organizing local leadership around goals formulated in Mexico City. Increasingly, the Mexican American community would see its own political future as wrapped in the context of American civil rights and the fulfillment of the promises of U.S. citizenship."¹⁹ It is in this period that the new "Mexican American generation" rose to take (or reclaim) the leadership of Mexican-origin communities. This experience, in San Antonio exemplified by the social and political rise of LULAC, marked the consolidation of a new leadership network of an

¹⁵ Sanchez, p. 123

¹⁶ Ibid, 219

¹⁷ Ibid., 221.

¹⁸ Hoffman, 152-57. Guerin-Gonzalez discusses numerous examples of three differing types of colonies for repatriates established in the early 1930s, pp. 102-106. See also Hoffman, 137-146.

¹⁹ Ibid., 124

American ethnic nature -- rather than Mexican émigré -- that quickly spread across the Southwest.²⁰

As San Antonio transitioned from being an exile Mexican *colonia* to a primarily U.S.-born Mexican American community, the diasporic institution that most visibly upheld the maintenance of Mexican identity and values, the newspaper *La Prensa*, went into steady decline.²¹ The community's new Mexican American leadership was able to consolidate its position in the wake of the old exile leadership's virtual self-liquidation through repatriation. According to Garcia, by the eve of World War II, the "Mexican American mind" had prevailed.²²

Phase II: Renewed Wartime Migration

World War II -- joined formally by the U.S. in December 1941 and by Mexico about six months later -- led to a reconsideration of bilateral relations and to an abrupt departure for Mexican policy toward migration. Among the items negotiated within the framework of wartime cooperation was the first in a series of executive agreements (and later U.S. legislation) that informally became known as the 'Bracero Program.' This was an unprecedented bilateral guest worker or 'contract-labor' scheme that directly involved the Mexican government in managing the temporary labor migration of its citizens to the United States for over twenty years.

Mexico signed the first agreement in July 1942, which went into effect the following month. The basic arrangement was repeatedly renewed in different forms and ultimately authorized some 4.6 million individual seasonal labor contracts by its end in 1964.²³ According to the order issued by President Manuel Avila Camacho for the initial wartime phase of the program, *Gobernación* was charged with working with municipal governments to inform Mexicans about their labor rights under contract as braceros and preventing those without contracts from migrating. The Labor ministry was charged with assigning quotas of braceros from each state while protecting Mexico's own labor needs, monitoring the enforcement of the specific provisions of the work contracts, and managing the Fondo de Ahorro Campesino. The Health ministry performed medical examinations on the *aspirantes*. Foreign Relations was charged with providing consular protection to the braceros and ensuring that they neither entered the U.S. military nor were used to break strikes or suppress wages. The Agriculture ministry was assigned duties related to the braceros upon their return.²⁴

The Labor ministry in Mexico City was quickly overwhelmed when it opened an office to register aspiring braceros in August 1942. This forced the relocation of the operation first to the Estadio Nacional and then to La Ciudadela. Long lines, delays that stretched into weeks and months, and the rejection of many applicants led to mass protests that were dispersed with fire hoses, as well

²⁰ This transformation of the Mexican-origin community remarkably parallels the effects of the experience of internment during World War II on the Japanese origin community. See John Higham, *Ethnic Leadership in America* (Johns Hopkins U. Press, 1979). LULAC claimed to have 150 councils from Texas to California by 1940.

²¹ *La Prensa*'s daily circulation fell from 22,587 (32,669 Sunday) in 1930 to 7,118 (15,662 Sunday) in 1940. Rivas-Rodriguez, p. 76.

²² R.A. Garcia, p. 268.

²³ Manuel García y Griego, "The Importation of Mexican Contract Laborers to the United States, 1942-1964," in *Between Two Worlds: Mexican Immigrants in the United States*, David G. Gutiérrez, ed. (Wilmington, Delaware: SR Books, 1996).

²⁴ See John Mraz and Jamie Vélez Storey, *Uprooted: Braceros in the Hermanos Mayo Lens* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1996).

as the elimination of the medical examination in 1943. During the early years of processing in Mexico City, two trains per week transported approximately 700 braceros each to U.S. contracting centers at the border.²⁵ In subsequent years, the processing of bracero candidates was moved out of Mexico City to several locations progressively closer to the northern border.

At the outset, Avila Camacho and his foreign minister Ezequiel Padilla lauded the program and the agreements reached with the United States, even though these were all ad hoc executive arrangements that were never formalized as treaties, and which for many years had no legislative authorization in the U.S. at all. Disagreements and conflicts with U.S. authorities and employers in fact came to plague the program from the end of the war into the mid-1950s.

Over the first dozen years, an increasing number of migrants skipped the program to cross the border illegally, as reflected in the steadily mounting apprehensions by U.S. authorities of deportable Mexicans. The Mexican government strongly opposed undocumented migration outside of the program; it pressed for sanctions on employers who used undocumented labor and supported the U.S. government's "Operation Wetback" to repatriate the undocumented in 1954. Mexico provided financial support, as well as trains and buses, for the massive campaign to repatriate undocumented migrants to the country's interior. The number of apprehensions of undocumented Mexicans by U.S. authorities soared to over 1,000,000 that year. Neither the experience of these repatriates nor the details of Mexico's handling of them have received attention from scholars in recent years comparable to that of the repatriates of the early 1930s.²⁶

Although Operation Wetback was widely believed to have eliminated undocumented migration, pressures to end the Bracero Program built steadily from the late 1950s into the 1960s. Among those advocating an end to the program were Mexican American leaders, activists and organizations, who were just beginning to emerge as national political actors beginning with the presidential campaign of John F. Kennedy in 1960.²⁷ The Mexican government's insistence succeeded in helping extend the program to the end of 1964. For the next decade, Mexico sought a new agreement with the U.S. to revive the program, but to no avail.²⁸

Mexican scholar and diplomat Carlos Rico has written that as a result of the Bracero Program "Migrating temporarily to the United States became part of the expectations of a significant part of Mexico's rural population. Networks, patterns, and routes were established and became familiar to Mexican migrants."²⁹ The importation of a new generation of Mexican workers formed the basis for decades of renewed immigration and the eventual revival of the organized elements of the Mexican immigrant community in the U.S. that we know today.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 39; García y Griego, p. 48.

²⁶ García y Griego, op cit., p. 58; Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story, 1942-1960* (Santa Barbara: McNally & Loftkin, 1964), p. 70. Juan Ramon Garcia, *Operation Wetback: The Mass Deportation of Mexican Undocumented Workers in 1954* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980) is out of print.

²⁷ David G. Gutiérrez discusses Mexican American opposition to the Bracero Program in two publications: "Sin Fronteras?: Chicanos, Mexican Americans and the Emergence of the Contemporary Mexican Immigration Debate, 1968-1978," in David G. Gutiérrez, ed., *Between Two Worlds: Mexican Immigrants in the United States* (Wilmington, Delaware: SR Books, 1996), as well as his book, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1995).

²⁸ García y Griego, op cit., pp. 68-72.

²⁹ Rico, Carlos. "Migration and U.S.-Mexican Relations, 1966-1986." In *Western Hemisphere Immigration and United States Foreign Policy*. Edited by Christopher Mitchell (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).

Phase III: Mexican Americans

By the 1970s, the Chicano Movement made the Mexican government aware, in a new way and perhaps for the first time, of the non-immigrant population of Mexican origin in the United States. Although generally speaking this movement's outlook was not genuinely Mexicanist or Mexican nationalist, it was nevertheless explicitly anti-assimilationist and critical of the Americanism of the previous generation that was identified with LULAC and the American G.I. Forum, the organization founded by Mexican American veterans of WWII.³⁰

In this period the Luis Echeverría administration opened a new stage in Mexican government policy by developing an unprecedented relationship with Mexican American leaders and activists. Official contacts began in 1971 and produced what Jorge Bustamante called "various programs for Chicanos supported by the government of Mexico."³¹ These primarily consisted of university-level scholarship programs for study in Mexico, and cultural programs in Mexican American communities in the U.S.

Echeverría's dialogue with Mexican Americans also had consequences for Mexico's policy toward migration. According to Bustamante, the activist-scholar Ernesto Galarza in particular persuaded Echeverría to renounce Mexico's quest for a new guest worker program in 1975.³² This position would have been strongly supported by all of the Mexican American leaders and academics that Echeverría and his advisors reached out to at that time, both within and outside of the Chicano Movement.³³ Over the next 25 years, Mexican American opposition to any new guest worker program appears to have served as an obstacle to the Mexican government's reconsideration of the issue.³⁴

More generally, friendly communication between the Mexican government and Mexican American leaders and organizations (who began calling themselves Hispanic or Latino) has continued on an irregular basis during each succeeding administration. Contrary to some early expectations, however, a close programmatic or political relationship has never been consolidated.³⁵ Mexican government policy would continue to reach out to Mexican Americans in the next period, but as a lesser priority within an entirely changed framework that emphasized the ties between a new generation of migrants with their home country.

Phase IV: The New Acercamiento

³⁰ For an overview see chs. 8-14 of F. Arturo Rosales, *Chicano!: The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Arte Publico Press, 1997).

³¹ Jorge A. Bustamante, "Chicano-Mexican Relations: From Practice to Theory," in Tatcho Mindiola, Jr. and Max Martinez, eds., *Chicano-Mexicano Relations* (Houston: U of Houston Mexican American Studies Program, 1986), p. 16. See in the same volume Armando Gutiérrez, "The Chicano Elite in Chicano-Mexicano Relations."

³² See García y Griego, op cit., pp. 72-73 and Rico, op cit., pp. 230-231.

³³ Bustamante, op cit., pp. 15-16.

³⁴ On the development of the 'Latino lobby' on immigration and its opposition to guest workers, see Christine Marie Sierra, "Latino Organizational Strategies on Immigration Reform: Success and Limits in Public Policymaking," in *Latinos and Political Coalitions: Political Empowerment for the 1990s*, Roberto E. Villareal and Norma G. Hernandez, eds. (New York: Praeger, 1991), and "In Search of National Power: Chicanos Working the System on Immigration Reform: 1976-1986," in *Chicano Politics and Society in the Late Twentieth Century*, David Montejano, ed. (University of Texas Press, 1999)

³⁵ . Bustamante, op cit., pp. 16-17

The mounting flow of undocumented Mexican immigration led to a search for policy responses and ultimately resulted in major shifts on both sides of the border. The passage of the Immigration Control and Reform Act (IRCA) in 1986 led to the legalization of some 2.7 million immigrants, the majority of whom were Mexican. This development in turn combined with political changes in Mexico to lay the basis for a new era in Mexico's relations with its diaspora.

The process of legalization in the U.S. coincided with a split in the ruling PRI party in Mexico, which led to the bitterly fought presidential election of 1988. The new left-leaning opposition movement headed by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas mounted an unprecedented challenge to the official party-state candidate Carlos Salinas. This political battle extended across the border, which in turn motivated the subsequent Salinas administration to devise a new approach to the burgeoning Mexican diaspora in the U.S.³⁶ The Mexican government sought to devise methods of encouraging the non-political organization of Mexican immigrant communities utilizing its consulates and the new Program for Mexican Communities Abroad (PCME). These developments combined to spur the growth of a new network of Mexican leaders, activists and organizations in the United States.

The Mexican government, acting through its consulates, boosted the development of hometown associations (HTAs) and strengthened their bonds to their towns and states of origin, especially with the creation of the PCME. The consulates had long provided a number of important services to the immigrant population, including the identification card known as the *matricula consular*. The consulates increased their support of Mexican immigrant associations in the 1990s and sponsored the creation of new ones, often utilizing visits by hometown mayors (*presidentes municipales*) to convene migrants of common origin and encourage them to organize themselves.³⁷ Similarly, increasingly frequent visits by Mexican state governors facilitated the organization of individual clubs into federations of clubs from common states. In Los Angeles, this process of organization was crowned in 2002 with the creation of the *Consejo de Presidentes de Federaciones Mexicanas*.

The Mexican Government and Migrant Organization

Mexico has both responded to the development of migrant leadership and organization, and acted to encourage it, in ways that are setting a standard for other countries in the region and beyond. This policy evolved over a dozen years from fostering the organization of hometown clubs to sponsoring the creation of a continental assembly for the integration and strategic direction of Mexican migrant leadership as a whole and its linkage to the Mexican government. Mexico has moved more tentatively, however, to establish voting from abroad in its presidential elections.

Mexican policy in the post-IRCA era developed from a reform and expansion of its consulate network, and the creation of the Foreign Ministry's Program for Mexican Communities Abroad in

³⁶ See Denise Dresser, "Exporting Conflict: Transborder Consequences of Mexican Politics," and Carlos González Gutiérrez, "The Mexican Diaspora in California: Limits and Possibilities for the Mexican Government." in *The California-Mexico Connection*, Abraham F. Lowenthal and Katrina Burgess, eds. (Stanford UP, 1993).

³⁷ See Gaspar Rivera-Salgado and Luis Escala Rabadán, "Collective Identity and Organizational Strategies of Indigenous and Mestizo Mexican Migrants," in Jonathan Fox and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, eds., *Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States* (La Jolla: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, UCSD, 2004); Carol Zabin and Luis Escala Rabadán, "Mexican Hometown Associations and Mexican Immigrant Political Empowerment in Los Angeles," Working Paper Series (Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute, 1998).

1990, to the addition of a Presidential Office for Mexicans Abroad in 2000 and the creation of the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME) in 2003. The IME was the successor to the previous two agencies, and is again housed in the Foreign Ministry.³⁸

Along the way, the Mexican federal government formally joined and expanded official efforts in support of the migrants' own social and economic development projects in their communities of origin. Raising money for improvements in their hometowns has long been a fundamental means of organizational development among migrants, acting originally in cooperation with either the church or local authorities in their communities of origin. This dynamic took on a new character especially in Zacatecas, where the state government began matching the funds provided by the migrants for a number of projects in the late 1980s.³⁹ In 1992 this incipient program became the Programa Dos Por Uno, by which the Zacatecas and federal governments each committed themselves to match every dollar contributed by the migrant organization to mutually agreed-upon projects.⁴⁰ By 1999, the program had extended to numerous states and expanded to 'three for one,' with municipal governments also matching funds.⁴¹ The proliferation of the program was facilitated by the establishment of special offices for migrant affairs in all of the primary states of origin, often at the behest of the federal government's PCME.

Further mention must be made of the consulate network, which was the leading edge of the reform of Mexican policy toward the diaspora in the 1990s known as *acercamiento*, and which carries the load of Mexican state services abroad.⁴² The most fundamental analytical and policy question in this regard is that, given the mission of the consulates, what need was there for a special program for Mexican communities abroad in the first place, to say nothing of the later special presidential office and then the IME?

Although the consulates, and in particular the Consuls General in major U.S. cities, play varied roles in relation to Mexican emigrants, American society and Mexican Americans, their primary responsibility has traditionally been to administer consular services delivered on a mass scale directly to individuals. The IME, on the other hand, which has assigned consular personnel

³⁸ See www.sre.gob.mx/ime

³⁹ Guillaume Lanly and Volker Hamann, "Solidaridades transfronterizas y la emergencia de una sociedad civil transnacional: la participación de dos clubes de migrantes en el desarrollo local del Occidente de México," in Guillaume Lanly and M. Basilia Valenzuela V., eds., *Clubos de migrantes oriundos mexicanos en los Estados Unidos: la política transnacional de la nueva sociedad civil migrante* (Guadalajara: U. de Guadalajara, 2004).

⁴⁰ See

http://www.federacionzacatecana.org/index.php?sectionName=home&subSection=news&story_id=102

⁴¹ See www.sedesol.gob.mx/mexicanosenelexterior/main.htm

⁴² On the role of the Consulates, see Carlos González Gutiérrez, "Decentralized Diplomacy: The Role of Consular Offices in Mexico's Relations with its Diaspora," in Rodolfo O. de la Garza and Jesús Velasco, eds., *Bridging the Border: Transforming Mexico-U.S. Relations* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997). On the Program for Mexican Communities Abroad (PCME) see the chapter in the same volume by de la Garza, "Foreign Policy Comes Home: The Domestic Consequences of the Program for Mexican Communities Living in Foreign Countries," as well as Rodolfo Figueroa-Aramoni, "A Nation beyond Its Borders: The Program for Mexican Communities Abroad." *Journal of American History*. 86:2 (September 1999) www.indiana.edu/~jah/mexico/; on the whole *acercamiento* policy see Robert Leiken, *The Melting Border: Mexico and Mexican Communities in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Equal Opportunity, 2000), www.ceousa.org/pdfs/MELTBORDER.pdf

across the U.S. and in Canada in addition to its staff in Mexico City, is designed for and dedicated to developing the network of émigré leaders, activists and organizations.⁴³

More often than not, official Mexican policy discourse has portrayed itself as addressing diaspora communities as a whole. But the Mexican government obviously cannot relate to its diaspora in the same way that it can reach its population on Mexican territory. The recourse to developing and engaging migrant leadership is at bottom a practical, if mainly unspoken, necessity for a wide range of purposes.⁴⁴

For example, in the first of several articles on the subject of Mexican policy toward its diaspora, Carlos González Gutiérrez – the policy’s main designer and executor -- offered a series of answers to the question of why the Mexican government would devote scarce resources attending to a population that had left the country. First of all, he wrote, there is “the need to respond to the growing influence of nongovernmental actors in U.S.-Mexican relations.” The Mexican government, he continued, “has a vested interest in being able to count on the support of as many of these groups as possible.”⁴⁵

González Gutiérrez goes on in this article to make clear that the state’s interest is as much defensive as it is supportive, because the diaspora could well act in opposition to the Mexican government, and U.S. officials could even try to mobilize it “as a pressure tool in relations with Mexico.”⁴⁶ Alternatively, “the Mexican government might work with the diaspora to push for desired U.S. policies.”⁴⁷ He then goes on to cite two particular cases in which the Mexican government already found in the diaspora “a valuable ally in its efforts to bring U.S. policy in line with its interests.”⁴⁸

⁴³ In addition to the previously cited sources, this section is based upon numerous conversations with the IME’s Executive Director Carlos González Gutiérrez, his presentations and remarks on the IME in various forums, focus groups conducted with IME advisory council (Consejo Consultivo - CCIME) members in Mexico City in November 2003, subsequent conversations with other CCIME members and observers, and my observation of a CCIME plenary meeting in Atlanta in May 2004.

⁴⁴ The Mexican state, like other states, finds it useful and perhaps necessary to work through social networks domestically as well. In the particular case of the Salinas administration, parallels can be seen between the administration’s strategies at home and abroad, even in the president’s thinking well before taking power. See Carlos Salinas de Gortari, *Political Participation, Public Investment, and Support for the System: A Comparative Study of Rural Communities in Mexico* (San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1982) and Denise Dresser, *Neopopulist Solutions to Neoliberal Problems*, (San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1991).

⁴⁵ See especially the section titled “Interests and Obligations of the Mexican Government” (pps. 225-228) in Carlos González Gutiérrez, “The Mexican Diaspora in California: Limits and Possibilities for the Mexican Government.” *The California-Mexico Connection*. Abraham F. Lowenthal and Katrina Burgess, eds. (Stanford UP, 1993).

⁴⁶ The pro-Cárdenas movement discussed earlier is not the only historical precedent of diasporic mobilization against the Mexican government. What is purported to have been the largest demonstration in Los Angeles history -- prior to the 1994 protest march against Proposition 187 -- was a church-sponsored Mexican community procession in solidarity with the *Cristero* rebellion in the late 1920s. See Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (London: Verso, 1990), p. 331, and Alberto López Pulido, “Nuestra Señora De Guadalupe: The Mexican Catholic Experience in San Diego,” *The Journal of San Diego History* 37:4 (Fall 1991), www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/91fall/catholic.htm

⁴⁷ *op cit.*, p. 225.

⁴⁸ González Gutiérrez refers here to the role played by Mexican American leaders and organizations in debates over U.S. immigration reform and the “fast track” legal authority to negotiate a free trade agreement with Mexico; *op cit.*, p. 226.

The division of labor between the consulate staff, which attends to individuals and families of migrants on one hand, and special programs such as the PCME and the IME, which attend to leaders and activists (i.e., the diaspora network) on the other, has most recently made possible a further critical function. The IME is able to plan and maneuver on a national and binational scale, setting and pursuing strategic goals and responding to challenges that transcend the purview of the dispersed consulates general.⁴⁹

Over the course of the 1990s, the PCME became primarily an adjunct to local consular programs, while the Mexican Embassy's office of Latino affairs, distanced from both its grassroots base and strategic decision makers in Mexico City, specialized in relations with the Latino leadership network in Washington, i.e., national Latino organizations, other immigrant advocacy groups and the offices of Hispanic members of Congress.⁵⁰ At the same time, however, Mexican migrant leadership and organizations were independently developing beyond their origins as links between local communities in Mexico and the U.S. to become first regional and then a national network that increasingly made itself visible in Mexico City, in particular to press the demand to vote in Mexican elections from abroad.⁵¹

The Fox Administration's first strategic innovation in 2000 was to create the *Oficina Presidencial para los Mexicanos en el Exterior* (OPME), headed by Juan Hernández, a Mexican American university professor from Texas who had been raised in Fox's home state of Guanajuato. The advantage of the presidential office was that it gave the presidency a direct channel to the diaspora while it simultaneously provided a mechanism for addressing the demands that the migrant activists insisted on making directly to the presidency.

This presidential office arrangement should also have allowed for the development of Mexico's overall goals in relation to the diaspora, but this function would have at minimum required cooperation with the foreign ministry, which was not forthcoming. The great disadvantage of the presidential office was that it was seen as a competitive intrusion by the foreign minister and was completely cut off from the consular network, the PCME and the Latino affairs office in Washington.

⁴⁹ "Strategic goals" would include coordinating multiple departments and levels of the Mexican government in their relations with the diaspora and the pursuit of objectives such as the encouragement of a pro-Mexico lobby, the mobilization of support or opposition for particular policies either in the U.S. or Mexico, a campaign to alter public opinion or a coordinated response to a particular incident in either country, etc.

⁵⁰ The Mexican government provided the funds to launch a nonprofit organization in 1994 that would be more than the sort of non-strategic program the PCME was becoming. Headed by former leaders of the PCME, the *Fundación Solidaridad Mexicano-Americana A.C.* continues to serve as ongoing effort to connect or reconnect Mexican American members of the Latino network with Mexico. In this regard, the FSMA is more of a continuation and development of the Mexican governments' earlier Chicano-oriented programs than it resembles current Mexican diasporic policy, which is overwhelmingly oriented toward the emigrant population. See www.fsma.org.mx

⁵¹ On the voting issue see Jesús Martínez Saldaña and Raúl Ross Pineda, "Suffrage for Mexicans Residing Abroad," in David Brooks and Jonathan Fox, eds., *Cross Border Dialogues: U.S.-Mexico Social Movement Networking* (La Jolla: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 2002). Source documents and ephemeral commentaries are gathered in Ross Pineda, *Los mexicanos y el voto sin fronteras* (Culiacán: U. Autónoma de Sinaloa, 1999). For deep historical background and analysis see Arturo Santamaría Gómez, et al., *Mexicanos en Estados Unidos: la nación, la política y el voto sin fronteras* (Culiacán: U. Autónoma de Sinaloa, 2001).

The special presidential office was abolished in the summer of 2002, and plans for the IME were announced a month later. This new structure's major innovation was its plan for an advisory council to be made up of 100 representatives of Mexican communities in the United States selected by various means through processes initiated by Mexico's 45 U.S. consulates. This body is known as the *Consejo Consultivo* of the IME, or the CCIME.⁵² By late 2002, González Gutiérrez was designated as executive director and the process was launched for the formation of the Consejo Consultivo.⁵³ The PCME was eventually phased out, with its functions and personnel absorbed into the IME.⁵⁴

IME and CCIME

The CCIME attempts to play the role of the coordinating assembly of the diaspora leadership as a whole – a formal and institutionalized network of networks, with a fixed membership that is convened twice yearly and which is divided into functional commissions. This creation, in spite of its unwieldy aspects, allowed the Mexican state to impose a much higher degree of order than ever before on its relations with the rising diaspora meta-network.

The original design for the CCIME called for 100 members to be chosen for three-year terms by Mexican “communities” in selection processes initiated by the consulates in 2002. The actual mode of selection varied considerably from one location to another. In Los Angeles, the meetings convened by the Consulate General agreed to reserve the majority of that district's CCIME seats for the presidents of HTA federations. The few remaining seats were filled by a vote taken at a second meeting. In Chicago, an open election with printed ballots was held under the control of immigrant organizations and activists away from the Consulate General.⁵⁵

As of 2005 the IME staff considered 105 consejeros to be voting members representing Mexican communities in the U.S. and Canada. Some number of locally designated *suplentes* to the consejeros also attended IME functions. Another 10 regular participants were nonvoting representatives of U.S. Latino organizations invited by the IME staff, and in its first year another ten or so “special advisors” also attended CCIME meetings. The latter included some Mexican American academics and other community leaders, most of whom had little regular contact with the immigrant community but had expertise in American and Latino politics. The IME, in other words, attached representatives of the U.S. Latino leadership network to its migrant leadership

⁵² The CCIME subsequently incorporated three consejeros resident in Canada, where Mexico also has consulates. Little has been written about the IME so far outside of the Mexican and U.S. Spanish-language press. For a diasporic activist critique that details the selection of the IME consejeros in Chicago see Raúl Ross Pineda and Juan Andrés Mora, *Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior: Notas Para Una Discusión* (Chicago: Ediciones MX Sin Fronteras, 2003). For a variety of articles see the supplement *Masiosare* to the newspaper *La Jornada* at: www.jornada.unam.mx/suplementos

⁵³ González Gutiérrez's naming as executive director was preceded by the appointment of a Mexican immigrant to the U.S. as its titular director, which is primarily a ceremonial position.

⁵⁴ The IME's first biannual report lists a staff of 23 titled positions beneath the director and executive director, with an additional 21 support staff; 98 consular personnel are listed as assigned to the IME at 49 locations in the U.S. and Canada. *Reporte Binanual de Actividades, 2003-2004*. Mexico, D.F.: Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2004.

⁵⁵ Little has been written about the IME so far outside of the Mexican and diasporic press. For an activist critique that details the selection of the IME consejeros in Chicago see Raúl Ross Pineda and Juan Andrés Mora, *Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (Notas Para Una Discusión)*. Chicago: Ediciones MX Sin Fronteras, 2003. The diverse methods of selection of the second generation of consejeros in 2005 is detailed on the IME website at the page titled “Convocatorias Locales.”

council. Additionally, Mexico's states were supposed to send a nonvoting representative of their migrant sending communities to the CCIME.

The CCIME is internally divided into six commissions dedicated to different policy areas.⁵⁶ These commissions meet and are in regular contact between the twice-yearly meetings of the CCIME as a whole. Furthermore, the *consejeros* in certain urban areas meet regularly as a local caucus. In Los Angeles, for example, the *consejeros* meet monthly at the Consulate General.

The membership of the CCIME was completely renewed in the summer and fall of 2005, again through a variety of processes determined at the individual consular level within parameters set by the IME and approved by the CCIME. The new CCIME, scheduled to be inaugurated by early 2006, will be in place through the presidential election and at the time of the transition to a new administration in Mexico.

Growth of the network of migrant leadership is built into the CCIME project by a ban on direct reelection of *consejeros*. As the first generation of *consejeros* entered the period of selection of the next in mid-2005, the outgoing class began developing plans to continue to work together as a non-profit advocacy organization of ex-*consejeros*. Thus the CCIME began to take form as a sort of migrant executive leadership academy, producing a continuous stream of graduates ready to form an alumni association.

Another major component of the IME's work is a parallel program of professional and leadership networking known as *Jornadas Informativas*. The IME staff identifies a particular sector of mainly Mexican immigrant professionals or community leaders in the U.S. for which it devises a 2-3 day program of activities, usually in Mexico City. The IME and selected consulates work for as long as six months to identify invitees from a sector or region, such as health professionals, educators, engineers, Mexican American elected officials, media professionals, local community leaders, etc. Groups of about 40 participants are flown to Mexico where they are briefed on a range of diaspora-related programs of the Mexican government, as well as current issues in Mexico that are related to that particular sector. The participants are challenged to make their contribution to Mexico and the diaspora, and to remain in contact with each other, the IME, and their local consulate.

Ten such *Jornadas* were conducted in each of 2003 and 2004. At the end of 2004, the consulates, directed by the IME, initiated a practice of convening all local former participants in such *Jornadas*, together with the local CCIME *consejeros*, for an annual reunion. The Chiefs of Mission at each consulate are required to report to the IME on these reunions with an update on the professional and Mexico-related activities of the former *Jornadas* participants. The consulates are thus instructed and empowered to develop a constantly expanding local leadership network. In this way, the IME is also systematically expanding and transforming the relationship between the consulates and migrant community leadership.

The IME also administers a panoply of instruments of mass communications to the migrant leadership network and the Mexican diaspora at large, which include a weekly presidential message broadcast throughout the U.S. by radio, television and internet, and a sophisticated

⁵⁶ CCIME Commissions: Asuntos Económicos y Negocios, Asuntos Educativos, Asuntos Legales, Asuntos Políticos, Asuntos de Organización Comunitaria, Salud y Cultura, and Asuntos Fronterizos. The main function of these commissions has been to formulate policy recommendations to the Mexican government. As of the publication of the IME's first *Reporte Binacional*, the CCIME had formally approved and submitted 202 policy recommendations, which are catalogued on the IME website: www.sre.gob.mx/ime

website. The network is showered daily with professionally produced email newsletters and messages known as *Lazos*, sent to a constantly growing list of thousands of Mexican immigrant and Mexican American leaders and other opinion shapers in the United States.⁵⁷ The IME furthermore makes regular use of the mass media through staged events and press conferences, and both its ceremonial director general and its executive director regularly make public appearances throughout the U.S.

The IME, working closely with the Deputy foreign minister for North America and the presidential staff, is essentially the nerve center and strategic coordinator of state relations with the diaspora and its evolving leadership meta-network. The Consejo Nacional para las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Exterior (CNCME) is the name given to the regular meetings of the various cabinet members who have responsibilities of interest to the diaspora – meetings that are prepared by the IME staff and which are presided over by President Fox. This body is intended to empower the IME in its strategic coordinating role by forcing cabinet secretaries to answer directly to the president on diaspora-related issues.

The CCIME has an irreducibly dual character. On one hand, it is composed of representatives of Mexican immigrant communities, selected through processes primarily controlled by elements of the immigrant leadership network, albeit with some influence by the Mexican consulates that varied from one city to another. On the other hand, the CCIME appears as a semi-autonomous creation of the Mexican government, an instrument for its linkage with migrant leadership and communications with the diaspora as a whole.

The foregoing does not constitute a complete description of Mexico's current diaspora policy or even a full accounting of the programs and activities of the IME. Furthermore, it must be noted that a range of leaders and activist formations has positioned itself as critical or independent of the Mexican government's programs. These include in particular groupings and activists agitating for the right to vote from abroad.⁵⁸ Perhaps the most visible node boycotting the IME, however, is the business-oriented Asociación Mundial de Mexicanos en el Exterior, which tries to represent itself as the nucleus of an alternative network altogether.⁵⁹

Dual Nationality and Voto Postal

The passage of legislation to implement voting from abroad in 2005 for the July 2006 presidential election can be construed as a further development of the Mexican state's diaspora policies as described here. Vicente Fox promised to support the "voto" in his 2000 campaign, and the approved legislation mirrored the proposal he submitted to Mexico's Congress in June 2004. Nevertheless, it would be more accurate to attribute the *voto postal* to the sustained effort of a hardy band of émigré activists that dates to the mobilization in favor of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in the 1988 presidential election. The extent and depth of the diaspora's interest in voting from abroad has been a matter of some debate. Nonetheless, the effort to achieve it constitutes one of the most important, sustained and successful undertakings of the migrant leadership network to date.

Although the form and conditions of the *voto postal* will severely limit its impact in 2006, it nonetheless marks a major step and opens a new period in the development of the diasporic

⁵⁷ The presidential messages and *Lazos* emails are archived on www.sre.gob.mx/ime

⁵⁸ Such as the Coalición por los Derechos Políticos de los Mexicanos en el Extranjero, and the magazine *MX*, which is published in Chicago.

⁵⁹ The AMME, which is the project of a business consultant, holds an annual convention in Las Vegas, hosts a website, and sends frequent mass emails. See www.mexicanosenelexterior.com

network and its involvement in Mexican politics. The Mexican state is now enlisting its electoral system, its party system, and the potential political energies of its diaspora as a whole in the further organization and mobilization of its émigré communities.

The Lobby Question

The Fox team debated whether the president-elect should make an open call for Mexican Americans to organize themselves into a pro-Mexico lobby in late 2000. One opportunity came when Fox addressed the annual dinner of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) in Los Angeles that November. The next opportunity was at a convocation at the presidential compound of Los Pinos the day after his inauguration in December – the first event the Fox Administration staged there. The Fox team, however, could not come to agreement on the matter of an explicit proposal concerning the creation of a lobby, in part due to tensions between Juan Hernández, the new special advisor, and Jorge Castañeda, the foreign minister.

The call for a lobby that was not made at the time that Fox's popularity was at its peak is not only a political experiment not undertaken, but one that may not have another comparably propitious moment. The Fox Administration proceeded to try to negotiate a migration agreement with the Bush Administration, apparently planning to try to activate the support of Mexican Americans and immigrants after an agreement was reached and there was legislation to be pushed through the U.S. Congress. No agreement was ever reached, of course, and the talks were never resumed after September 11, 2001. But Hernández and Castañeda were both gone within 16 months, when the IME was launched and marked a new beginning for Mexico's diasporic policy.

In a sense, the IME and the CCIME themselves appear to be functioning now as both the focal points and framework for the cultivation of pro-Mexico or Mexico-related mobilization among the diaspora in the United States. The IME has assembled an incentive structure for identification with Mexico. Activists must compete with each other to win a position on the CCIME and the status and privileges that it confers.

Mexican state sponsorship is demonstrably capable of convening representatives of diasporic networks and drawing Mexican American leaders to Mexico. But the Mexican state faces significant obstacles to translating this capability into an organized pro-Mexico lobby in U.S. national politics. A different possibility presents itself, however.

Mexican state action since the early 1990s, now concentrated in the programs of the IME, has already advanced the development of diasporic political networks, helped them to refine their agendas, and enhanced the skills of their participants. Representatives of national Latino organizations and other members of the Mexican American/Latino political class have been introduced to immigrant leaders and exposed to their issue agendas, as well as Mexico's, in the course of their participation in IME-sponsored programs.

The result of all of this is that Mexican state action has in effect already fashioned to a considerable extent a Mexican network-cum-lobby, not so much at the level of U.S. national politics but within the U.S. Latino community, vis-à-vis the Mexican American/Latino political and organizational establishment, i.e., a 'Mexico lobby' *within* the larger existing U.S. 'Latino lobby.' This Mexico lobby has both formal (the CCIME) and informal (the whole network) aspects.

The network, or network of networks appears consolidated and linked to Mexican society and government in a manner unparalleled in previous history. This arrangement serves a number of

functions and lends itself to diverse uses. Although not a formal foreign policy lobby in the U.S. capital, that network is able to advance certain Mexican state goals both in Mexico and the United States. To the extent that this network is able to make the domestic-policy oriented 'Latino lobby' in the United States more sensitive and attentive to Mexican immigrant and Mexico-related issues on one hand, while the Latino lobby continues to become more influential in U.S. politics on the other, Mexico will be likely to consider its most recent diasporic policy experiment to be a success and extend it indefinitely into future administrations.