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Negotiating Formal Membership in Mexico and the United States: The case of Federations of Mexican Hometown Associations in Los Angeles County

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Negotiating Formal Membership in Mexico and the United States: The Case of Federations of Mexican Hometown Associations in Los Angeles County

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts

in

Latin American Studies

by

Veronica Noriega Gonzalez

Committee in charge:

Professor David S. FitzGerald, Chair
Professor Steven P. Erie
Professor David G. Gutiérrez

2015
The Thesis of Veronica Noriega Gonzalez is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2015
EPIGRAPH

Porque aquí estamos y aquí nos quedamos.
- Isaí Pazos
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature page.................................................................................................................................................. iii

Epigraph............................................................................................................................................................ iv

Table of Contents............................................................................................................................................... v

List of Abbreviations ......................................................................................................................................... vi

List of Figures ...................................................................................................................................................... viii

List of Graphs .................................................................................................................................................... viii

Acknowledgements............................................................................................................................................. ix

Abstract of the Thesis ....................................................................................................................................... x

Introduction......................................................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter 1: Transnationalism and forms of belonging..................................................................................... 17

Chapter 2: Hometown Associations and Federations: Origins and characteristics ....................... 44

Chapter 3: Federations and the Mexican State ............................................................................................... 74

Chapter 4: Migrant Membership in the Host State: The case of Mexican Federations in LA County .......................................................... 90

Concluding Remarks.......................................................................................................................................... 110

Appendix A: List of Interviewed Organizations........................................................................................... 114

Appendix B: Interview Questions................................................................................................................... 119

References.......................................................................................................................................................... 122
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCESS</td>
<td>Agreement of Cooperation in Communities to Enhance Safety and Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFL-CIO</td>
<td>American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHIRLA</td>
<td>Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COFEM</td>
<td>Council of Mexican Federations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DACA</td>
<td>Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHS</td>
<td>Department of Homeland Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCJSC</td>
<td>Federación de Clubes Jaliscienses del Sur de California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCZSC</td>
<td>Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FECademich</td>
<td>Federación Californiana de Michoacanos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FECademín</td>
<td>Federación de Clubes y Asociaciones en Michoacán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIOB</td>
<td>Frente Indígena de Organizaciones Binacionales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOCOICA</td>
<td>Federación Oaxaqueña de Comunidades y Organizaciones Indígenas de California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTA</td>
<td>Hometown Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICE</td>
<td>Immigration and Costums Enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IME</td>
<td>Institute of Mexicans Abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INE</td>
<td>National Electoral Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INS</td>
<td>Immigration Naturalization Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRCA</td>
<td>Immigration Reform Control Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPR</td>
<td>Legal Permanent Resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LULAC</td>
<td>League of United Latin American Citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>MALDEF</td>
<td>Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCLR</td>
<td>National Council of La Raza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAN</td>
<td>National Action Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCME</td>
<td>Program for Mexican Communities Abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRD</td>
<td>Party of the Democratic Revolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>Revolutionary Institutional Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPEXT</td>
<td>Unión de Poblanos en el Exterior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Interview locations .......................................................................................... 12

LIST OF GRAPHS

Graph 2.1: Mexican Population in the United States (1850-2013) Migration Policy Institute, MPI Data Hub, 2015 ................................................................................................................ 51
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Finally, I would like to thank my dad, my brother and Nora for helping me become who I am today. I could not have accomplished anything without all your support.
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Negotiating Formal Membership in Mexico and the United States: The Case of Federations of Mexican Hometown Associations in Los Angeles County

by

Veronica Noriega Gonzalez
Master of Arts in Latin American Studies
University of California, San Diego, 2015
Professor David FitzGerald, Chair

This study focuses on how Mexican Federations of HTAs have negotiated their formal membership in Mexico and the United States. In Mexico, migrants’ market citizenship opened the channels of communication between Federations of HTAs, and the Mexican government. Once those channels were established; HTA Federation leaders were able to negotiate their passage from market to formal membership. In the case of the United States, HTA Federations have advocated for a formal inclusion in the United States, by organizing marches, lobbying and writing to their representatives and by emphasizing their economic contributions to the U.S. society in their discourse. However,
these strategies have proven partially ineffective. Nonetheless, Federation leaders have sought other strategies of inclusion at the local level by emphasizing the value of migrants as market citizens, encouraging migrants to show “good character” in order to be seen as “less illegal,” and through civic activities.

This study is based on 25 semi-structured interviews that took place between July 14 and September 4, 2014, as well as participant observation in Los Angeles County. I conclude that through these alternative strategies of membership, migrants have been able to become members of their host societies at a local level in the case of Los Angeles County.
INTRODUCTION

While Hometown Associations (HTAs) were created with the idea of providing economic assistance to the hometowns of Mexican migrants, these organizations have transcended that role to become relevant political actors capable of negotiating formal membership for their members, i.e., full rights-bearing status (Gutiérrez, in press, p.4) within sending and receiving communities. In Mexico, migrants organized in Federations of HTAs have attained significant victories such as the right to vote and, in some cases, the right to run for public office at a local level. Organized migrants have been able to demand accountability from their hometowns’ authorities. Conversely, Federations of HTAs have become more active seeking formal membership in the United States, as a response to anti-immigrant bills such as Proposition 187 and HR4437. HTA Federation leaders participate in rallies and send letters to their representatives. Many have gone to Washington D.C. repeatedly to lobby for comprehensive immigration reform.

This is a study of how Mexican Federations of HTAs (hereafter “Federations”) have negotiated their full membership in Mexico and the United States. I contend that home and host State\(^1\) policies deeply affect the strategies of transnational organizations such as Federations, and that Federations are in regular contact with State officials. I focus on how Federations have acquired political leverage, the strategies that they have used to claim formal membership in their host and home societies, and the importance

\(^1\) For the purpose of this research, State with capital “S” refers not simply to the government but rather, as Quentin Skinner, argues, a persona fictia, who has to be represented by the government (Giannakopoulos, & Quijano, 2012, p.21). On the other hand, state refers to the level of government of the federal entities that comprise the Nation-State (i.e., California, Zacatecas, Durango, etc.).
that they have given to formal membership in Mexico and in the United States.

First, alongside Luin Goldring (2002), I contend that Federations were able to negotiate their formal membership in Mexico by emphasizing their economic contributions to the Mexican State, i.e., their “market citizenship.” These early efforts opened channels of communication with the Mexican government. Once those channels were open, Federation leaders were able to negotiate their passage from market to formal membership. However, formal membership is something that Federations have had to keep renegotiating with the State ever since.

The process has been more complicated in the United States. For years, migrants have made demands for further inclusion by advocating for a comprehensive immigration reform and by protesting against anti-immigrant measures. Up until now, these strategies have not been effective in getting migrants formal membership in the United States. Therefore, Federation leaders have sought other strategies of political inclusion, such as emphasizing the value of migrants as market citizens in their host society (through their economic contributions), encouraging migrants to show “good character” in order to be seen as “less illegal,” or organizing programs and civic activities that aim to educate their members and their children. These activities have allowed Federations to establish contact with U.S. government officials, making the latter more receptive of migrant populations. Moreover, Federation leaders’ involvement with the Mexican government has provided them with valuable experience to negotiate with local U.S. authorities for further formal inclusion. Some of these authorities (e.g., in Los Angeles) have responded by trying to make their districts more welcoming places for immigrants; for example, they have suspended raids at the workplace and provided drivers licenses for
undocumented immigrants. This, in turn, has decreased the sense of migrant vulnerability in Los Angeles County.

**Characteristics of HTAs and Federations**

In order to discuss how Federations have negotiated their membership in Mexico and the United States, it is important to first understand the characteristics of HTA organizations (of which Federations are comprised), as well as the characteristics of Federations themselves.

Mexican Hometown Associations (HTAs) are voluntary organizations formed by Mexicans living abroad whose usual purposes are to carry out philanthropic projects in the Mexican hometowns of their members and to help newly arrived immigrants in issues regarding housing, getting a job, and collecting funds for emergencies. HTAs are considered transnational organizations because they promote a sense of community that transcends political borders by strengthening the links between individuals living abroad (mostly in the United States) and those who have stayed or gone back to Mexico. According to Carlos González Gutiérrez (1995), “the ultimate purpose of HTAs is to keep the community together, but understanding 'the community' as a whole that is physically divided by the border” (p.65). Additionally, Miguel Moctezuma (2004) points out that HTAs are high structures that have recognition and social legitimacy due to the collective practices of their members. These practices transcend individual members to create collective or organized migrants (p.130).

In their studies of transnational migrants, McKeown (1999) and Glick-Schiller (1999) explain that migrants feel responsibility towards their families, and that sending
remittances is a status enhancer as well as a claim for being good members of the community despite their absence. HTA members and their leaders claim membership to their hometowns across borders by different means. The most important one is by helping their hometowns with community projects through collective remittances and thus exercising market citizenship. However, other activities, such as organizing cultural events in the host land are also forms of exercising membership in the homeland. Festivals and other cultural activities raise funds for projects back home, and also help migrants preserve a cultural identity that ties them to their homeland. Nevertheless, as time has passed and as more Mexicans have settled in the United States, migrants have started to claim their membership in the United States as well. Most HTAs are concentrated in California, Illinois, and Texas, the states with the highest population of Mexican migrants.  

HTAs are a phenomenon linked to rural communities in Mexico. Most likely, this has to do with the fact that urban areas have fewer infrastructure necessities in comparison to rural villages with lower budgets and are in greater need for funds. It also responds to the fact migrants from rural villages tend to travel to the same localities in the United States since they are able to get temporary housing and find jobs through social networks. As Josefina Herrera, from Federación Chihuahua explains:

Let’s say I am a migrant that comes form anywhere in Mexico and I go the California. I start working and I am winning good money. There, where I work they tell me they need to hire someone else. 'Do you know somebody?' I call my cousin, my brother, my partner and I bring them here, maybe without documents. That way new groups form. This is how

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2 According to the Migration Policy Institute, 37 percent of all Mexican migrants live in California, 21 percent in Texas and 6 percent in Illinois. Additionally, the top three counties with Mexican immigrants were Los Angeles County, Harris County (Houston) and Cook County (Chicago) in 2012 (Zong & Batalova 2012).
you get to have a street full of people form the same state, because someone brought someone else and so on. (J. Herrera, personal communication, July 18, 2014)

González Gutiérrez (1995, p.72) also points out that people form rural communities, experience an extreme life change when they migrate to a city such as Los Angeles and therefore there is a stronger need to stay close in order to help one another, but also to keep their identity and customs. Furthermore, people from rural villages hold a stronger sense of community when compared to cities with tens of thousands of people; individuals from small rural communities are usually more willing to invest in public goods that their families back home can benefit from.

Organizationally, an executive board —conformed by a President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer— and general members who meet on a monthly or bi-monthly basis and general members, usually comprise HTAs. It is also important to notice that although HTAs claim to have a membership of hundreds of individuals, these figures are usually a reference of the people that participate in their events. In fact, survey research has found that Mexican migrants do not participate in high numbers in HTAs: the rate of participation for the Mexican population in the United States is between 6 and 14 percent, which is a low figure (Suro, 2005; Waldinger, 2007). Nevertheless, this rate is similar to that of civic participation of Mexicans in their own homelands (Bada, 2014). The core membership of HTAs tends to be much smaller, comprising between three and twenty individuals, which are the people that meet on a regular basis.

Leadership in HTAs remains within the first generation —that is, in the hands of foreign-born immigrants. Leaders are on average 50 years old and most of them are naturalized U.S. citizens. In regards to their socio-economic status, most HTA leaders are
self-employed or middle-class business professionals. They have a better grasp of English than other members of their respective organizations, and a minority is fully proficient in English. HTA members have greater diversity in regards to gender, age, and immigrant generation. Nevertheless, most of them are first-generation immigrants who are interested in preserving their identities and connections with their hometowns (Ramakrishnan and Viramontes, 2010, p.159).

In general Federations are associations of HTAs of the same Mexican state. “Federations are clubs. These clubs form a directory board and the directory board is the basis of the federation. That is, people form the clubs pick their leaders form their own board of directors and all members of the clubs elect who should be in the Federation’s board of directors” (Francisco Moreno, personal communication, July 17, 2014). As with HTAs, volunteers usually comprise these organizations and most do not have formal headquarters. They usually meet at member’s houses, restaurants and in Casas de Gobierno. Additionally, although the majority of members of Federations tend to be on the same area, there are also some members that are from other areas and even from other

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3 Youth participation in Hometown Associations is circumscribed to certain activities. In general boys play for sports teams for boys and girls participate in beauty pageants for girls. In the case of more structured organizations such as the Federación de Clubes Jaliscienses del Sur de California, sons and daughters of HTA members also serve as interns. Although these activities might seem purely recreational, such events are more than simple beauty pageants. In order to enter, participants must learn about their homeland and its traditions. This awakens pride for their pueblos and can bolster future participation in the organization, or at least in other migrant organizations (P. Hernández, personal communication, August 31, 2014).

4 An exception to this is FOCOICA (the Oaxacan federation) and the Federación de Clubes Jaliscienses del Sur de California and Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California. The latter does share an office with the Casa de Gobierno but President Pina Hernández claims that it is the Federation’s space and they lend it to the state government.

5 These are representations of Mexican states (Durango, Colima, Chihuahua etc.) in the United States. Their main purpose is to tend to the migrant community. They usually focus on business, cultural, educational and social activities. Casas de gobierno sometimes also bring people from the civil registry so that migrants can obtain birth certificates. Casas de Gobierno also coordinate efforts with Federations in regards to the 3x1 Program, the management of emergency funds, visits of the governor and the planning of cultural events (Rivera Salgado, Escala Rabadan 2002, p.17).
states. For example the *Federación Hidalguense* has members from Southern California, but also from Texas.

**Selected Literature Review**

The literature regarding how HTAs and Federations have negotiated their political rights in Mexico is vast. Studies about the role of HTAs and Federations in the negotiation of effective membership in the United States are fewer, and this literature usually concentrates in the 2006 immigration rights rallies.

In general, works that focus on Mexico tend to highlight the fact that HTA’s economic contributions to their hometowns drew the attention of government officials first at a local level, then at the state level, and finally at the federal level (Bakker and Smith, 2008). Mexican authorities interested in maintaining a continuous flow of collective and individual remittances developed programs that encouraged the participation of migrants by matching remittances with public development projects, initially at a local, and eventually at a federal level. Other institutions that have been established to open channels of communication and cooperation between Mexican authorities and migrants are *Casas de Gobierno* and a federal entity that deals directly with migrants, the Program of Communities Abroad created in 1990 which in 2003 became the Institute for Mexicans abroad.

It has been argued that the State has tried to coopt migrants through these practices and programs. However, several scholars agree that, regardless of the State’s intentions, these programs have also provided opportunities for migrant groups to become more autonomous and to demand political participation (Zabin and Escala-Rabadan 1998;
Goldring, 2003; Smith, 2003; Lanly and Valenzuela, 2004, Bakker and Smith, 2008, Bada 2014). Goldring (2003), for example, argues that participating in these programs offers migrants a way to exercise substantive citizenship and can potentially help them make a more serious claim of membership to the Mexican State. Bakker and Smith (2008) state that migrant organizations have been able to lobby successfully for political rights, such as being able to run for public office in Mexico, even when their members are residents of the United States. Nevertheless, many of the aforementioned authors add that the overall process is not linear, and that the political empowerment of migrants extends only to those individuals and organizations that have the resources to claim their rights.

While there are many factors that affect the activities of HTAs and Federations — the effects of global capitalism, reception conditions in the host country, federal policies in regards to migrants in the host and home countries— most scholars emphasize the importance of the State and the government. Valenzuela (2007), for example, concludes that what tends to shape the claims of migrant membership and the activities of migrant organizations in their homeland is the reactions and subsequent policies of the government at the state level.

One of the first studies that focused on the ability of HTAs and Federations to become actively engaged in political issues on both sides of the border was a research report written by Carol Zabin and Luis Escala Rabadán in 1998. In that paper, the authors explored the political empowerment of HTAs and Federations in the aftermath of Proposition 187, when HTAs played an active role demonstrating and giving donations to campaigns against such proposition. Nevertheless, the authors concluded that although
HTA achievements empowered migrant organizations socially and economically in the host State, HTAs had little involvement in political activities in California in the aftermath of the movement against Proposition 187. Zabin and Escala Rabadán concluded that HTA mobilization at that time was an exception and not a turning point in regards to their goals (p. 35).

The literature about political participation of HTAs and Federations and the prospect of their effectiveness as a means of attaining formal membership resurfaced in the mid 2000s, mostly because of the immigrant marches in 2006. Many news reports pointed out that these organizations were greatly responsible for the high levels of participation in the immigration rallies of Los Angeles and Chicago (650,000 people participated on the Los Angeles march of May 1st).

After these events most studies contended that HTAs increasingly began focusing on civil and social rights claims for immigrants in the United States in the early 2000s, thus shifting their traditional interest in Mexican communities to U.S. issues. For example, they have lobbied for the issuing of drivers’ licenses for undocumented migrants, for health care and education, and for the recognition of the Matrícula Consular as an official identification card (Rivera Salgado, Bada, & Escala-Rabadán, 2005; Alarcón, Escala Rabadán, Odgers, 2012; Bada, 2014; Ramakrishnan & Viramontes, 2010). As in the Mexican case, these studies conclude that the process is not linear, even if, generally speaking, the organizations they study have incorporated the quest for migrant membership in the host State fully into their agendas.

Scholars do seem to differ on their interpretations of why there has been a shift in migrant organizations’ goals. Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, Xóchitl Bada, and Luis Escala-
Rabadán (2005) note that the consolidation of HTA organizational structures—an outcome of HTAs interaction with the Mexican government at the state level—has increased the recognition of their capabilities among other members of the Mexican government, the U.S. government (at a local level), and Latino organizations. Viramontes (2008) and Rivera-Salgado et al. (2005) argue that the expansion of the activities HTAs and their claims for civic and political rights for Mexicans in the United States is motivated by the social and political threats that migrants face in the host land. Rafael Alarcón, Luis Escala Rabadán and Olga Odgers (2012) point out that migrant political participation in Los Angeles varies according to the immigration status of the members—although they notice, alongside Bada (2014), that both legal permanent residents and undocumented migrants participate through marches and rallies. Alarcón et al. (2012) also contend that HTA’s reorientation from focusing on political issues in Mexico to those in the United States can be explained by migrants’ negative view on Mexican politics. Finally, Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro (2011) emphasizes the importance of the State regarding migrant civic and political engagement in the host land. For her, the overall shift in the agenda can be seen as the outcome of both the Mexican and U.S. governments pushing in that direction.

Methods

Because this research subject is complex and non-quantifiable, I decided to adopt a qualitative approach in the field. I conducted semi-structured interviews. To find interviewees, I relied initially on the Mexican government database of Mexican organizations abroad that is updated regularly (Directorio de Organizaciones y Clubes de
Once I was able to contact some of the leaders, I employed the “snowball” technique, i.e., I asked the interviewees to provide the contact information of other Federation leaders. In this way I was able to reach leaders that were not on the government’s database, and thus able to widen the scope of my analysis.

I decided to approach Federations because these organizations have firmer structures when compared to HTAs. Federations tend to have more lasting structures, and they usually have monthly meetings. The HTAS that form them tend to be the most well established.

All in all, I completed 21 semi-structured interviews with leaders of various Mexican Federations in different parts of Los Angeles County. Map 1 depicts the locations where the interviews took place. Aside from Federation leaders, I conducted two interviews with migrant serving community organizations (*Hermandad Mexicana* and *Vamos Unidos USA*), one cultural organization (*Organización Regional Oaxaqueña*), and the Council of Mexican Federations (COFEM), which is a confederation of Mexican Federations. The rationale behind this was that these four organizations have regular contact with Federations; I foresaw that their members would be able to provide a more objective perspective regarding the goals, activities, and strategies of Federations.

Finally, I was an unobtrusive observer of COFEM’s Annual Meeting, and in cultural events such as the Guelaguetza ORO and the *Feria Internacional de la Cultura Maya*.

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6 The interviews, and quotes from these interviews, represent the personal opinions of the interviewee, and do not necessarily represent the official position of the organization that the person belongs to.
Most of my interviewees were males (only 5 were women). This is consistent with past studies (Viramontes, 2008; Bada, 2014): historically, the leaders of Federations have been first generation males (i.e., men that were born in Mexico). The average age was 55 years, with the oldest interviewee being 65 and the youngest 31. Their occupations varied, although most of them were small business owners. About 75 percent had arrived to the United States before 1986. A majority of the interviewees had acquired
U.S. citizenship. Finally the majority of them thought that they spoke “good” to “very good” English.\footnote{A list with the organizations interviewed and their basic information can be found in Appendix A.}

One substantial difficulty is that some of the telephone numbers in the *Directorio de Organizaciones y Clubes de Oriundos* were no longer in service. Although the database is updated regularly, the updates usually consist of adding new information, but not deleting the data of organizations that are no longer active. As already mentioned, Federation members helped me schedule interviews with a different array of organizations. It is difficult for me to determine the overall number of Federations in the United States, or the percentage of Federations that I was able to interview. By the end of my research very few available contacts remained, which leads me to believe that I was able to interview most of the active Federations in the County. Given time constraints, in most cases I was only able to interview one member per Federation and these members where core members of the Federation, either the President of the organization or a member of the board. Thus the information collected does not necessary reflect the view of the basis membership.

**Location**

This research was conducted in Los Angeles County, California from mid-July through the first week of September. Los Angeles County is one of the nation's largest counties and has the largest population in the nation with nearly 10 million residents who account for approximately 27 percent of California's population.

Los Angeles County was a gateway for millions of immigrants who arrived in the
United States in the mid-to-late 20th century, and it is the most important migrant destination for Mexican immigrants. There are around one million undocumented migrants in the county, of which approximately 60 percent are Mexican.

According to Alarcón, et al. (2012), the population of Los Angeles County underwent a change from being 60 percent white to being 60 percent non-white from 1970 to 1990. Today, Los Angeles County’s Latino population is nearly majoritarian: three-quarters of its population is of Mexican origin. According to the Migration Policy Institute, 1,800,000 Mexican immigrants live in the Los Angeles area. Even if recently immigrants have turned away from Los Angeles and other traditional cities of immigration, Los Angeles continues to be the largest immigrant metropolis in the nation. More than one-third of its residents and nearly half of its workforce are comprised of immigrants. Even if migrants tend to work in low productivity economic sectors, migrants contributed over 40 percent of the region's total economic output in 2009 (Pastor and Ortiz, 2009, p.33).

Los Angeles County has a generally welcoming immigrant environment with a long tradition of migrant organization. As I will discuss in chapter 4, several bills have sought to include migrants as members of Los Angeles County by extending social and civil rights to all migrants regardless of their immigration status. Furthermore, it is home to religious, cultural, and civic institutions that have long served immigrant and ethnic communities, and it headquarters powerful national labor and advocacy groups (Bada, Fox, Donnelly, & Selee, 2010).

According to Xóchitl Bada, Jonathan Fox, Robert Donnelly, and Andrew Selee (2010), “Los Angeles plays a leading role in national debates on immigration politics and
policy, and its models of immigrant civic engagement are replicated elsewhere” (p.59). For these reasons, Los Angeles is an ideal location to conduct research about migrant organizations and the strategies for becoming formal members in their host society.8

**Organization of the thesis**

Chapter 1 focuses on the theoretical concepts that have informed this research: the theories of transnationalism and citizenship. Regarding the first, I argue that State power has not been eroded, contrary to the belief of some scholars. As a matter of fact, State actions shape the activities of transnational actors, and State policies and attitudes towards these organizations can have deep effects in migrant organizations. Later in the chapter, I discuss what citizenship entails, how it has evolved in the case of the United States, and what other forms of belonging to the State exist.

I describe the origins of HTAs and their evolution into Federations in Chapter 2. I detail how HTAs interact with State policies on both sides of the border, and how this has shaped HTAs’ and Federations’ development, goals, and activities.

Chapter 3 focuses on the relationship between Federations and the Mexican State in the present. While there is a generally good relationship between Federation members and Mexican public officials (mostly at the consular level), there continues to be distrust between both parties. I contend that, in some cases, local governments have pushed back against the demands of migrants and have found ways to go around migrant organizations.

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8 Los Angeles welcoming climate and its long tradition of being a migrant gateway has fostered migrant organization in the area and has allowed migrants to engage into dialogue with local authorities, as it will be discussed in Chapter 4. While it is beyond of the scope of this research to look what the direction of the causality between migrant organization and government attitude towards migrants is, further studies should include other states were migrant reception varies in order to further assess how the state’s government attitude towards migrants affect the organization and development of HTAs and Federations.
to fund local projects. This represents a serious setback for the migrant organizations and might even diminish their political clout.

Finally, Chapter 4 focuses on the strategies that Federations of HTAs have used for negotiating their political rights and a path to formal citizenship in the United States. Although formal citizenship is still desirable in the minds of Federation leaders, I show that it is opinion of many of them that instead of engaging in political participation, migrants can show that they belong to U.S. society most effectively by demonstrating “good character”, by being good market citizens, and thorough “bureaucratic incorporation.”
CHAPTER 1: TRANSNATIONALISM AND FORMS OF BELONGING

While HTAs and Federations of HTAs were created with the idea of assisting their hometowns, they have also become important political actors in both their sending and receiving communities. They claim membership in both localities and they have used different strategies to negotiate the political rights of the population they represent. In order to analyze the activities of Federations and the ways in which they claim membership to both nations it is important to understand two key concepts and the theories that revolve around them: transnationalism and citizenship.

One of the main characteristics of Federations is that, like migrants, they are transnational actors. The activities of Federations, which are non-governmental actors, have repercussions in home and host communities; thus it is important to understand the theory of transnationalism in order to understand the characteristics of Federations. In the first section of this chapter, I argue that contrary to what authors such as Soysal (1994) and Sasen (1999) point out, the power of the State has not been eroded. The actions of the State (or lack thereof) shape the activities of transnational actors (in this case migrant Federations) and they can either help or harm the organization of migrants abroad. Furthermore, the attitudes of the State frame the discourse that migrants use to claim membership in their host and home communities.

In regards to the theories of citizenship, by discussing what citizenship entails, how it has evolved in the case of the United States and what are other forms of belonging in the State, it will be possible to understand how migrants become members of their host State, how they reclaim their right of belonging in their homeland and why being a
formal citizen is still important.

1.1. Transnationalism

The term transnationalism refers to the contacts, coalitions and interactions across State borders that are not controlled by government’s central offices and in which at least one of the participants is not a government agent or an intergovernmental organization. Scholars of transnationalism also point out that transitional actors experience a duality or multiplicity in three possible ways: 1) In their daily and family lives, for example, by having family and living on both sides of the border or in a third State; maintaining kinship and social networks across borders, sending remittances or depending on remittances; 2) A duality in their organizations; for instance, a hometown organization can focus on both, host and home communities; and 3) they experience a duality or a multiplicity vis-à-vis their homeland(s) and host society due to the fact that they belong to both. An example for this would be returning for patron saints’ day celebrations, which are increasingly dollarized, or organizing community projects in the home and host State. Furthermore, the importance of transnationalism is experienced through global interactions, such as flows of money, goods, people and information across borders (Cano, 2008, Goldring, 2002).

Finally, it is important to note that the study of transnationalism tends to be framed by international migration, due to the fact that migrants are non-governmental actors, whose actions have repercussions on governments\(^9\) (Keohane & Nye, 1973).

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\(^9\) Although transnationalism is framed by international migration it is important to take into account that, as Basch et al. (1994) argue the term is used to describe all individuals who, engage in transnational practices. Therefore, the term also includes people who appear to be "settled."
Additionally, scholars distinguish between “transnationalism from above,” which focuses on corporations and States and “transnationalism from below,” which is led by international migrants and highlights how they negotiate their membership in their home and host States (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998).

The term transnationalism has been criticized because it has been used to explain different phenomena and because of it, scholars that use it do not seem to fully agree on what the term conveys. According to Gustavo Cano (2008), this disagreement comes from the fact that the term is used in different fields of social sciences, such as sociology, economics, political science and anthropology and therefore interpretations and methodology differ.

1.2. Transnationalism and the State

Nina Glick-Schiller, Linda Bash and Cristna Szanton-Blanc coined the concept of “transnational migrant” in 1994. According to their definition, transnationalism is a process under which migrants sustain enduring economic, cultural and political ties across borders, thus transforming the State and the home societies into a “transnational social field.” This is to say that there are “sets of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged and transformed” (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1009). According to them, this situation represents a break from the past, due to the fact that nowadays migrants have closer and more lasting connections with their homeland due to technological innovations in

However, many scholars have questioned this argument. It is documented that at the beginning of the 20th century migrants kept ties with their home countries while, at the same time, they also developed new ties in their new State residence. For Nancy Foner (2001) the elements that have given new dimensions to
transportation and communications. This has made it possible for migrants to operate in both places simultaneously. Moreover, the authors point out that the Nation-State has been surpassed as the principal social and economic structure and that global capitalism has become the main force that conducts transnationalism. Finally, due to the fact that migrant participation conveys simultaneous participation in the host and homeland, it can be argued that political and geographical borders are no longer absolute.

Saskia Sassen (1999) and Yasemin Soysal (1994) also highlight that in this new era of economic globalization and transnational organizations, the Nation-State and formal citizenship have lost their importance. Sassen contends that globalization has reconfigured sovereignty and depreciated the value of Nation-State citizenship by providing a citizenship-like power to govern to certain sectors of private global capital. Nevertheless, Sassen does contend that the State is still the ultimate guarantor of the “rights” of global capital and that the States themselves have participated in the process of liberalizing their own economic and political systems (although the latter one to a lesser extent). Soysal, on the other hand, affirms that we live in an era of post-national citizenship. According to her, the international system of human rights is the new principle that guides the exercise of rights within Nation-States, and that post-nationalism can be observed through the fact that even if migrants are not incorporated as citizens in their host-nations, they exercise rights and duties only reserved to citizens, even if the Nation-State has not recognized them.

These kinds of affirmations have been criticized, among other things, due to the transnationalism and which are an actual break from the past are practices like double nationality, the increasing tolerance towards ethnic pluralism and multiculturalism, as well as the fact that nowadays migrants have a more developed sense of nationality.

\[1\] Migrants have connections to the homeland that can go beyond the first generation of migrants.
fact that many actions that migrants undertake cannot be understood without the existence of the State. By contending that “global capitalism” is the driving force of transnationalism, the scholars seem to ignore the fact that States do have agency and can even be the ones that encourage the creation “transnational public spaces.” The State can create a new arena for transnational actors or loosen requirements for citizenship in order to include migrants in their national project and give them tools to participate in the host or home State, such as the possibility to vote from abroad or by creating organizations to provide services to its communities form abroad. States can create transnational spaces for various reasons; it can be as part of their foreign policy or their domestic policy (Smith, 2003). Moreover, by asserting that the Nation-State has been “deterritorialized,” scholars are also ignoring that in the majority of cases States still are able to exercise the monopoly of violence in their territories, even if not in absolute terms. Furthermore, the term “deterritorialization of the Nation-State” does not explain why migrant communities maintain links with their home communities, or the different ways home States seek to keep ties with their citizens, even if they are abroad. Finally, this type of analysis ignores that migrants and their children can simultaneously belong to more than one State, which is one of the requirements to describe the formation of a transnational community (Smith 2003, Imaz, 1999).

In this regard, Ludger Pries’ (2002) analysis on transnational public spaces (which he names “transnational plurilocal spaces”) is illustrative in explaining how this transnational spaces work. According to him, Nation-States should be seen as containers

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12 For example, Smith (2003, p.307) argues that the Mexican government created transnational spaces to addressed the increasing transnational political activity by opposition groups and Mexican state governments.
and transnational spaces should be seen as “spaghettis” that pierce and go over these containers. This also illustrates that these spaces affect both States due to the fact that individuals obtain new areas where they can interact, and the interaction of these transnational actors have repercussions in both “containers.”

Even if transnational agents tend to emerge “under the shadow” of the State, this does not mean that they are not affected by State’s policies and practices. The actions and activities of transnational actors are often an outcome of the State’s actions or lack thereof. They engage into such actions because State’s policies are deficient in regards to their residents’ needs or because States encourage the activity of transnational actors by creating spaces where they can express their demands. On the other hand, transnational actors tend to work within official channels, and therefore its administrative structure and goals (in the case of transnational organizations) are a reflection of the State where they reside. In the case of Federations —as it will be discussed further in Chapter 4— they tend to register as non-profits in order to be taken more seriously, and because this status is important to procure funds and obtain grants.

Furthermore, Roger Waldinger and David FitzGerald (2004) contend that migrants do not create their communities in a vacuum. “States and the politics conducted within their borders fundamentally shape the options for migrant and ethnic trans-State social action” (Waldinger & FitzGerald, 2004, p.1178). Even if migrants have contacts across borders, their membership as well as the methods they can use to keep such ties is not something that they can decide independently. Not only do States grant access to their territory (in the case of legal immigration), States also regulate contacts across borders.
Even liberal States,\textsuperscript{13} such as the United States and Mexico, try to control the influx of goods and people by regularizing (to the extent of their ability) their circulation across borders. Due to these reasons the role of the home and host State is crucial for explaining political participation within the immigrant community. Since States and their policies shape the activities of the migrant community, the State’s attitude in regards to migrants must be taken into account when analyzing the actions of Federations and the claims they make regarding membership in the host and home State. However, this does not mean that States are all-powerful entities. As it will be shown later in this paper, States must also negotiate with transnational organizations in order to ensure a healthy relationship with its members. Transnational communities do not exist beyond the State, nor seek to do so.

Migrants also have repercussions on the host land. From the point of view of mainstream society, “international migrants are \textit{aliens}, not just \textit{strangers}” (Waldinger & FitzGerald, 2004, p. 1178). This means that migrants are seen as beings that are completely disconnected from the values and customs of the host country due to the fact that the national identity of a State is in many cases defined \textit{vis-à-vis} other Nation-States. Therefore, by entering into another State, international migrants create a conflict of identity between the domestic population and migrants. They “challenge the perpetuation of national myths of essentialized singular cultures and racial histories” (Chávez, 2007, p.

\textsuperscript{13} Fareed Zakaria (2003) being liberal refers to the rule of law, open and fair elections and human rights. Human rights in the sense of liberalism are usually conceived as individual rights and it is from the idea of liberalism that human rights originated. Some examples of such rights are freedom of press, religion, trade, and private property. Furthermore, liberalism entails that all people should be treated equally under the law. Christian Joppke (1998) argues that liberalism also implies being culturally neutral, since imposing particular cultural ways on their members would violate the dignity of the individual (p.32). Hence, liberalism also comprises the protection of minority rights, such as immigrants.
even if they are welcome as workers in competitive sectors of local economies. The State, through government agencies, has thus an interest in having migrants recognized and taken into account in order to deal with this situation. For example, hosting an important number of people that do not speak the native language becomes a policy issue due to the fact that public schools have to deal with the new members of the community who do not share the language or culture.

On the other hand, in the case of the State of origin, the departure of its citizens weakens its ability to control its population. Migrants acquire an unprecedented degree of freedom from the State, since the latter has no means of coercion outside its territory. Moreover, by having access to another territory and to its economic and ideological resources, migrants can create methods to influence policies in their homeland. For example, if the host State has a culture of transparency and accountability it is possible that migrants will start demanding such practices in their home States. This can even result in a direct confrontation between the transnational community and the State. For instance Cuban migrants were the ones that promoted the economic boycotting of their homeland. Nevertheless, the State can also create policies to expand its scope and include emigrants and their descendants outside the national territory in its national project and thus avoid conflict.¹⁴

1.3. Citizenship: rights, status and identity

Although transnationalism has not eroded the power of the State, we cannot say that Nation-States hold absolute power or that they perfectly enclose people, government

¹⁴ This issue will be discussed in the next section.
and territory. Migrant activities across borders, among other phenomena, show us that States, although still important, are porous entities. This has engendered a debate about the value and definition of citizenship. What does citizenship entail? According to Christian Joppke (2007) citizenship contains at least three aspects: 1) status, 2) rights, and 3) identity.

Citizenship as status conveys formal State membership and its rules of admission. The Hague Convention of 1954 stipulates that each State may determine who will be considered a citizen of that State thus, domestic laws on citizenship vary across States, just as the definitions of what it means to be a citizen. Nevertheless, according to Joppke (2007) citizenship has become more accessible in Western countries in the latter half of the 20th century. Sexual and racial barriers have been removed, and citizenship is in many Western countries conferred through territory (*jus solis*) rather than through decent (*jus sanguinis*) (Joppke 2007). Thus, citizenship is not static: the rules to access it can change over time and States even copy form other States the requirements to access it.

On the other hand, the classical definition of citizenship, which was postulated by T.H. Marshall in 1950 addresses the idea of citizenship as rights. According to him, citizenship includes civil (i.e. freedom of speech, freedom of association, non-deportation), political (i.e. right to vote, run for office) and social rights (i.e. health care, unemployment insurance, labor rights). Nevertheless, this does not mean that the rights

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15 I use the term “Western countries” to refer to the States that have directly derived from and influenced by western European cultures, such as countries in Western Europe, but also the United States, Australia, and the Latin-American countries.

16 However, it is important to note that not so far ago, *jus sanguinis* was considered a modern notion against *jus solis*, given the fact that *jus sanguinis* related citizenship to the individual and its servitude to the feudal landlord.

17 Today voting rights are seen as indispensable in (democratic) citizenship, yet, before World War I, the majority of U.S. citizens could not vote, whereas non-citizens of European descent could (Varsanyi 2004).
conferred by citizenship make all its members equal in power. “Citizenship [provides] the foundation of equality on which the structure of inequality could be built” (Marshall, 1950, p.151). Thus, citizenship gives individuals the capacity to strive for the goods, but it does not guarantee the possession of any of them.

There is a lot of debate in regards to the idea of citizenship as rights. What do these rights include or should include? How have transnationalism and globalization changed which rights are for all members of the community and which ones are part of the benefits of formal membership? For example, in regards to civil rights, some authors argue that civil rights are invested in personhood rather than citizenship, an argument that is also sustained by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), as well as in many Western constitutions. However, many other scholars such as Hannah Arendt contend that while this might be what the official discourse sustains, the State is the entity that in all cases is the ultimate guarantor of all rights, which is paradoxical, since it is because of the injustices carried by the State that human rights advocates argue that certain rights are invested in our very humanity. However, as the tragedies of World War II attest and the extreme difficulties that refugees have to endure, it has become clear that as Arendt contends, “outside of political community, humans lose their very humanity” (Somers, 2006 p.42).

Nevertheless, Holston and Appadurai (1999) argue that citizenship is not necessary for individuals to have access to a substantive amount of rights. Legal members of the community that are not citizens, such as lawful permanent residents (LPRs) and to a lesser extent other migrants with visas or work permits, often possess almost the same
civil and social rights as citizens; the big exception is in regards to political rights, such as voting and being able to run for office and being able to apply to certain federal jobs although in the case of social security LPR receive less compensations when compared to citizens. Furthermore, the author points out that the rights of citizens are often onerous (such as jury duty, military service and certain tax requirements)\(^\text{18}\); thus, migrants are not always willing to become citizens. Moreover, according to Peter Schuck (1985) liberalism has shifted immigration law and policy towards the empowerment of non-members by increasing the number of immigrants, regardless of their national origin, including undocumented immigrants, and by providing even them with constitutional protection. Thus, “the civil rights imperative of non-discrimination has stood in the way of effective immigration control” (Joppke, 1999, p.38).

These asseverations seem to point out that in this “new era of transnationalism” and global capitalism, the idea that citizenship is a protection against abuses has become obsolete. Nevertheless, Tanya Golash-Boza (2014) points out that in the case of the United States, although legal migrants such as LPRs have access to some rights of citizenship, they are denied the most basic right which is “territorial belonging” (the right of non-deportation) and that the laws that govern the presence of noncitizens change anytime and LPRs do not have the ability to interfere in the law-making process, as do citizens; Thus further affirming that States still play an important part in the fates of transnational actors, such as migrants. Golash-Boza does a case study of four LPRs who were deported due to the fact that the Immigration Act of 1990 and later IRIRIA in 1996 (The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act) expanded the

\(^{18}\) These onerous rights can also be seen as the obligations of citizenship.
definition of aggravated felonies and made deportation mandatory in those cases. Under the new laws minor infractions for citizens became serious offenses, which in cases such as the ones the author describes resulted in deportation and sometimes even in retroactive deportation. In the case of undocumented migrants, although they are entitled to civil and some social rights (emergency treatment, education etc.), they are in a position of vulnerability and employers can take advantage of this situation and deny compensation for their work.

In the case of emigrants, once individuals abandon the territory, the State can no longer control their actions. However, some home States have an interest in establishing relations with their communities abroad. FitzGerald (2012) contends that, in an effort to reach its citizens from abroad, the State has negotiated a new social contract that is based on voluntary options that highlight rights over obligations. This is due to the fact that while countries of emigration are obligated to let returnees back in, citizens have the right to leave their countries of origin and renounce their nationalities. This creates a structural imbalance that favors rights owned by emigrants over their obligations. In the case of Mexico, the population that lives abroad is able to exercise its political rights, such as vote from abroad, be represented in their home State through extra territorial election districts and in other cases by being able to run for public office at the municipal level.

Although emigrant citizenship highlights rights over obligations, this does not necessarily mean that migrants hold an advantageous situation vis-à-vis the State. According to Luin Goldring (1998) and Robert C. Smith (2003), by offering these possibilities of participation, the Mexican government institutionalizes migrant membership, which can also be seen as a way to coopt migrant participation in the
homeland. For example, in order to participate in government programs, such as the 3x1 program—a program in which the federal and local government entities and migrants co-fund public projects—, migrants have to register in the consulate as hometown associations. Regardless of the reasoning, these policies evidence how States can create “transnational public spaces” through which Mexican emigrants can negotiate further participation in their home country, thereby opening the possibility of exercising the full rights of citizenship from abroad. Furthermore, State institutionalization has also helped migrants become integrated into their host communities. For example with the Consular ID, migrants are able to open bank accounts in certain financial institutions and in some it also serves as a valid ID for local law enforcement. Nevertheless, this also means that the State is also able to alter the channels of communication it has set for migrants, a scenario that can affect the ability of emigrants to exercise their rights. In the end, the State is the ultimate guarantor of rights.

Another characteristic of citizenship is that it conveys a term of identity within a political culture, an idea of unity and integration in a society. Citizenship as political identity is associated with nationalism (Ritter, 2000, Joppke, 2007). However, according to Christian Joppke, in Western countries, citizenship has become available regardless of ethnic, racial, or cultural factors. Thus official membership in the State no longer connotes a specific identity in those terms. In the present, the author argues, it is much more complex for States to convey a specific national identity due to the ethnic and racial heterogeneity of members within the political community. This has created uneasiness among government officials and scholars alike in regards to ensuring unity among the different members of the State. Western States have responded to this with campaigns to
symbolically upgrade citizenship by focusing on moral values, such as honesty, being a hard worker, etc. However, it is important to point out that although these campaigns do center in nationhood, they tend to focus on the same ideas, such as liberal democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance etc. regardless of the State.

Even though Western countries such as the United States have sought to dismiss national discourses that highlight ethnicity and race as the basis of identity, mainstream society still keeps an ethnic and sometimes even a racial notion of what citizenship as identity entails, even if not all notions are exactly the same. Because of this immigrants, and above all immigrants that are ethnic and racially different, are seen as “strangers” or “space invaders,” even though they are welcome as workers. According to Leo Chavez (2007, p.193) these simultaneous processes of inclusion and exclusion undermine imagining undocumented immigrants as part of the larger society, although the same can be said for legal migrants. It is important to notice that this also means that citizenship as identity also excludes those that do not comply with the notions of who belongs. Mexican migrants, for example, do not comply with classical American notions of belonging; they are racially distinct, speak another language and are “illegal.” According to David FitzGerald (2000), because Mexican migrants are marginalized and segregated, they have kept their identity as Mexican and have organized transnationally. At least in the case of Los Angeles, Mexican migrant neighborhoods are segregated from white neighborhoods as well as form other ethnic neighborhoods with a few exceptions —mostly migrants coming form Central America (Alarcón, Escala Rabadán and Odgers, 2012).

On the other hand the relationship between citizenship and identity and nationalism becomes problematic when talking about migrant transnational
organizations. From the State’s point of view, migrant participation in the host society is seen as suspicious, due to migrant’s connection with other States and because of conflicting identities. In the case of members of Federations of HTA the identity as *paisanos* (people form the same locality) is at the core of their organization. Thus, the political participation of transnational organizations such as Federations of HTAs is a controversial subject. Scholars such as Samuel Huntington (2004) argue that migrants are able to shape policies in their destination States, even if these policies are contrary to the State’s national interest. He even goes as far as asserting that migrants can act as spies for their home States and that they provide them with military experience and political leadership. Moreover, according to James Holston and Arjun Appadurai (1999) transnationalism creates a dynamic that reduces the possibility of common allegiances and civilities significantly. Migrants do not feel much loyalty to the host State and are likely to retain primary loyalty to their homeland. Furthermore, Huntington (2004) also argues that the existence of migrant communities in the United States has caused the erosion of the State’s “national interest.” This is due to the fact that the national interest is defined along the lines of U.S. culture (white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant) and creed (a set of universal ideas and principles that are located in the founding documents of the country, such as freedom, equality, democracy, constitutionalism, liberalism, a limited government and private enterprise). Huntington adds that the demographic changes have brought this scenario into question. Nevertheless, a plurality of scholars, such as Smith and Bakker (2008), González Gutiérrez (2009), Adrián Felix (2010) and Yossi Shain (1995) point out that participation in multiple States is not a zero-sum game

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19 American culture and creed can also mean American identity.
between loyalties or identities towards one State or the other. According to Gilberto Giménez, and Mónica Gendreau (2002), in the case of Federations this identity works more as a symbol and it does not stand for the national territory, it is rather an identity based on the cultural relations that their members construct around it subjectively. This scenario eventually leads them to form a formal organization around such identity. Rather than choosing one country, Federation members have stressed their belonging to both nations. They have multiple loyalties and identities, which are considered complementary not opposite. For example, on the yearly welcome message of President of the Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos de Sur de California (FCZSC), Mr. Guadalupe Gómez recounted that he had been invited to the White House to an event with our President of the United States, but he also thanked our Government of Mexico, and closed with the following remark, “We hope that your participation will help you in your personal lives and feel proud to be from Zacatecas, as I am. God Bless You, God Bless America” (Bada, Riverea, Escala Rabadán, 2005, p.25). Here we can clearly see how migrants feel part of different communities. Mr. Gómez sees himself as American, Zacatecan and Mexican. These identities do not pose any kind of conflict in the mind of Mr. Gómez or in the mind of many other migrants. Neither is his participation in the political life of these three societies conflicting to him. According to González Gutiérrez (2009) and Shain (1995), migrants usually consider that they belong to both places and ethnic identification and attachment to the homeland may encourage migrant political participation on both sides of the border. Furthermore, according to Felix (2010) participation in the politics and institutions of the home country can, in turn, help migrants obtain skills and interests that are important for engaging in the politics of the
1.4. The case of U.S. citizenship

In the case of the United States, citizenship is easy to acquire if certain residence conditions are fulfilled. Some scholars contend that citizenship is easy to acquire due to the principle of liberal democracy. In order to keep a legitimate democracy, all members of the State need to have a voice. Therefore, a true democracy can be preserved by making citizenship accessible to migrants (at least documented ones). According to Joppke (1999) U.S. citizenship is easy to acquire because the State “cherishes markets over the State and open borders over a bounded community, thus entry and residence have always been more meaningful than citizenship” (p.142). Furthermore, after the civil-rights movement, the United States has committed itself to non-discrimination (at least in its official discourse), which has almost equalized the status of legal permanent residents to that of citizen. However, as already noted, LPRs are still subject to deportation and the reasons to be deported can change anytime. For example, immigration and deportation laws, such as ACCESS (Agreement of Cooperation in Communities to Enhance Safety and Security) have had a spillover effect on documented migrants, who have been moved into the category of “illegality.” Researches have estimated from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) data that around 88,000 lawful permanent residents were deported for relatively minor non-violent offenses between 1997 and 2007 (C. Menjívar & D. Kanstroom, 2014, pp. 10, 11).

In any case, Joppke (2013, p.65) points out that migrants do not see political incorporation as important as economic and social incorporation, which is why acquiring
citizenship is not a priority for them. As stated before, citizenship confers political rights, but often comes with tedious obligations. Mexican migrants naturalize at half the rate of migrants from all other countries according to the Pew Research Center (Gonzalez-Barrera, Lopez, Passel & Taylor, 2013). Nevertheless, this also means that politicians have little incentives to cater to Mexican migrant communities, since they do not vote, and that an important part of the population has no way of participating in policy decision-making and thus politicians have little incentives to learn about and respond to their claims. According to Peter H. Shuck (1989) “under those conditions, the gap between power and accountability widens and the potential for exploiting non-citizens grows.”

Another critique to citizenship is that it does not have an equalizing effect among its members —as Marshall contends— most of all among vulnerable groups. On the one hand, although citizenship is supposed to confer civil, political and social rights, minority groups often struggle to acquire them even when they are considered citizens formally and they can still be violated by the State. For example, although women have always been considered citizens, it wasn’t until 1920 that they gained the right to vote, and even after that, they still face discrimination (Ritter, 2000). Even nowadays, the civil rights of African-Americans are violated on a daily basis by the State through police brutality. Thus, formal citizenship does not by itself provide a basis for full substantive equality. However, as other scholars point out citizenship is supposed to grant an equal playing field, not absolute equality. On the other hand, given that transnational actors, such as migrants, act within the constraints given by the State, in order to act more effectively or without the fear of being expelled from the host society, they need to secure their right to
residing in the territory, i.e. the right to non-deportation.\textsuperscript{20}

1.5. Citizenship an instrument of marginalization?

Even though citizenship is something that the foreign-born can acquire, it is not open to everyone. In fact, citizenship excludes by its very nature. As stated before, States, as sovereign entities have the right to choose whom they admit as part of their community. If States are supposed to take care of their members, this also means that they control who can access those benefits. Michael Walzer (1983) contends, “the distribution of membership is related to elementary national self-determination, and as such cannot be subject to considerations of justice” (p. 61). Hence, those who are not members, such as immigrants, are in a vulnerable position. They are not protected from the inequalities of capitalism (or have less protections than citizens) and are more vulnerable to exploitation. In extreme cases, they do not have “the right to have rights.” Migrant membership is even more precarious than that of disadvantaged citizens because they are liable to expulsion. According to Thomas Simon (2013), “the State employs citizenship and immigration policies as weapons that generate more, and often new, inequalities” (p.513).

Citizenship creates vulnerable populations and immigration laws have helped in making people that are not citizens more vulnerable. According to Nicholas de Genova, in the case of Mexican immigration, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, which established quotas for the Western hemisphere, created the “illegal” immigration problem.

\textsuperscript{20} However, the right of non-deportability for citizenship is not absolute. In some instances U.S. citizens have been subjected to deportation. This was the case of the mass deportations in the early 1930’s, when U.S. citizens of Mexican origin were deported.
(Nicholas De Genova, 2004). However the “undocumented immigrant problem” dates to the establishment of quota systems with the Immigration Act of 1924, when the system shifted to one that privileges status over all else (Gutiérrez, in press, p.10). Laws create outlaws and these populations become even more vulnerable and exploitable. Nevertheless, according to Edwin Ackerman (2012), the discourse of “illegality” became public during the 1970s, in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement. As racism became less tolerated, the discourse of illegality took its place as a way to maintain the marginalization of immigrants. According to him, by 1970, the term “wetback,” had become increasingly inappropriate, since it was considered racist, in public circles. The INS (Immigration Naturalization Service) also stopped using the term around the time.

21 This does not mean that before 1965 the idea of Mexican illegality was non-existent. Although there were no numerical quotas on “legal” migration from Mexico, migrants could nonetheless be conveniently denied entry into the US or deported from it, on the basis of a selective enforcement of qualitative features (for example illiteracy, liability to become a “public charge”, violation of prohibitions against contract labor) of immigration law since the 1920s. From the 1920s to 1965 the U.S. government had a “revolving door policy” whereby mass deportations would be synchronized with an overall, large-scale importation of Mexican migrant labor in accordance to the seasonal labor demand by U.S. employers. In fact, according to Gutiérrez (in press), over the duration of the Bracero Program the estimated number of undocumented migrants apprehended was roughly the same as the total number of official contracts issued (nearly 5 million) (p.12). According to De Genova (2014), the 1965 immigration reform redefined Mexican migrants as “illegal" because it instituted numerical quotas and this foreclosed viable prospects for Mexicans to migrate within the parameters of the law (p.22). The 1965 immigration reform quotas had little ground on the realities of immigration. Mexican migration was much higher than those of any other country in the world. It was far below actual numbers of migration form Mexico, which was already documented. The restrictions of the 1956 immigration law legislated meant that an ever-greater number of Mexican migrants had no alternative than to come as undocumented workers. The author continues to point out that beginning in 1968 when the law took effect, the number of INS apprehensions of “deportable” Mexican nationals skyrocketed annually leaping 40 percent in the first year and continued to rise, thus giving way to the idea of paring “Mexicans” with the idea of “illegal (p.46).

22 Ackerman (2012) further contends that the shift towards the use of “illegality” in the public discourse was the outcome of different organization, such as the INS, and the Border Patrol, unions and Latino organizations, whose goals aligned in favor of an “illegality discourse” during the 1970’s, in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement. The author argues that the with the passing of the 1965 Immigration Act and the institution of a quota system for the Western Hemisphere, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and Border Patrol bureaucrats saw an opportunity to secure and increase their budgets by emphasizing the rise of undocumented immigration through unreliable data. On the other hand, unions started targeting undocumented immigration, as the cause for unemployment or low-wages. Finally, Latino organizations sought to fight discrimination by emphasizing he difference between U.S. and foreign-born Latinos.
The notion of ‘illegality’ already present but not that commonly used until then was left with an open field for media to talk about immigration without directly relating it to a matter of race/ethnicity.

Illegality (a situation experienced on a daily basis by the fact that an undocumented individual can be deported at anytime) “provides an apparatus for sustaining Mexican migrants’ vulnerability and tractability – as workers – whose labor-power, inasmuch as it is deportable, becomes an eminently disposable commodity” (De Genova, 2004, p.161). This is the type of workers that “core” capitalist States need in the post-Fordist economy. As Kitty Calavita (1998) argues, globalization and immigration restrictions in post-Fordist economies are natural companions. Post-Fordist economies, with an emphasis on labor flexibility derive substantial benefits from marginalized migrants in the “periphery”, and immigration laws are a pivotal factor in maintaining the marginalization and labor flexibility of immigrants. Although this makes immigration laws seem as the State’s master plan, De Genova (2014) argues that they serve more as a kind of permanent crisis management. Immigration laws are part of the efforts of the State to make particular migrations into disciplined and manageable objects.

Furthermore, the stigma of “illegality” also helps to keep the idea that migrants do not rightfully belong to the host society. They are “strangers, aliens” unable to become members of the State. “Undocumented migration must be perennially produced as a problem” as an invasive and incorrigibly 'foreign' menace to national sovereignty, a radicalized contagion that undermines the presumed national 'culture' [or identity] and a

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23 According to Calavita (1998, p. 538), post-Fordist economies are the late capitalist economies that have replaced the Fordist principles of mass-production, internal job ladders, relative job security and welfare State protection in favor to "just-in-time" production inputs, labor cost reductions, flexibility in hiring and firing, an increase in contingent or part-time jobs, and gradual retrenchments of the welfare State.
recalcitrant 'criminal' affront to national security (De Genova, 2014, p.58).

This makes the organization of migrants particularly in the case of undocumented migrants (but also in the case of LPRs) and their negotiation of membership in the host land a difficult task. Although as Soysal (1994) notes, migrants find other ways of incorporation (economically and socially) even if the State does not recognize them, new restrictive immigration laws still threaten their permanence in the host land. Moreover, illegality deters many migrants who are afraid of deportation from demanding the safeguarding their rights. Illegality means that migrants can be excluded from basic rights and dignity (Abrego, 2014, p. 146). This is why the power of citizenship remains important, despite global and transnational forces. As Calavita (1998) argues, in any case these forces help global capitalism by keeping the labor force of the “periphery” vulnerable. Even if these State guarantees certain rights to those residing in their territory, despite their lack of citizenship, the State and its laws are still the forces shaping the lives of immigrants and their rights.

1.6. Alternative forms of membership

While migrants are a vulnerable population, this does not necessarily mean that they, or at least not all of them, live their lives with a feeling of impending doom. Many migrants do not see themselves as victims, but as people with agency, who reproduce their culture, provide economic support to their families in the host and home State, and in some cases individuals that can exercise political agency in both sides of the border. Migrants see themselves as members of the host State even if they are not citizens. Not only do they contribute to their host State’s economy: they also participate in civic
activities in their local communities and some of them even participate politically through advocacy efforts and by marching in the streets. According to Leisy Abrego (2014, p.156), illegality plays out differently to affect migrants and their families according to the demographics and political nature of the local context. People living in communities with a concentration of undocumented immigrants and mixed-status families—which is the case of Los Angeles County—are more likely to develop networks and organizations, such as HTAs and Federations of HTAs and thus can access information that can mitigate the fear and insecurity associated with illegality.24

Furthermore, Sébastien Chauvin and Blanca Garcés-Mascarenas (2014) contend there are degrees of illegality. Not all illegals face the same probability of removal. For example, under the Obama administration, non-criminals have been low priority removals.25 Additionally, according to Jill Alpes (2011) “migrants themselves do not perceive deportation as a consequence of illegality strictly speaking, but as the result of bad luck, laziness, or irresponsible behavior” (p. 426). Additionally, migrants can demonstrate that they are “less illegal” by showing they have a “good character,” which is defined in terms of noncriminal conduct, economic reliability, fiscal contribution, identity stability, and bureaucratic traceability (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2012).26 This way, migrants although formally excluded from the Nation-State, become members

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24 However, in communities with few undocumented migrants, in which anti-immigration advocates feel encouraged to practice hateful speech, immigrants and their families are likely to experience illegality as extreme vulnerability that can penetrate even their most intimate relationships (Abrego, 2014, p. 156).
25 Nevertheless, a study from the Pew Research Institute found out that only 44 percent of all deportees have a criminal record. Out of those, 19 percent committed an immigration offense, such as entry and reentry, false claims to citizenship or alien smuggling, and 18 percent committed criminal traffic violations such as DUI, reckless driving or vehicular assault.
26 For example, the U.S. Federal government currently encourages young undocumented males “to act as deserving noncitizens” by registering with the Selective Service which is the organization that identifies who would be fit for combat in case of national emergency (Chauvin, Garcés-Mascareñas, 2012, p.2).
of the community economically and socially.

In localities where there is a concentration of undocumented immigrants and mixed-status families, illegality acts more as a handicap, than as an absolute marker of illegitimacy (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2012, Abrego, 2014). Furthermore, by showing “good character” migrants are able to gather proofs of “legitimacy/deservedness” in the hope of lesser deportability or with the expectation of future legalization. However, by engaging in these practices, migrants also make themselves more visible to government authorities, and this can result in expulsion from the country.

It is important to note that many of the forms of “less illegality” are related to economic issues, i.e. having a job, paying taxes. Because of it, this form of membership has been coined as “market citizenship.” The term was created by Veronica Schild (1998) and, it emphasizes the principles of a market-free society, such as autonomy, self-sufficiency and discipline. Market citizenship “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… membership is thus defined through market-readiness (i.e. remittances, investment, and consumption), individuals become members of the community on the base of their economic contributions” (Goldring, 2002, p.69).

Furthermore, one can become “less illegal” through “non-legal” means, such as acquiring a fake social security number. By doing so, migrants may be able to prove more easily that they have maintained a stable job or a continuous residence in the country, should a legalization program come along. Nevertheless, this could also result in imprisonment and/or deportation, given the fact that a false social security number is a criminal offense (identity theft). However, it is important to note that 2009 the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that a federal identity-theft law may not be used against undocumented workers who use false social security numbers to get jobs (Liptak and Preston, 2009).

Tax policy has proved to be very inclusive in the United States. The only requirement to be declared a fiscal resident and acquire an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), is to have been present in the United States for at least 31 days during the current fiscal year and for at least 183 days during the last three years.
Nevertheless, this form of membership is incomplete since it does not include political rights.

In the case of emigrants, many migrants continue to participate in their communities of origin through local projects, among other activities. Migrants acquired market citizenship, through their economic contributions to the local community by the means of their individual and collective remittances. Furthermore, by contributing to their households migrants are also able to use that power to persuade family members to vote for certain candidate back home. Due to the importance of economic contributions of migrants, Jonathan Fox (2005) claims that the legitimacy of political participation of emigrants in the homeland is often based on remittances.29

Another important form of being “less illegal” is “bureaucratic incorporation”. This happens when migrants register in any government organization, in some cases in order to exercise social rights, such as education and welfare for U.S. born children, but also for other kinds of activities, such as registering for playing sports tournaments in public parks, getting permissions in order to organize a community event, etc. In this case, one should also keep in mind that this kind of integration into the community occurs because local governments have an in interest in keeping a peaceful environment in their communities, and thus prefer to collaborate with migrants, even undocumented ones, especially in communities where migrants are a significant part of the local population.30

Through bureaucratic incorporation, migrants and migrant organizations can be

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29 The negotiation of formal membership in the Mexican community will be explored in depth in the next chapter.
30 Nevertheless, not all bureaucracies are inclusive. According to Helen B. Marrow (2009) bureaucrats in public elementary schools and emergency medical are the most inclusive, while bureaucrats in law enforcement and court systems are the least inclusionary.
recognized as important actors in the host community, which can potentially open channels of communication with local authorities. This can help migrants in shaping local policies to create a more liberal stance in regards to immigration at least at a local level.

Through alternative forms of membership, migrants are able to exercise some rights in their host community and potentially negotiate their membership into their home and host society. Furthermore this other forms of membership shed some light into the fact that States are not unitary entities, which can facilitates migrant incorporation, by negotiating their membership first at a local level and later at the state and federal level.

1.7. Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have sought to explain the importance of the State in an era of transnationalism and globalization and how international migrants and transnational organizations fit into this picture. Even though they are not able to control to an absolute degree who enters their territory (something that has actually never been possible), States do shape the actions of transnational actors such as migrants and HTAs and Federations of HTAs. In some cases they even create channels through which transnational actors can express their demands or become integrated to the host society.31

On the other hand, while one could conclude after this account that citizenship has indeed lost all its value –given the fact that it conveys little benefits, onerous duties, does

31 In the same way, the local government can show a stronger stance against immigration (particularly undocumented immigration) than its federal counterpart as is the case of the states of Arizona, where an anti-immigrant bill was passed (SB1070), which required local police to check the immigration status of anyone they suspected to be in the United States illegally, and Texas where undocumented parents are denied the birth certificate of their U.S. born children because they lack of a driver’s license or any other identification card issued in the United States.
not provide equality and there are other forms of participation through which migrants can be incorporated into the host and home society—formal citizenship is still important because it confers the right of non-deportation. Citizenship gives migrants the right to have rights, the right to belong to the political community. Although this might not seem as much, due to the fact that States also exploit their citizens, citizenship gives at least a legal basis to fight for equality and it lessens migrant’s vulnerabilities (if only a little) in regards to the State and the forces of global capitalism.

In the next chapter I will explore how Federations have sought recognition as citizens in their home and host States, and in the subsequent chapters I’ll address what importance Federations give nowadays to acquiring full membership and how these alternative forms of membership have played a role in their pursuit of rights.
CHAPTER 2: HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS AND FEDERATIONS: ORIGINS AND CHARACTERISTICS

In the previous chapter, I argued that State governments shape the activities of transnational actors, and that migrants see themselves as members of their home and host State even if they are not citizens and the alternative strategies they use in order to become members of the host and home states. In the present chapter I analyze how these issues factor in the case of Mexican migrant organization. First, I do a brief description of the origins of HTAs and their evolution into Federations. The second and following sections address how HTAs interact with State policies on both sides of the border and how this has shaped HTAs’ and Federations’ development and goals.

I argue that HTAs have tried to negotiate formal membership —which is full political rights-bearing status (Gutiérrez, in press, p.4)— in their home and host societies through market citizenship. HTAs economic contributions to their hometowns attracted the attention of the Mexican government, first at a local level and beginning in the 1990s also at a federal level. Moreover, the Mexican government further bolstered the formation of HTAs and their conglomeration in Federations of HTAs and later in Confederations of Federations. This, in turn, helped migrants acquire know-how on how to deal with government authorities and acquire more political clout and legitimacy to negotiate their membership with the state and federal levels of the Mexican governments, and later also with the local government in the United States, which culminated with the migrant rallies against HR4437 in the spring of 2006.
2.1. Origins and evolution of HTAs

According to Zabin and Escala Rabadán (1998), HTAs typically start as “informal migrant village networks,” which focus initially on helping migrants by providing assistance and resources to find jobs and housing. While these networks are not formal organizations, they will be the core of the organization if other conditions are met, such as the existence of a core leadership that organizes meetings and compiles the lists of their paisanos, a firm social cohesion among the potential members, and sufficient members to merit the continuous existence of a formal organization (Morán Quiróz, 2004). In general, informal migrant village networks make newcomers feel more comfortable in a new environment, where everything might seem foreign to them.

As social networks mature, via continuous immigration flow from Mexico to the United States, some of these networks develop into comunidades filiales (daughter communities). According to Moctezuma (2004), these daughter communities form once migrants settle and bring their wives to the United States, due to the fact that women are the ones that reproduce the culture and social life in the community and thus, a common identity. In a similar vein, David FitzGerald (2008) argues that it is actually the permanence of settlement, rather than increased circularity, that drives migrants to claim membership in the community of origin despite their physical absence.

The identity of HTAs is classified as “topophilic identity.” It refers to the fact that migrants feel attached to their originating geographical spaces, such as a region in the countryside instead of “Mexico” as a more abstract Nation-State (Rivera Salgado, Bada & Escala-Rabadán, 2005). Thus, many Mexican migrants manifest their identity not only by referring to their country of origin, but also by displaying a sense of attachment to the
birthplace. Even though the emotional connections to the homeland might become less tangible as time passes, this identity does not wane. On the contrary, it becomes an essential element of migrants’ social organization in the United States.

As daughter communities develop, different collective activities start to take place such as soccer or baseball matches, church processions and social gatherings. All these activities strengthen migrants’ connections with their hometowns. This gatherings are also a perfect medium where migrants are able to talk about the news in their towns and discuss what the necessities of their towns are, which results in members raising funds to help their hometowns. Migrants are aware that the projects they do should in principle be carried out by the government. However, as a Efraín Jiménez, former vice-president of the Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California (FCZSC) argues “many times, it is not that the local government is neglecting its responsibilities, in many instances municipalities simply do not have enough money in their budgets to carry out these kind of projects” (E. Jiménez, personal communication, August 24, 2014). On the other hand, seen through the lens of membership and citizenship, it is possible that migrant leaders contribute to their hometowns because they want to feel part of the community. In their studies of transnational migrants, McKeown (1999) and Glick-Schiller (1999) explain that migrants feel responsibility towards their families and that sending remittances is a status enhancer, as well as a claim of being good a members of the community despite absence.

HTAs begin to form, as these kind of transnational activities formalize. This does not mean that informal migrant networks of daughter communities disappear, but that HTAs generally begin to form as those types of networks develop (Moctezuma, 2004).
Most HTAs are concentrated in California, Illinois, and Texas, the states with the highest population of Mexican migrants.

HTAs are not necessarily registered with the Mexican or U.S. governments, nor do they have an office building or paid staff. They are formal organizations inasmuch as they have an agenda and periodical meetings. It is also worth noting that the process of formation of HTAs differs from one organization to another. Some HTAs are a result of the autonomous organization of migrants abroad. However, in other cases migrants organize into HTAs because of the suggestion of leaders in the community back home, such as the priest, a schoolteacher or even because of the suggestion of a municipal president. HTAs’ structure can also be very fluid they disintegrate and reform in the lapse of a few years, sometimes under a different name (González Gutiérrez, 1995, p.64). Furthermore, some HTAs have formed in recent years with the sole purpose of participating in the matching-funds program of the Mexican government, the 3x1 Program, which started to work at a national level in Mexico in 2005.

According to the “Directory of organizations and hometown organizations” of the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME for its acronym in Spanish), there are 342 Mexican

32 Although HTAs that form because of the suggestion of a third party can be as successful as those that were formed “from below,” in some cases, they are not actually supported by their community and their only purpose is for the municipality to participate in the matching-funds program. Additionally, as I’ll discuss in Chapter 3, this kind of situations hurt the organization of migrants in the United States.
33 As we will see, this is a disadvantage when it comes to civic and political participation.
34 The basis for the “3x1 Program” originated in Zacatecas. As it has been stated migrants gathered funds to help their hometowns to build churches, plazas, and public parks. During the 1970s some municipalities joined migrants efforts by matching every dollar they spent in this kind of projects. Later, Genaro Borrego—Zacatecan governor from 1986 to 1992—created a matching-funds program called 2x1 Program in which every dollar received by HTAs for community projects would be matched by the municipality and the state government of Zacatecas (García Zamora, 2006).
HTAs registered in the Consulate of Los Angeles.\textsuperscript{35} However, as already stated, not all HTAs register.

As HTAs began to proliferate, these organizations also started to come together in order to gather more funding to help their hometowns, as their collaboration began to formalize, HTA Federations started to form. According to González Gutiérrez (1995, p.83), the idea of forming a Federation does not usually come from HTAs that have a longer tradition, but form a group of leaders that see the formation of an umbrella organization advantageous.

One of the first federations that was created was the \textit{Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California} (FCZSC). Efraín Jiménez tells us more about the reasons the Federation was formed: “Zacatecan HTAs formed as a Federation with the idea of being a stronger voice, with more political clout, so that they could negotiate with the government. So they could say: ‘we have ten HTAs here that are doing public works. How are you going to contribute?’ [....] We never expected that it was going to evolve to do bigger things” (E. Jiménez, personal communication, August 24, 2014).

Forming a Federation is useful to HTAs because political authorities in Mexico and the United States tend to pay more attention to umbrella organizations that have a larger number of members and therefore represent a larger part of the community. As pointed above, participating in matching-fund programs is also one of the main reasons why HTAs participate in Federations and why some of them pay dues to be part of a Federation. Being part of a larger organization makes it is easier for individual HTAs to

collect funds, even if that means that the proceedings will be distributed among all the villages that are part of the Federation. Carrying out these projects enhances the social status of migrant leaders, which contributes to their ability to enter into a more effective negotiation with Mexican and U.S. political authorities. Potentially, this enhances their power vis-à-vis these authorities (Goldring, 2002) and Federations are thus able to obtain information and resources that would be out of reach if they were to seek them individually. Furthermore, according to Lanly and Valenzuela (2015, p.23), the goals of Federations are to negotiate spaces of participation and collaboration, as well as earn the social the recognition of key institutional actors of the home State. Finally, Rivera Salgado and Escala Rabadán (2002) point out that Federation members can also get commercial deals by letting certain companies sponsor their events in exchange of services and goods that can help their organizations, or hire services at cheaper prices (goods go from food and beverages, to cement and paint for projects in Mexico, life insurances). Additionally, Federation gatherings also provide a space for philanthropic projects such as providing help for churches or funds for members in trouble.

2.2. Laying the groundwork HTA’s early development

Many consider sociedades mutualistas —formed in the 1920s— as the predecessors of HTAs. These organizations were formed by Mexican residents in the U.S. and had some of the goals of HTAs today. They helped gather funds for repatriation of mortal remains and for when migrants got sick. Additionally, sociedades mutualistas organized cultural events. Nevertheless, in contrast to HTAs, members of these organizations could be from any nationality and its leaders belonged to the urban
educated Mexican middle class (Bada, 2014 p.47). Today, HTAs carry out social activities to fulfill two primary objectives: reinforce the feeling of membership to their hometowns and help their hometowns by using the funds gathered in social events to build schools or churches, paving roads, etc. These efforts had been absent in the agendas of Mexican organizations of the early twentieth century (Bada, 2014 p.47).

Migrants from Zacatecas created the first formal HTAs in the 1960s. According to Rivera Salgado and Escala Rabadán (2002, p.13), the first HTAs that formed in Los Angeles area were Fresnillo, Zacatecano, Guadalupe Victoria and Yahualica. According to Bada (2014) another factor that helped the formation of HTAs was that this period was “the time of a renaissance of an ideology of cultural pluralism in American public discourse,” (p.47) and migrants were interested in recreating the culture and values of the Mexican rural countryside. By this time, an important number of Zacatecan migrants had settled and had a modest surplus income due to the relative prosperity of the U.S. economy, which they started spending in the development of their small towns and villages (Bada, 2014, p. 48).

HTAs became a popular form of organization during the following decades, as Mexican migration to the United States started to increase in the 1970s and 1980s (see Graph 2.1) and as more migrants began to settle. Up until the 1970s, Mexican immigrants hailed mainly from seven states located in the west and northern part of Mexico: Jalisco, Michoacán, Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Chihuahua, Durango, and Nayarit. In the 1980s a new wave of immigrants started to come from Guerrero, Oaxaca, Morelos, Puebla, and Estado de México.
Although during this period, some governors visited their communities abroad, the contact was very sporadic and the relationship between HTAs and the Mexican federal government was very limited. The Mexican foreign policy was based on the principle of non-intervention and therefore its contact with the community focused on identification and protection services as well as some cultural festivals.

The *Federación de Clubes Mexicanos Unidos*, the first federation of Mexican HTAs, was formed in 1972 and it was integrated by HTAs from different states (Jalisco, Chihuahua, Michoacán, Guanajuato and Zacatecas), something that became atypical for Federations, since in the present they usually comprise HTAs from the same state (Rivera Salgado, Bada, Escala-Rabadán, 2005). The main goal of this Federation was to extend cooperation among its members and increase support for their philanthropic projects. However, the Federation was eventually taken over by Zacatecan clubs, in a process that culminated with the formation of the *Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de*
California in 1992, one of the most active and professionalized HTAs in the United States. By organizing in a Federation, migrants were not only able to gather more funds, but through federations they were also able to articulate the demands of their community at a state level and negotiate with all government levels of the Mexican government and later at the local governments in the United States (González Gutiérrez, 1995, p.61).

2.3. The 1986 immigration reform and its repercussions: Towards active political involvement

The 1986 Immigration Reform Control Act (IRCA) had a deep effect in the lives of Mexican immigrants. It was a compromise between immigrant interest groups and ethnic associations, on the one hand, and a Congress that was responding to increasing public pressure to address the growing undocumented population and restrict it. It contained a path to regularization, increased the number of visas and favored family reunification. Around 2.3 million Mexicans were able to regularize their status as an outcome of immigration reform. Mexican migrants who were allowed to naturalize were able to settle in the United States, and many acquired jobs that enabled them to move up the social latter and become part of the middle class and/or become small business owners. In fact, the majority of migrant leaders today are people who were able to regulate their status due to the IRCA. Having a formal status enabled some of them to accumulate certain wealth and to obtain a more flexible schedule (in the case of business owners). They used the surplus of these resources to manage HTAs and Federations.

As a result of the enactment of the IRCA in 1986, Mexican migration to the U.S. acquired an even greater impetus, and significant numbers of individuals from non-
traditional states, such as Chiapas, Hidalgo and Veracruz, also started going to the United States, while migrants that were already in the United States were able to bring their family members back home.

On the other hand, legalization under IRCA advanced the efforts to organize Mexican HTAs, since many of their members were able and travel back to Mexico more often and to become aware of what their communities of origin were lacking. Another outcome of this immigration reform was that the demographic profile of Mexican migrant communities began to change, because of family reunification. After the reform, more women and children started to arrive in the U.S. legally and illegally. Furthermore, IRCA helped migrants settle in the United States by breaking the circularity of migration due to the increased border enforcement. Many gave up the idea of returning to Mexico, since many of them had their family and businesses in the United States. However, because of the rising demand in the low-skilled U.S. job market, new migrants continued to arrive, which also helped established migrants to maintain their identity and also provided HTAs with new members.

Another consequence of the 1986 Immigration reform is that HTAs started to become more politically active in the Mexico. In 1986 HTA leaders traveled back to Zacatecas to invite candidate Genaro Borrego Estrada to Los Angeles (in an personal capacity). The candidate accepted and continued to visit Los Angeles at least once a year. Due to their philanthropic activities, some mayors and governors started building a closer relation to HTAs and in some cases they also came to United States to promote their political campaigns. Even if migrants could not vote, they had the power to dissuade their family members back home to vote for candidates that seemed to be taking them into
account. Furthermore, in some cases Federations became the voice not only of the community abroad but also of the locality, since in some cases migrant leaders had better access to the governor than the municipal authorities. These practices later extended not only to other communities of Zacatecas, but also to other states. HTAs started to be seen not only as social clubs to the different levels of government in Mexico, but as legitimate political actors who were capable of mobilizing their communities (González Gutiérrez, 1995 p.79).

Nevertheless IRCA also had negative consequences for migrants. It instituted employer sanctions for those that hired undocumented immigrants, and it also enhanced security reinforcement at the border. According to De Genova (2014), employer sanctions introduced greater instability for undocumented migrants at the workplace. Additionally, IRCA heightened immigration enforcement at the border, which broke the circularity of immigration but not the flow of undocumented migrants to the United States. The labor demand for low qualified workers continued to attract migrants and as the costs of crossing the border heightened, migrants stayed for longer periods in the United States or decided to stay indefinitely, thus contributing to the long-term growth of the undocumented population (Gutiérrez, in press, p.23).

Because of the growing number of immigrants and the economic recession in the early 1990s, anti-immigrant sentiments grew among the U.S. population and states with a high proportion of undocumented migrants started to enact anti-immigrant laws in response to what they perceived as inaction of the federal government’s against undocumented immigration. One of the most notable cases was the introduction of Proposition 187 in 1994, an anti-immigrant ballot initiative that banned undocumented
migrants from using health care, public education, and other social services in California. In response to this initiative, Mexican migrants, led by Federations, took part in the marches against this bill. Around 700,000 people participated in the marches (Zabin & Escala Rabadán, 1998). Additionally, HTAs donated money to organizations that fought against the enactment of Proposition 187, directed letters to the media rejecting the proposition; and participated in “get out to vote” campaigns and encouraged naturalizations campaigns. According to Angel Morales from Federación Veracruzana:

Proposition 187 is what brought all of us together, I swear it. It was one of the best rallies I’ve seen in my life, because it is when the community realized that they [the state legislators] were messing with our children at school. That’s when they realized that if we didn’t step it up, they would deport us. Instead of harming us, it brought the people together. There were no Mexicans or Central Americans; everyone was united (A. Morales, personal communication, August 7, 2014).

On the other hand, in response to Proposition 187, the Mexican government decided to approve a law to allow Mexicans to obtain another citizenship without losing their homeland’s citizenship in 1996. This measure was passed in order to encourage naturalization, and thus help protect the rights of the Mexican community abroad.

Although Proposition 187 helped to raise awareness among Federations and the Mexican migrant population about the importance of negotiating their membership in the host community, migrant organization was still incipient. According to a study from 1998, written by Carol Zabin and Luis Escala Rabadan, it was other groups such as Latino organizations and local government officials that persuaded HTAs to participate. Furthermore, after the event, HTAs were still unwilling to get involved in U.S. politics because of various reasons, such as not having enough time, stating that political participation wasn't their main goal, and general distrust in politics. While some leaders
expressed their interest in participating more actively in U.S. politics, there was a lack on consensus, even as Congress enacted various laws that heavily restricted the rights of immigrants.36

2.4. Mexico’s new and ongoing national project

Meanwhile, several factors in Mexico hastened the growth of HTAs. First, Mexico went through a political and economic reform, as a consequence of the 1982 economic crisis. The national project—which was based on protecting the national market vis-à-vis the international market, was replaced with a “social liberalism” project—which according to Lorenzo Meyer (2010) was nothing more than authoritarian neoliberalism. According to president Salinas, the only way Mexico would modernize was by following the market signals, privatizing, and by decreasing the State’s intervention in the economy, as well as to embrace globalization by integrating the Mexican economy with the United States, through a free trade agreement (Meyer, 2010, p.53).

The North American Free Trade Agreement—which was signed in 1992 and went into effect in 1994—affected many rural communities in places like Michoacán,

36 Although Proposition 187 was passed in a referendum, in the end, it was declared unconstitutional. Nevertheless, in the next few years the federal government started to enact several bills, which restricted immigrant rights, such as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in 1996 and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA). PRWORA excluded legal immigrants from 60 federal welfare programs, such as Medicaid, and Food Stamps for many years after obtaining permanent legal residence. IIRIRA, on the other hand, reinforced the security at the border and toughened immigration laws in the country, by allowing immigrants (including documented immigrants) to be deported without an audience and increasing the causes that merited the deportation of permanent residents. IIRIRA reclassified many minor offenses as “aggravated felonies,” but only for non-citizens. It also reinforced restrictions for undocumented immigrants and banned them from receiving social security and federal benefits, such as ESL classes. IIRIRA also instituted bans for people that overstayed their visas.
and Zacatecas. An important part of the population was no longer able to live from agriculture due to the competition from the United States, whose produce of corn and wheat was cheaper, thus making it impossible to make a living from small-scale farming which contributed to increase the immigration flow to the United States, regardless of border enforcement. In the case of Mexicans that already lived in the United States (some of them HTA members), this factor —added to the heightened enforcement at the border— further discouraged them from returning to Mexico (Bacon 2013, Chollett, 2009). The new reforms, on the other hand, decentralized the State, granting municipalities with more decision-making power and more responsibilities to deliver and improve public services. Nevertheless, rural villages that were far away from urban centers were frequently not included in the allocation of resources for basic infrastructure (Bada, 2014).

As part of the new national project, the Mexican government changed its diplomatic strategy towards the United States and the Mexican community in this country, from “non-intervention” towards a more active involvement.\footnote{A detailed account of the Mexican foreign policy towards the United States, as well as how the Mexican government sought to gain the favor of migrants in regards to NAFTA can be found in the doctoral dissertation of Alexandra Délano (2008).} However, this new policy of acercamiento (rapprochement) also responded to the fact that the Mexican community in the United States had acquired an important economic,\footnote{Mexican immigrants sent $699 million dollars in remittances in 1980, almost matching the countries tourism income.} and political power,\footnote{The Mexican community started voicing its opinion against the PRI—the ruling party— after Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas —candidate of the PRD the leftist party— lost against Carlos Salinas, the candidate of the official party. Immigrants were among those that claimed that the election had been arranged (Smith, 2003, 317; Goldring, 2003, p.76).} as well as an important number (around 4 million). One of the programs President Salinas created to get close with the Mexican community in the United States...
was the Program for Mexican Communities Abroad (PCME for its acronym in Spanish). The program was created in response to the demands of Latino organizations for a counterpart from the Mexican government that dealt exclusively with its community in the United States. The PCME developed projects on education, healthcare, culture, sports, business and tourism, through its consular network.\footnote{Many of these projects still exist in the new organization, the IME created in 2003.} This new program further encouraged the formation of HTAs, its professionalization and a closer relationship with the local governments in Mexico and helped the Mexican government to claim legitimacy at a domestic and international level, as well as to encourage the neoliberal economic project. In order to build relationships between migrants and local governments, the Mexican consulate used its databases of Mexicans living in the United States that had applied for Consular ID cards to inform people of the visit of their municipal authorities to the consulate. In some cases these meetings served as a place to meet migrants from the same community and afterwards, municipal officials would encourage them to form a HTAs. On the other hand, communities that had a long migratory and organizational tradition took advantage of the Mexican government’s outreach campaign led by the PCME and consolidated their organizational networks, particularly the HTAs and Federations from Jalisco, Michoacán, Oaxaca, and Zacatecas. HTAs from other states also started to form Federations, since it enhanced a more direct interaction with the Mexican government at a local and federal level, which enabled them to better support the objectives and initiatives of their member clubs (Zabin & Escala Rabadan, 1998, p. 8).

According to González Gutiérrez (1995), many Federations formed as a result of
visits of governors\textsuperscript{41} in the early 1990s, such as \textit{Federación de Clubes Jaliscienses} and \textit{Fraternidad Sinaloense} in 1991, \textit{the Asociación de Nayaritas} in 1992, the \textit{Asociación de Potosinos de California} in 1993 and \textit{Asociación Guanajuatense} and \textit{Asociación Tlaxcalteca del Sur de California} in 1994. For González Gutiérrez (1995), the attention that governors give to their people abroad is something that legitimizes migrants efforts to help their hometowns and it helps to assuage suspicions and apathy from other migrant members. On the other hand, it is beneficial for state governments to get closer to their communities abroad, because both of them want to help with the development of their home communities and coordinated efforts can prove effective to achieve these goals. Furthermore, politically speaking, taking migrants into account is well regarded not only by migrants themselves but also by the public opinion, which “feels a collective frustration for not being able to keep its workers in Mexico, but also increasingly recognizes their contributions to the development of the country” (p.82).

However, this does not necessarily mean that HTAs were coopted by the Mexican government, as Smith (2001) suggests. According to Celia Viramontes, “this is a process neither entirely state driven, nor migrant-led, but rather the merging of State interest and migrant interests” (p. 366). Federations of HTAs were already starting to move from exercising merely market citizenship in their homeland to trying to shape politics at a local level and federal level in Mexico. Such was the case of the FCZSC, who supported the campaign for governor of Ricardo Monreal in 1998.\textsuperscript{42} Monreal expected to be

\textsuperscript{41} Most of these governors belonged to the ruling party, the PRI.
\textsuperscript{42} Monreal’s election created a rift in the Federation between the members that did not want to be involved with politics, which they felt would affect their relations with the Zacatecan government, and those that supported Monreal. In the end those that supported Monreal created the \textit{Frente Cívico Zacatecano} (FCZ), which later became the political arm of FCZSC. In 2000 the FCZ was registered as a political action
nominated to run for governor for the ruling party—the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI in Spanish)—and he had started campaigning in the United States and had won the support of the Federation. Nevertheless, when the PRI failed to give Monreal the nomination, he decided to run for the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD in Spanish). According to Goldring (2002), Monreal actively courted the Zacatecan community in the United States because of the importance of remittances and because he believed that Zacatecans in the United States could tell their families at home “how to vote”. After winning the election the new governor maintained its relation with the community abroad. He introduced the 2x1 Program under which the state government also started to cooperate with HTAs matching-funds program and established a one million dollar budget for it. He also appointed a leader of the Zacatecan Federation as his official liaison with the Zacatecan community in the United States and he gave migrants more control over the funds of the 2x1 Program by establishing that money accounts would be controlled by FCZSC and their representatives and not by the state treasury (Goldring, 2002, pp. 88-91). In 2005 the 2x1 Program became the 3x1 Program and started to work at a federal level, which bolstered further the creation of HTAs. One of the main reasons that HTAs continued to form during the 2000s is the implementation of the 3x1 Program. As in the case of Zacatecas, this program also helped create a stronger relation between Mexican migrants and their local governments in Mexico.

In the early 2000’s the Frente Cívico Zacatecano (FCZ), which is the political arm of the Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California, lobbied for the Ley Migrante, which allows people that reside in the United States to run for public office in committee (PAC). Its goal is to support politicians and political initiatives in California and Zacatecas.
Mexico,43 This is known as “binational residency.” Additionally, two seats in the thirty-deputy state legislature are reserved for migrants. This case is paradigmatic because it enabled migrant leaders to run for public office even when they continue to reside in the US, thus giving migrants political rights, regardless of their place of residence (at least at a local level). Moreover, according to Guadalupe Gomez, President of FCZSC from 2001 to 2004, this was the forerunner of the campaign to lobby for the vote from abroad at a federal level (G. Gómez, personal communication, September 3, 2014).

Although the case of the Zacatecan Federation is paradigmatic, most HTAs consider themselves to be apolitical. Nevertheless, the importance of remittances to local politicians made these organizations become more involved with migrant communities on an even level field, where the exchange of ideas became possible (Alarcón, et. al., 2012). This relationship has also helped HTA leaders to develop negotiation skills with government officials and some have even decided to return and run for political positions in mayoral elections and in the state legislature in Mexico. In Michoacán in the 2005-2007 state congress at least seven migrant legislators obtained their seats after returning to Michoacán to run for office (Bada, 2014, p.113).

Federations were active players in the debate regarding the Mexican’s vote from abroad. The demand to vote from abroad was first articulated in 1929. However, the issue

43 Originally the campaign for the state’s reform was done in partnership with Andrés Bermúdez Viramonte, popularly known as “El Rey del Tomate,” who had won the municipal presidency of Jeréz but was denied to him due to the fact that he did not comply with the requirement of one-year continuous residency in the locality before the election. However, FCZ broke with Bermúdez Viramontes once he reconciled with then governor Ricardo Monreal. This posed a problem for the organization due to the fact that it was a non-partisan organization. Bermúdez Viramontes ran once again for the municipal presidency in 2004 with the National Action Party (PAN ins Spanish) (the right wing party) and won. In 2006 he became a federal Representative for the same party. (Michael Peter Smith and Matt Bakker, 2008).
became of interest again in the late 1980s, as the process of democratic transition moved forward. In the mid 1980s the PRD worked with the Mexican pro-democracy movements that were already active in the United States and, as it has already been noted, migrants largely supported Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (PRD presidential candidate who ran against the PRI), who actively campaigned in the United States (Smith, 2003, p. 307). According Michael Peter Smith and Matt Bakker (2008) the campaign for the vote gain further momentum in the wake of a series of electoral reforms that sought to “further cultivate and maintain migrants’ ties and loyalties to their homeland.” The 1996 electoral reforms removed the constitutional obligation that required citizens to vote in their local electoral districts and opened the possibility for voting from abroad and the next year Congress (no longer dominated by the hegemonic PRI) passed the law of non-loss of Mexican nationality. According to Alexandra Délano (2008), by 2004, more than 15 initiatives concerning the vote form Mexicans abroad had been introduced in Congress, many of which included initiatives from immigrant coalitions such as the Federación de Clubes Michoacanos en Illinois and the Coalición por los Derechos Políticos de los Mexicanos en el Extranjero. The vote from abroad was finally passed in 2005; however, the procedure was complex and it was decided that no voting IDs would be issued in the United States.44 Both factors severely affected migrant participation in the elections.

According to the National Electoral Institute, of an estimated of 9 million potential votes

44 The procedure that was finally accepted was complex and demanded considerable attention from potential voters: they had to mail, months in advance, a copy of their voter’s ID card. Then they received a ballot, and they had to send the ballot back using certified mail. However, in June 2014, as a result of the electoral Reform in Mexico, which migrants also actively lobbied, the National Electoral Institute (INE in Spanish) declared that they would start issuing voter’s ID cards for Mexicans living abroad by the end of 2015. Migrants will be able to vote from abroad starting in 2017, when an electoral registration of Mexican voters abroad is created (F. Moreno, personal communication, July 17, 2014).
from Mexicans abroad only 32,621 votes were cast and in the 2012 election the number of votes from abroad remained very low (40,714). In any case, regardless of the limited participation and the law restrictions, this was considered a historical milestone by Mexican immigrant organizations (Ayón, 2006). Moreover, some states, such as Michoacán and Zacatecas, have also passed legislations that allow immigrants to vote in their local elections. The last electoral reform has enabled the issuance of voter IDs abroad, a process that will start at the end of 2015 (F. Moreno, July 17, 2014).

Goldring (2002) argues that although the neoliberal partnership between the state and the government was based on “a corporatist and semi-clientelist relationship to the State” (p.94) it gave Federations bargaining power. These initiatives have gradually enabled migrants to exercise formal membership. Moreover, the interaction with the government at a local level provided migrants with experience to successfully articulate their demands at a federal level. What began as market citizenship has gradually become formal membership, as migrants have recovered their political rights. Although, formal membership for migrants is still restricted to those with the means to become involved in politics, this is the result of the battle of Mexican Federations for more substantive rights.

Nevertheless, local elections also reported low numbers of migrant voters, which leads to questioning the representativeness of migrant leaders who have led the initiatives as well as migrants’ interest in maintaining political ties with Mexico (Délano 2008, p. 297).
2.5. A new century, a new horizon: Civic and political participation in the United States

In the United States, a new economic bloom during the late 1990s had tempered the anti-immigrant sentiment among the population. Furthermore, the administration of George W. Bush was taking steps towards the enactment of a new immigration reform. In December 2000 the Agricultural Job Opportunity Benefits and Security Act (AgJOBS)—a temporary farmworkers program—had the support of both parties. Nevertheless, Republicans wanted to delay its approval to the beginning of the Bush administration. President Bush also supported a comprehensive immigration reform and even met with Mexican President Vicente Fox to discuss preliminarily the issues of the reform. However, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 made this impossible. After the attacks, immigration became an issue of national security even more closely related to terrorism than it had been in the 1990s after the first attack to the World Trade Center. Between 2002 and 2006, the U.S. Congress enacted six bills that focused on securing the border and strengthening immigration laws.

Nevertheless, president Fox continued Salinas’ strategy of active engagement and even went further, by seeking more active interaction with migrant leaders through the creation of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME in Spanish) in 2003. One of the new

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46 According to Wane A. Cornelius (2000), a country where the economy is expanding has less deficit, the cases for immigrant social assistance are less and the tax burdens regarding social services for immigrants diminishes and is more tolerable. Additionally, more jobs are created and shortages in the workforce rise. Immigrants fulfill the demand and because of it, their presence is tolerated.

47 The Mexican consular body in the early years of Fox administration went as far as asking their community abroad to contact their U.S. representatives to promote President Bush's proposal for immigration reform (Fitzgerald, 2008).

features of the IME is was Advisory Council, which is formed by migrant leaders that are
elected by the community in each of the Mexican Consulates, some of them are member
of HTAs, although not exclusively. The creation of this Council further helped migrants
in acquiring know-how for dealing with politicians in both sides of the border through
different conferences and meetings, as well as with national Latino organizations.
Additionally, the Council laid the foundations for Mexican migrants to organize at a
national level. As Raúl Murillo former councilmember argues:

Those of us, who have been part of the CCIME, we cannot deny that it
gave us the opportunity to expand our network. Before being part of the
CCIME I didn’t know many people from other [U.S.] sates, but now, I got
to know them and we keep in touch, we still do projects together. We must
make the most of it (R. Murillo, personal communication, July 14, 2014).

By the early 2000s most HTA Federations started forming, and some of them
started to also become active in the United States, which led them to participate more in
local issues, such as demanding quality education and neighborhood safety, as well as
going more involved with unions (such as AFL-CIO), churches, and other types of
migrant-led organizations. These factors have led migrants to care more for the issue of
formal membership in their new societies, which they identified as a matter of equal
rights (Rivera-Salgado, Bada and Escala-Rabadán, 2005).

Some HTA leaders also started to focus on civil and social rights claims for
immigrants, such as campaigns for driver’s licenses, the acceptance of the *Matrícula
Consular* as an official identification form and the approval of a comprehensive
immigration reform. And some of them, such as the FCZ, even participated in political
campaigns of Latino politicians, such as the campaign of Antonio Villaraigosa in 2005
(Hazán, 2009).
In the cases of Chicago and Los Angeles involvement in U.S. politics has come hand in hand with an additional phase in migrant organization, the formation of Confederations of Mexican migrant federations, such as the Council of Mexican Federations (COFEM for its acronym in Spanish), which was officially founded in 2005, although it started operations since 2002. In the present COFEM is conformed by 16 organizations, 12 of which are Federations (the other organizations are cultural organizations, such as the Organización Regional Oaxaqueña, women rights organizations, like MUSA, and Mujeres Exitosas and a sports organization, Anahuac) and nine people that are paid staff (including the executive director) plus 500 civic promoters. COFEM is able to reach around 300 thousand members (F. Moreno, personal communication, July 17, 2014). Another organization that was created with an explicit political agenda on both sides of the border is FCZ. Lastly, the Frente Indígena de Organizaciones de Binacionales (FIOB) was also created with a binational agenda in mind although it was formed much earlier, in 1991. An explanation for its early existence, especially compared to the mestizo organizations is precisely its indigenous identity, which has made this population much more conscious and active in political issues, because of the challenges indigenous people have faced in Mexico (Rivera-Salgado &; Escala Rabadan, 2004).

These organizations also attracted the attention of U.S. politicians. For example, in 2004 President Bush invited a member of COFEM to the announcement of a new immigration reform initiative in the White House. At a local level, Latino legislators started to get informed about HTAs and their potential as political players in the United

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49 COFEM was previously known as Consejo de Presidentes de Federaciones Mexicanas de Los Ángeles.
States. Furthermore, Latino organizations such as Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) started to seek partnerships with COFEM and even organized a leadership program for COFEM members.

However, in December of 2005 the situation took a dramatic turn, when the House of Representatives (dominated by the Republican party) passed a restrictive migration reform, sponsored by James Sensenbrenner: the HR 4437. This bill stated that undocumented immigration was a felony offense, as well as assisting, supporting, guiding, or provoking a person to either enter illegally or stay in the United States. This bill, if enacted would have been the most punitive immigration legislation in the history of the United States. It represented a direct threat for Mexican immigrants, but also to all people and institutions that in some form aided undocumented migrants, such as the Church, schools and family members that were U.S. citizens.

As a response to the passing of the HR4437 in the House of Representatives, immigrant leaders organized marches and rallies in various localities across the United States. Migrant organizations –such as COFEM, FCZ and FIOB– were at the center of the marches against the HR4437 in Los Angeles. They were largely responsible for the organization of the March 25 demonstration, which attracted around 500,000 people. The largest group that attended the mobilizations was Mexican migrants. Most of them were legal residents, but an important number wasn’t. According to the president of the Federación Hidalguense legal residents participated because many of them know what it is like to be undocumented, having lived in the shadows for many years. Furthermore

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50 A survey created in Chicago by Amalia Pallares and Nilda Flores-Gonzáles (2010) states that 74 percent of the marchers were citizens. While other groups attended, the majority was Latino, and from those that were foreign born, 81 percent were Mexican and 10 percent from other Latin American countries.
people felt that if the bill was passed this could set a precedent for creating another bill to restrict the rights of documented migrants in the future (S. Marin, personal communication, July 29, 2014).

Federations were able to organize their members in an effective manner due to the fact that they had been negotiating with the Mexican government the possibility of issuing voting cards abroad. This campaign had brought them together despite their ideological differences (Ramírez, Perales, Arellano, 2010, p.128). Once it became clear that the Mexican government was not going to yield, migrant leaders turned their attention to the HR4437. According to Raúl Murillo from Hermandad Mexicana, it was in 2006 that Federations from Jalisco, Nayarit, Colima, Zacatecas, Michoacán and Guanajuato started to participate on civic and political issues that had to do with the United States and not just Mexico (R. Murillo, personal communication, July 14, 2014).

Because of the impressive response, the Catholic Church, Latino and labor organizations started to collaborate with HTAs to organize further demonstrations in April 10 and the historic march of May Day, where between 1.2. and 2 million people participated nationwide.\(^{51}\) Latino national organizations (such as MALDEF, LULAC and NCLR) and the Hispanic media had a larger part in the latter marches; because of them an image of a national movement was created. For example, these organizations advised marchers to wear white and to carry American Flags instead of Mexican flags during the marches and adapting English slogans that showed that they wanted to be members of the United States society, such as “We are America” (Wang & Winn, 2010).

\(^{51}\) Los Angeles, New York, Atlanta, Seattle, Phoenix, Washington, D.C., and Chicago were the cities with the greatest turn out.
During the marches migrants also highlighted their role as workers with slogans such as: “We are not criminals and we are not terrorists,” “we are only workers” or “Mi trabajo vale” (my work has value). Furthermore, the most important demonstration was planned on May Day, which is the international day of workers. Migrants were thus pointing out that through their market citizenship—they had a legitimate claim in belonging to U.S. society.

However not everything went always smoothly. There was for example disagreement among different members on what kind of strategies to follow. For example, not all members agreed on doing an economic boycott on May Day. Those in favor argued that such an action would show legislators the political and economic power the migrant community had. This was an effective form of exercising their market citizenship; immigrants comprised 33.9 percent of the state’s workforce in 2013 (or 6.5 million workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau and between 2003 and 2011 Mexican migrants contributed between 3.7 and 4.1 percent to the U.S. gross national product. Furthermore the Latino purchasing power was amounted to in $1 trillion dollars in 2010 (American Immigration Council, 2015). Finally, Mexican migrants constitute 12 percent of small business owners in the country and generate an income $17 million dollars a year (Fairlie, 2012).

On the other hand, those that opposed the boycott stated that such an action would have negative consequences in the Congress and in the American population, because it would show an image of confrontation, since the Senate had already been
working in a new immigration bill that had the support of President Bush.\textsuperscript{52} This faction wanted to migrants to continue to exercise “good character” in regards to their economic reliability. Nevertheless, disagreements were managed in a peaceful manner and it was finally decided that people should do as they saw fit and that in the end, all organization were united towards the same goal.\textsuperscript{53}

After the May Day demonstrations, some organizations, Federations among them, changed their strategy towards more institutional activities, such as organizing naturalization and get out to vote campaigns. Some interest group strategies were also implemented, such as indirect lobbying. Migrant organizations encouraged leaders to contact their legislators by mail or phone calls. Nevertheless, because of the lack of common goals beyond preventing the enactment of HR4437, the migrant national coalition dissolved. Even when all members favored a comprehensive immigration reform, not all of them agreed on what such a reform should contain. HTA leaders usually advocate for a path to citizenship for all migrants, while Latino organizations are more willing to compromise on the issue. There is also disagreement in regards to the creation of a temporary workers program, the importance of prioritizing family reunification, among other issues. Finally, after the marchers, HTA members were tired and unsatisfied due to the lack of immediate results. Many of them started once again to question their role as a political organization and demanded to go back to organizing cultural events, such as the Independence Day celebration (September 15), which was

\textsuperscript{52} Senator Arlen Specter (Republican, PA) introduced the new project; it included border reinforcement, a temporary workers program, and a path to citizenship.

\textsuperscript{53} Angélica Salas, executive director CHIRLA, stated to La Opinión Newspaper that even if there were disagreements in regards to the boycott the goal was the same. Salas stated: “We are not telling people to do one thing, or another, but to choose what is the best option for them.” (Hastings M. 2006).
drawing nearer. However, the immigration marches showed to the United States that Federations had great capacity to mobilize the Mexican migrant community and this also legitimated them in the eyes of local governments, Latino organizations and other migrant serving organizations. Although it is impossible to measure what was effect of the May Day rallies on the Senators decision to reject the HR4437, some legislators admitted to the press that the first marches made them realize that such a punitive law could not be supported and that migration should be seen as an issue that went beyond national security (Díaz Briseño, J., 2006).

2.6. Concluding remarks

HTAs are grassroots organizations that formed as a way for migrants to keep their identity and their connections to their hometowns. Through the exercise of their market citizenship back home, HTAs were able to attract the Mexican government and developed formal channels through which migrants were able to get their demands heard in a more efficient manner. Furthermore, the Mexican government also encouraged their creation through visits from governors. Additionally, the Mexican government also helped to formalize and institutionalize HTAs by officially registering them, by providing them a space for leaders to get to know each other through monthly meetings and through the CCIME and by encouraging the formation of Federations and Confederations of HTAs, such as COFEM.

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54 However, it is important to remember that the broadness of the law ran against the interests of different groups, such as the church and public schools, who cater to immigrants, but also against the interests of companies who hire undocumented immigrants, since the law criminalized everyone that helped, encouraged, or assisted migrants in remaining in the US.
Nevertheless this does not mean migrant-based organizations have been coopted by the Mexican government. Although migrants have cooperated with the Mexican government and many Federations have a good relationship with the consulate and with government authorities back home, they have also used such contacts to acquire formal membership, without having to comply with the obligations, as FitzGerald (2012) noted. The interaction with the government at a local level provided migrants with experience to successfully articulate their demands at a federal level. What began as market citizenship has gradually become formal membership.

In the case of the United States, Federations have become more conscious in regards to how legislations can affect their daily lives and have realized that it is important to be united and organized in order to confront these kinds of legislations. Although anti-immigrant bills got migrants to the streets in 1994, it was not until the early 2000s that Federations started to do advocacy on issues concerning migrants’ rights and that they became a relevant actor for local government authorities and other political actors such as Latino organizations and unions. Moreover, the immigrant rights marches in 2006 proved that HTAs are capable of mobilizing their communities.

HTAs tried to acquire formal membership in the United States by highlighting their value as market citizens. Some slogans focused on their identity as workers, and the boycott revealed how they could use their “market power” to compromise the

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55 Other slogans also focused on human rights and human dignity, as well as the idea of the United States being a “nation of immigrants.” Following this narrative, the United States is a nation of immigrants who were able to have a “better life” because of their hard work; hence all immigrants should have the same opportunities. On the other hand, organizers also tried to create empathy among the general public, by portraying participants as an ethnic minority, who were part of the U.S. society. For this purpose they used a civil rights discourse and tried not to focus too much on amnesty for undocumented migrants (Pantoja, Menjívar, & Magaña, 2008).
economic stability of a government they think is unfair to them; a government that won’t let them become formal members of their adopted community, due in part to their stigma of “illegality” which makes U.S. society see them as a problem and a threat to their culture and identity and as criminals who put in jeopardy the national security of their territory.

Nevertheless, these strategies did not prove very effective. Although the HR4437 did not become law, the marches and the boycott were not enough to pass a comprehensive immigration reform. As it will be discussed in chapter four, HTAs were discouraged with the results. However, this does not necessarily mean that they have abandoned their goal of acquiring formal membership in their new home.
As we learned in Chapter 2, the Mexican government played an important part in the development of HTAs, Federations and in the creation of the Confederation of Federations. This was the result of a change in the Mexican foreign policy from “the policy of having no policy” to one of “active engagement” due to the fact that Mexican migrants abroad had gained more political and economic power. Migrant leaders took this opportunity to strengthen the commitment of the Mexican government — at the federal level — with the development of their hometowns through the creation of the 3x1 Program and also started to demand their political rights, thus using their clout as market citizens to earn effective citizenship. However, this does not mean that the relationship between the Federations and the Mexican government is not without its conflicts.

This chapter draws mainly from my field research conducted during the summer of 2014 and further focuses in the relationship between federations and the Mexican State in the present. While in general there is a good relationship between Mexican public officials, most of all at the consular level, there continues to be distrust between both parties. Furthermore, in some cases local governments have pushed back on the demands of migrants and have found ways to go around migrant organizations to fund local projects, which can have serious consequences to the organization of migrants and diminish their political clout.
3.1. A collaborative relationship: HTA Federations and the Mexican Consulate

In the present federation leaders have a good relationship with the Mexican Consulate. When asked how they would rate their relationship with the Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles, all interviewees rated it from “good” to “very good.” Furthermore, many leaders also stated that they were very satisfied with the last two Consul Generals of Los Angeles and many stated that their relationship was very different from before, when migrant leaders generally distrusted the Consulate. This shows that the State’s strategy of acercamiento has been successful. However, Federation leaders also pointed out that it was still hard to get their communities to go the consulate to seek advise, because some migrants believe that the Mexican Consulate will report them to immigration or simply because there is a sense of distrust. Nevertheless, Federation leaders stated that they attended the monthly meetings at the Consulate and that they regularly received invitations from the Consulate for various events that ranged from cultural events to information workshops.

The Mexican Consulate nowadays goes beyond issuing consular IDs and passports. Under its new guidelines, Mexican officials try to strengthen Mexican leaders in the United States through various activities. Federation leaders often mentioned that the Mexican consulate organized information workshops on DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals)\(^{56}\), as well as workshops on how to apply for the new driver’s license (AB60) for undocumented migrants and citizenship workshops. The goals of said

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\(^{56}\) The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, usually known as DACA is an executive order issued by President Barack Obama on June 15, 2012 under which undocumented youth who came to the United States as children may be granted a temporary permission to stay in the United States for at least two years, although it can be renewed. Under DACA undocumented youth are issued a work permit and are able to apply for a driver’s license. DACA however does not provide a path to permanent residency or citizenship (National Immigration Law Center, 2015).
workshops are not only to inform the attendees, but also to train migrant leaders so that they can spread the information to their members. The consulate also organizes leadership workshops and has taken steps to formalize its collaboration with COFEM through a Memorandum of Understanding. This document states that both organizations will work together to help people to apply for DACA and get their driver’s license and other issues that are of interest to the Mexican communities abroad (F. Moreno, personal communication, July 17, 2014).

The Mexican consulate has also organized information workshops with the Sheriff’s office so that Federation leaders can build a closer relation with law enforcement officials and thus help create a better relation based that extends to the rest of the community. Thus the relationship between the Sheriff’s office and these communities, such as Huntington Park or the City of LA, becomes one of collaboration instead of fear.

The consulate also seeks to strengthen migrant leadership in the United States by introducing federation leaders to public officials, such as mayors, councilmen and woman, and the Sheriff’s office. This is done through the monthly meetings the consulate organizes or during cultural events, such as the celebration of the Mexican Independence. As Raul Murillo from *Hermandad Mexicana* points out, this is very important:

The Mexican consulate has a very good relationship with all these offices, and when they invite us to an event where such authorities are present, and they see that the consulate acknowledges migrant membership, they also start to take us into account. So, this kind of interaction is important to us. The relationship that the Consulate here has with the state is very strong, it is very important to the government of the City of Los Angeles and to the state government, so for us to be taken into account for events is very important, it opens doors for us (R. Murillo, personal communication, July 14, 2014).
About half of the meetings at the consulate are scheduled to talk about the advancement of the Mexican community in the United States, how leaders can create a good relationship with the city government. Nevertheless, Isaí Pazos from Organización Regional Oaxaqueña (ORO) points out that the issues that are given importance vary from one Consul to another. “Every consul has its own project. Consul Sada’s project [the Consul General in Los Angeles since 2013] has been to look after the well being of the community [in the United States] (I. Pazos, personal communication, August 1, 2014).

Migrant leaders are also aware that sustaining a good relationship with the consulate is important because it helps them to reach more migrants:

Sometimes people badmouth the consulate, but we need them. For example, if I do my press conference, it is not the same for the consulate to summon the media than it is for me. More people pay attention if the call comes from the Consulate. They are a great help. When I organize meetings at the Consulate more people show up, even though they attack the people that work at the Consulate… The image of the Consulate is something that helps us. (A. Morales, personal communication, August 7, 2014)

Nevertheless, a certain amount of distrust still exists and leaders also exert certain caution towards the Consulate. Leaders fear that the Mexican Consulate might interfere and change their agenda. As Guadalupe Gómez, President of Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California (FCZSC) from 2001 to 2004 describes:

“We used to use the Consulate for meetings. When there was an issue that was of interest to all leaders, we asked the Consulate to call for a meeting. Nevertheless, after a while some leaders decided that we should put some distance between the Consulate, and us because we did not want them to intervene… Consuls are very cunning and migrant leaders are not easy to manipulate… we see our government with a certain skepticism so they are
also careful. What we need from them is their support for our causes. (G. Gómez, September 3, 2014).

Although Federation leaders have a good relationship with the Consulate, this does not mean that Federation leaders have no criticisms towards the Mexican government representatives. Many of the interviewees think that the Mexican government could do more to protect their community abroad:

There are some instances when one asks the Consul his opinion about certain issues. Maybe we could organize more informal meetings to give certain orientation on how to achieve certain goals... I do not understand much about diplomacy... but there shouldn’t be any limits for the Mexican government to have a relationship with its people, the conversation should be open... ” (Raul Murillo, personal communication, July 14, 2014)

On the other hand, Efraín Jiménez from FCZSC thinks that the Mexican Consulate should be more supportive to its community abroad:

They have been very prudent and try not to intervene with U.S. polices, but sometimes we do need the Mexican government to do more than just pronounce itself against anti-immigrant policies. We need them to take a stronger stance. For example, they could invest more in lobbying on issues that benefit their communities here in the United States... Mexico also needs to do more studies with reliable sources and strong academic foundations that highlight the contributions that we, the Mexican community, make to the U.S. economy and to the political and social development of the United States. We need studies that highlight that we are part of the solution, not a burden.... The Mexican government falls short in this regard (E. Jiménez, August 24, 2014).

Although not exempt from criticism, the relationship between the Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles and Federation leaders is a healthy one, which in recent years has strengthen with the work of the last two Consul Generals who have taken an interest in the well being of the Mexican community in their circumscription. The Mexican Consulate has put an important amount of energy in informing their community about programs such as DACA and the drivers’ license and has also helped federations to be
taken more seriously by public officials in their host communities. Thus confirming that the State continues to be an important entity in transnational relations; the Mexican consulate has helped migrants create communication channels with the host government in order to facilitate the communication between both actors and as stated in Chapter 2, the Mexican consulate also played an important part in helping with the professionalization of Federations although it still maintains a neutral position when it comes to committing to direct action in regards to U.S. policies, given the fact that the consulate does not want to interfere in another government’s issues, but also because the Mexican government does not want to give the impression that they are hijacking the agendas of Federations, since some leaders remain distrustful of the government. Although the Mexican government does support the formation of leadership in the United States, it prefers to do so in the background.

3.2. Between collaboration and resistance at the local level

Although Federations have become active in regards to demanding full rights, their main objective continues to revolve around helping out of their hometowns. During interviews, when asked about what the main goals of their Federations were, two thirds of interviewees stated that their main goal was to help their hometowns through the 3x1 Program.

Apart from participating in the 3x1 Program, some federations such as (FCZSC), the Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos de la Costa Oeste and the Alianza Duranguense have started novel programs that go beyond the usual activities of Federations to help their hometowns. Alianza Duranguense is developing a project that consists of registering
the organizations in Mexico that play a counterpart to HTAs (clubes espejo) as non-profits in the Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público (the Mexican IRS) and training them, so that those organizations can seek grants and donations at an international level from transnational corporations. This way, such organizations will be able to gather funds for their hometowns without having to rely on migrants (S. Ramírez, personal communication, August 18, 2014). Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos de la Costa Oeste, on the other hand, is investing in another project in partnership with Conacyt (National Council of Science and Technology) and SAGARPA (Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Foodstuff) to produce wine in Fresnillo, Zacatecas. According to its president, this project could benefit 360 families and it is a more efficient approach compared to the traditional method Federations and HTAs use, such as organizing fairs and other events to raise funds in the United States (C. Sifuentes, personal communication, August 27, 2014). Finally, FCZSC is starting to develop a new branch for the 3x1 Program. This new matching funds program uses individual remittances and funds of the federal government on financial ventures that also create jobs in Mexico although a Federation must introduce the project in order for it to qualify for the program. 

Aside from the project of Alianza Duranguense, these new projects still focus in the importance of migrants as investors in the local communities, migrants. The idea of still belonging to their community continues to center in their market citizenship, their economic contributions. However, the activities of Federations go beyond helping with

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57 The Zacatecan projects are different from other productive project programs, because it seeks to fund large projects that can create an important number of jobs. At the moment productive projects tend to focus on the creation of small businesses.
the local development of their hometown. As it was discussed in Chapter 2 and following the arguments of Goldring (2002) and Smith (2003), participating in social projects also enhances migrants’ ability to negotiate with the Mexican government. As Bada (2014, p. 111) argues, “these new state-migrant civil society collaborations present a unique opportunity to create civic engagement models that are not only based on “market membership” but also include migrant citizen engagement in community development agendas beyond collective remittances investments” and into greater political participation. As discussed in Chapter 2, Mexican migrants have been able to acquire political rights such as the right to vote from abroad,58 the issuance of voter’s ID cards abroad, and in some cases be able to run for office in their hometowns. As Mr. Gómez affirms:

Once we came together and the government started to support us through the 2x1 Program, which would later become the 3x1 Program, we realized that the Federation had an important political clout, which is why we started to demand the recognition of our full rights. We started saying: “if we are sending so much money, I also want to have a say in the decisions you take... Zacatecas won’t transform if there are no new ideas, if there is no democracy.” That’s how we started to pressure Congress so that we, the migrants were also represented. Zacatecas was the first state that modified its constitution to include migrant representatives (G. Gómez, personal communication, September 3, 2014).

Federations and state governments benefit from working together. Governors have an interest in the collective and individual remittances migrants send, which in many cases are the primary source of income for the locality, and they benefit from getting good publicity, while the formal recognition from governors legitimizes and raises the public profile of Federations. Furthermore, according to M. Basilia Valenzuela

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58 In Baja California Sur, Chiapas, Coahuila, Colima, Distrito Federal, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacán, Puebla, Yucatán and Zacatecas, migrants can also vote for governor/jefe de gobierno.
(2007), it is important to point out that the recognition of governors is vital to Federations and HTAs because they inject a sense of direction and efficacy to the relations between Federations and their localities. While this does not mean that Federations and HTAs cannot do their work without the governor, it is harder to embark in projects without this support and the lack of incentives also affects migrant organizations in a negative way (Valenzuela, 2007).

Once a working collaboration is established, Federation leaders are regarded as migrant representatives and government offices cater to Federation leaders in a more efficient manner and many of them are given awards and other kinds of recognition in their states. For example, according to the President of Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos de la Costa Oeste in the state of Zacatecas the governor invites migrants to his annual report and a day later celebrates with Federation leaders the “Day of the Migrant,” which includes a mass at the cathedral, a dinner, and an ofrenda (offering) that is taken to the monument of the migrant (C. Sifuentes, personal communication, August 27, 2014).

Federation leaders visit Mexico quite frequently. In general they go to their hometowns about four times a year. When they are in Mexico, leaders usually oversee 3x1 projects and check what their towns are lacking to work on such issues on future projects. Given their close relationship with their communities, some of them develop political aspirations. For example, Alfredo Gómez from Unión de Poblanos en el Exterior (UPEXT) says:

Last year I was in Mexico because I ran for mayor. But I did not win. Because I was always going to Mexico every month, I had no problem fulfilling the residency requirement, and everyone there knows that I am
the president of the Federation and I was able to bring them an ambulance... However, as you know, in the communities there are people that sell their vote... and I lost. But I feel like I won. I have the acceptance and respect of my people. I am really loved in my town. I ran for the PRI although the governor is from PAN. But there was no problem, really. I do not belong to any political party. In fact, I have a good relationship with governor Rafael Moreno Valle ... last year he gave an award to the Federation (A. Gómez, personal communication, August 11, 2014).

Many local politicians see Federation leaders as ideal candidates for election posts, which can work as a way of attracting more people to vote for them while at the same time, keeping federation leaders in line. That was the case for Salvador Ramírez from Alianza Duranguense:

I’ve always been very active in the northern part of Durango; a lot of people know me... Last time I came I organized many meetings with other non-profits, until the mayor asked me to meet her. She asked me if I was starting to work on the upcoming elections for governor. I told her that that wasn't the case and told her about my project [creating non-profits in Mexico and asking for grants to help our hometowns]... after a while she told me that she had spoken to a state representative and [asked me] if I would be interested in appearing in the lists [for the next legislative elections].... [T]hey feel that since one is capable or since one has the sympathy of the people... they feel they have to be careful with us, because we can become a game changer (S. Ramírez, personal communication, August 21).

Even if they do not have political aspirations, Federation leaders can also try to influence elections at home as the President of Federación Californiana de Michoacanos argues:

The organizations are nowadays more involved in politics than ever before. Even though we are a non-profit and thus we cannot support any candidate, we do it informally. In the last few years we have been really involved in Mexican politics. We have a lot of political clout, that’s why they come to look for us when they are campaigning. We know who is worth it and who isn’t. I meet all candidates and see what their intentions are. And if I think one of them can benefit us, then I talk to the board and they talk to their family and friends. Even if we are not involved in politics
formally, politics is everywhere, at home and outside it (L. Sandoval, personal communication, August 4, 2014).

Some people use their time at the Federation as a stepping-stone into a political career, since being part of a Federation makes them recognizable figures within the community on both sides of the border. However, running for office or attempting to openly support one party is not always seen as a good thing among federation leaders, because Federations need to work with whoever is in office and thus need to maintain a good relationship with all political players and because it can cause cleavages among members which can endanger the existence of the organization. That is for example the opinion of one of the members of Federación de Duranguense:

There is for example this group Frente Zacatecano. This group was created from a Federation to focus on all political matters…. But then it turns out that some of them support the PAN, others the PRD, others the PRI, and others the PT. In our organization all of them want to do politics, but then there is a blue one [PAN], there is a green one [PRI] and then the federation loses, because it creates divisions (C. Martinez, personal communication, July 26, 2014).

Therefore, most Federations claim to be non-partisan and in many cases members that want to advance their political career are asked to leave the organization. However, the fact remains that most Federations are able to exercise some political clout directly or indirectly (by telling their members for whom to vote). On the other hand, Federation leaders are not afraid of expressing their disagreement with the current government. However, migrants have also noticed that this situation worries local government officials. Mario Cardenas from Fraternidad Sinaloense explains:

They see migrants as allies but they fear that they can turn into an enemy because now they [the government] don’t have the same influence they used to have. Here [in the United States] you don’t depend on them. Instead of using the power of their communities abroad to lobby [manejar
influencias], the state governments do not know how to handle them. They are afraid of waking them up (Personal communication, August, 6 2014).

As argued before, once out of the home State, migrants have greater levels of freedom than ever before given to the fact that they are not in the territory. In order for them to keep participating in the homeland, they have given migrants the possibility to exercise political rights without some of the obligations that citizenship confers, but in some cases government officials still try to keep migrants under control by trying to hinder migrants from exercising formal membership. This was the case in Durango. After the last electoral reforms, the “General law of Institutions and Electoral Procedures” was modified in 2014 to give the right to Mexicans abroad to vote not only for President, but also for governors, federal senators and jefes de gobierno. However, it is up to the local legislatures to decide if they want such rights enforced or not. Although many states that had elections in 2015 decided that migrants could vote from abroad (such as Baja California Sur, Chiapas, Colima and Michoacán), the Durango legislature decided that it would put a hold on the decision (Carlos Yescas Alvarado, 2015). Mr. Ramírez continues:

They only approach us when it is convenient for them. They think that we, the Federations, don’t notice, but there are always interests that are stronger than those of Federations. The interests of Federations are very noble, to help our communities, but that’s not the interest of other political groups and we have to be careful about that. Every maneuver is done to restrain us, because it is true, Federations have a lot of influence in México...Just look at Zacatecas, the Zacatecan Federation is the strongest one and they changed the state of Zacatecas, no one can argue with that. They have so much influence in the state’s elections that they can change the result of the election. That’s just a state, but if all of us do the same... it is something that worries politicians. (S. Ramírez, personal communication, August 21, 2014)

While in some cases, as with Mr. Alfredo Gómez of Puebla, migrants are able to
exercise their political rights, and even run for the opposition without the local
government openly being against it, in other states local officials prefer to keep migrants
from exercising formal citizenship, because they fear how formal membership might
affect how they govern, since migrants expect public officials to be accountable.

The confrontation between the local government and Federations does not only
exist when the time of elections comes. Some leaders also complained that local public
officials (usually at the municipal level in Zacatecas, Guerrero and Michoacán) have
started to abuse the 3x1 Program, which has had a serious impact on the power of
Federations and HTAs on both sides of the border. According to Guadalupe Gómez, one
of the founders of the 3x1 Program, one of its benefits was that it would help to bring the
migrant community together in the United States:

The vision, we, the Zacatecans had about the 3x1 Program was not only to
engage in community projects to help our hometowns, but also unite the
community here in the United States. We believed that it would have the
same effect with all the Mexican community here in the United States, and
we were not wrong about that, that’s why it is important that the program
started working at the federal level, it is a mechanism under which the
community can come together” (G. Gómez, personal communication,
September 3, 2014).

However, instead of collaborating with HTAs in the 3x1 Program, some local
governments have encouraged the creation of “phantom HTAs.” These organizations
register as HTAs in the consulate, but they are formed just in paper, they do not organize
meetings or do any kind of activities. They act more as managing companies for the
mayor in Mexico, as they register the mayor’s projects under their name. This,
according to Efraín Jiménez, discourages migrant organizations:

The cost of having “managing companies” [empresas gestoras] instead of
ture HTAs is that the latter fall prey to disintegrating. HTA members start
thinking: why should they invest so much time in meetings? If they join this kind of organization the outcome will be the same, a project will be completed in Mexico. That is one of the problems of the 3x1 Program, it is a program that can bring lots of benefits to the hometowns or the clubs, but because of the lack of supervision, it is easy to corrupt and this can hurt migrant organization and affect the communities it is supposed to help (E. Jiménez, personal communication, August 25, 2014).

Furthermore the projects of “phantom organizations” still use migrant funds, although they are channeled through family remittances instead of collective remittances and as migrants decide that it is more time-efficient to do projects this way, the political power of Federations diminishes not only in Mexico, but also in the United States. As with the case of elections, Federation leaders think that the reason behind the adoption of this strategy was that migrants have become too strong.

They see a monster that’s becoming organized and we started to put social and political pressure that was so strong that we were able to change the [Zacatecas] state constitution. That’s when they see us as a real threat, we started to demand transparency and accountability and they started to realize that they don’t want to see us organized. They want to pat us in the back and play it as if they have a good relationship with us, but in fact the more disorganized we are, the better for them. If our network disintegrates then everyone goes back to their homes and apathy returns. Apathy goes away the moment you organize, when you sit to talk about issues, set up agreements, that’s how you start collaborations (E. Jiménez, August 25, 2014).

While it is hard to assess if local officials in Mexico have used “phantom organizations” to deliberately affect the organization of migrants, the testimony of Mr. Jiménez is important. Like other migrants he points out that migrants do not feel totally included in Mexican national project, and that some public officials actively seek to hinder the rights of the Zacatecan migrant community, because they see migrants as a kind of “ticking bomb”, which can explode in any moment and change the form they govern. Furthermore, FCZSC is one of the most professional and one of the oldest
Federations in the United States, if the corruption in the 3x1 Program is affecting the organization of Zacatecan migrants, it is possible that the same could be happening to other Federations, in fact the Federación Guerrerense, which also expressed that the 3x1 Program was being corrupted was in the process of disbanding by the time I did the interview.

3.3. Concluding Remarks

In the last few years, the Mexican State has tried to maintain an image of collaboration with migrant Federations. At the federal/consular level, there exist an excellent relationship between migrant leaders and the Mexican officials, which relates to the strategy of the Mexican state of acercamiento. The Mexican consulate has assisted in the formation of a migrant leadership in Los Angeles, by organizing conferences and workshops that give migrants the tools to help their communities and by introducing migrants to public officials of the County of Los Angeles, and from the state of California, as important civic actors in the community.

Back at home, Mexican migrants continue to exercise their market citizenship and expand their participation in their communities by creating new programs based on remittances. They are also important political players who can vote, run for office or shape the public opinion in their localities. Consequently, it could be argued that migrants have acquired great amounts of political clout in Mexico. After all, it is very difficult for Mexican officials to coerce individuals that are beyond their territory. Nevertheless, Federation leaders are aware that the Mexican government is still reluctant to fully collaborate with migrant leaders. Federation leaders argue that Mexican public officials
are afraid of the potential power of migrants and in some cases have tried to hinder them from exercising formal citizenship. In Durango they denied migrants the right to vote in the elections for governor, and in Zacatecas, Guerrero and other states, mayors have created “phantom organizations” to acquire funds from the 3x1 Program, without having to deal with migrant Federations, which might demand transparency from them. The actions of the Mexican government thus, continue to affect the organization and actions of transnational actors, such as migrants in both sides of the border. This means that the negotiation of formal citizenship between migrants and the State a continuous process.
CHAPTER 4: MIGRANT MEMBERSHIP IN THE HOST STATE: THE CASE OF MEXICAN FEDERATIONS IN LA COUNTY

After the 2006 marches, migration scholars such as Rivera Salgado, *et al.* (2005), Alarcon *et al.* (2012), Bada (2010 and 2014) and Vonderlack-Navarro (2011) seemed to agree that HTAs and federation of HTAs have shifted their interests from Mexico to also include issues in the United States, especially in regards to obtaining political rights and a path to formal citizenship in their host country. Chapter 4 focuses on this assertion and actually finds that Federations have taken a backseat regarding political participation activities in the United States after the 2006 immigration rallies. Although marches and rallies still take place on May Day, their numbers have decreased. Federations do continue to participate in non-electoral political activities in the United States, but they see this as secondary objective or as something that is beyond their scope of activities.

Although Federation leaders think that formal citizenship is desirable, they consider that migrants can show that they belong to U.S. society by showing they have “good character”, by being good market citizens and thorough “bureaucratic incorporation.”

4.1. Federations in the United States: New homeland, new century, new goals?

Since 2006, Federations of HTAs in Los Angeles County have continued to grow and develop. Alarcón *et al.* (2012), point out that Federations have experienced a reorientation from focusing on political issues in Mexico to the United States, due to migrant’s negative view on Mexican politics. Moreover, the scholars use the case of
FCZSC as the main example of a Federation that not only participates in marches, but also actively participates in public hearings in order to express their dissatisfaction with current policies towards migrants (Alarcón et al., 2012 pp. 309, 371). However, my findings show that Federations still consider their homeland as their number one priority, and fighting for immigrants’ rights in the United States is seen as a secondary goal. Only six out of twenty Federations stated that one of their main goals was to help migrants in the United States.\(^{59}\)

When thinking about non-electoral political participation of Federations in the United States it is important to note that a majority of Federation leaders continue to see the well being of their communities in Mexico as their fundamental goal. As Alfredo Gómez from UPEXT puts it: “Mexico is always going to be more important than the United States, even when both issues are important. The work that HTAs do [to help their communities] in regards to Mexico is something that is really personal. It is their calling and we cannot change that” (Personal communication, August 11, 2014). Furthermore, according to Francisco Moreno, Communications Director of COFEM and member of the

**Federación de Clubes y Asociaciones en Michoacán (FECADEMIN):**

Hundreds of HTAs —around 80 percent— only focus on getting funds to help their communities back home. They organize their events, such as selling food, organizing fairs, dances or raffles, all in order to gather funds and give them to their communities of origin. It is unbelievable that this is what drives people together. It is really hard for the Mexican community to come together on issues that have to do with the United States. First generation Mexicans believe that these issues belong to their children. That is: my son goes here to school, he can speak English, and he knows

\(^{59}\) It is possible that the difference between my findings and those of Alarcon et al. (2012) stems from the fact that those authors seem to have interviewed migrants and Federations in 2008, that is, in the aftermath of the 2006 immigration rallies for a comprehensive immigration reform. My investigation takes place almost 10 years after these events. During these years, Congress’ action regarding immigration reform has stymied, and so has migrant’s interest in advocating for it, as I will discuss in this chapter.
how life works here. Me, I am from Zacatecas or Guanajuato: it is my responsibility to help my hometown (C. Moreno, personal communication, July 17, 2014).

Nevertheless, Federations do engage in different civic activities that aim at the advancement of the Mexican community in the United States. As Ángel Morales from Federación Veracruzana attests, most of them consider that securing their rights in the United States is a family matter:

Well, we have realized that all this is also a family matter, if we don’t show interest in participating civically there will be family disintegration. If you don’t participate in marches, what happens? They take your mom or your dad or your sister. If your dad isn’t here anymore there is no one left to pay the rent... your family disintegrates (A. Morales, personal communication, August 7, 2014).

Federations have started to diversify their activities mainly towards cultural and educational issues. Educational issues can include goals such as helping migrants finish their high school and learning English, but also award young people scholarships for college. In regards to culture, federation leaders often invoked the idea of preserving their traditions in the United States and sharing them with their children and grand children but also with the rest of U.S. society. Leaders also cited other goals, such as bringing their community together, helping their members in regards to healthcare, organizing sports tournaments, spread information about government services and help migrants obtain birth certificates and other documents from Mexico.

However, this does not mean that Federations do not engage in any kind of political activities. Some Federation leaders from the Federación Veracruzana, FECADEMICH and FCZSC highlighted that they participated in political activities such
as organizing marches, helping to campaign for a comprehensive immigration reform, or even going to Washington D.C. to advocate for a comprehensive immigration reform. Additionally, most Federations do participate in rallies, although they do not tend to be the main organizers of such events. They participate by the invitation of other organizations that are actively involved in the fight for immigrants’ rights such as COFEM, Hermandad Mexicana and Vamos Unidos USA and the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA). Furthermore, they tend to participate as individuals or in a non-affiliated manner. When asked why they did not participate in political activities or why did they did it at an individual level, many Federation leaders argue that their status as a non-for-profit organization prevented them from it.

The overwhelming majority of Federations in Los Angeles area are registered as non-profits (501(c)(3)). Only one of the Federations I interviewed had not registered as a non-profit. According to Els de Graauw (2008), “non-profits facilitate the political participation of individual immigrants, develop immigrants’ political skills and resources, foster immigrants’ political interest, and mobilize immigrants’ civic and political participation” (p. 324). Nevertheless, in the case of Federations, they face an important psychological barrier when thinking about becoming more active in the United States in terms of civic and political participation because of their non-profit status.

Federations seek to gain a non-profit status because this enables them to qualify for certain tax exemptions (they do not pay income tax on their revenue and donation contributions are tax-deductible) and because a non-profit status is often required to apply for grants. Furthermore being a 501(c)(3) is a way of showing seriousness and formality when dealing with elected officials and government offices in the United States (De
Finally, being a non-profit is also a requirement for Federations that want to join COFEM. However, federal law discourages non-profits from engaging in overly political activities, and bars 501(c)(3) from involving themselves in partisan politics at any level of government. This fact discourages Federations to from getting involved in any kind of political activities, even non-partisan political activities, even though federal legislation allows non-profits to allocate up to 25 percent of their resources to engage in non-partisan political activities (Bada, 2014, p. 183). Yet, Federation members seem to relate any kind of political organization with electoral politics. Efraín Jimenez expresses this situation very clearly:

We haven’t really assimilated what politics means here in the United States. So, although we are a political organization 100 percent [and] we do not support any parties, the majority of our members prefer to do charity and strictly just in regards to Mexico. A very small percentage is working on issues regarding the Mexican community in the United States (E. Jiménez, personal communication, August 25, 2014).

However, it is also possible that Federations stick to the idea that the organization cannot engage in any kind of political activity in order to defuse potential conflicts and divisions within the federation. As discussed in Chapter 3, this is the reason why many Federations avoid openly backing up candidates in Mexico; after all matters of political rights are closely intertwined with party politics and it can be a slippery slope from there.

On the other hand, while Federations have increased their organizational formality in the last years, their voluntary nature is still a major obstacle for further institutionalization and professionalization. Federation leaders feel that focusing on issues related to the advancement of their community in the United States, while something desirable, can also be very troublesome given their lack of resources:
For us getting empowered in the United States is a secondary effect, that is, once you are organized you start thinking about also working on “this side.” That’s how our scholarship fund started and other ideas about doing projects here, but it is really complicated. You need to do constant monitoring, and you can’t do that given the nature of the organization, these are 100 percent volunteer organizations, even the chairs are volunteers (E. Jiménez, personal communication, August 25, 2014).

Many leaders did think that although they acknowledged the importance of being organized in the United States, mostly when it comes to voting, most of their members are not interested in such issues or feel apathetic towards the government; they feel they cannot change anything. The president of the *Federación de Clubes Jaliscienses del Sur de California* (FCJSC) commented that she tried to register voters and to create a new NGO that would work as a sub-chapter of the Federation that would deal with civic and political issues (more or less in the same fashion as *Frente Cívico Zacatecano*) but failed in both instances. The members of the Federation turned both proposals down. “I have to respect their decision, they are the ones that volunteer their time to the Federation. Nevertheless I still think that this is something we need,” Mrs. Hernández, president of FCJSC says (P. Hernández, personal communication, August 31, 2014).

As Guadalupe Gómez expresses:

We do have a leadership, we are able to interview with the Governor of California and other public officials, but we don’t have people that have the disposition to demonstrate against the injustices we are going through. They don’t show up to march. I think that the Mexican community doesn’t want to make a racket [*no le gusta estar en el argüende*] (G. Gómez, personal communication, September 3, 2014).

On the other hand, people have become disappointed and apathetic towards marches due to the fact that this actions have not given any results.

The first time they are called up to march everyone wants to be part of it, but when they don’t see any changes then they decide to stop going. They
say: “Why am I going to waste my time? I better go to work.” And that’s the point. Many of these people live paycheck to paycheck. Many of them cannot afford not to go to work (I. Pazos, August 1, 2014).

The issue about people not going to marches or rallies because they have to work came very frequently during interviews. Members of Federations are opposed to participating in rallies and marches, because they simply do not have the time to engage in this kind of activity. Many of them cannot afford to lose one day of work, which could not just result in losing some of their income but also in being fired.

Moreover, not all Federation leaders think that participating in rallies and other types of grassroots advocacy is an effective strategy when it comes to the fight for immigrants’ rights. On the one hand, leaders point out that rallies are good, because public officials become aware that an important migrant population exists in their districts and because it is a form of showing that people want to stay in the United States. Furthermore, rallies, demonstrations and petition campaigns are more inclusive and are a way in which migrants can participate regardless of their immigration status. On the other hand, many of them believe that demonstrations are not enough. Mr. Ramírez explains:

[Public officials] have also told us that an immigration reform won’t be the outcome of us rallying but the outcome of seeing that an immigration reform is what would benefit the country economically speaking. They won’t pass it for humanitarian reasons. They don’t care that we stay undocumented, if they can profit from it (S. Ramírez, August 18, 2014).

Because of these issues, Federation leaders in general think that while they would like to be more active in issues regarding political participation, their voluntary nature, and the lack of support of these issues among their members makes it very difficult. At most, they can contribute in a symbolic manner. “Federations are not going to be the ones that will push for an immigration reform, but they can be part of this process” (E.
If Federations do not think that they can do much in regards to migrant rights and tend to focus on issues related to their hometown, why are they cited as one of the driving forces behind the 2006 rallies against the anti-immigrant bill HR4437? The reason for this is that while political participation is usually not one of the main goals of Federations, they are nonetheless organized, and Federations are able to mobilize effectively in the face of anti-immigrant bills. As Matt Barreto, Sylvia Manzano, Ricardo Ramírez and Kathy Rim (2009) point out “there [is] a history of consciousness and viable mobilizing structures that proved instrumental in facilitating the logistics and in forming the necessary frames” (p.746). HTA participation is reactive. In times of need federation leaders use their networks to disseminate information about the danger of anti-immigrant laws and can thus organize effectively. Nevertheless, because they haven’t articulated a project of immigration reform that goes beyond the need for a path to citizenship, effective political organization within Mexican Federations has not been possible. As Pina Hernández, notes: “I do believe in rallies. It is an expression of what we are feeling and it gives you visibility, but without a legislation a rally is not worth it” (P. Hernández, personal communication, August 31, 2014).

4.2. Encouraging good market citizens

While Federation leaders in general agreed that it was not their role to become advocacy organizations, most of them did emphasize that rather than going out to march and organizing other kinds of advocacy campaigns, they focused on encouraging “good character” among migrants and that members showed their desire to stay and to become
part of U.S. society by “following the rules;” that is, by working hard, paying taxes and educating themselves so that they could find better jobs and succeed in life, thus showing that they were successful members of the community. As Carlos Martínez from *Federación Duranguense* argues: “Politics, culture, education are all important, but every organization needs to focus on creating good citizens in the United States, because this is where we live, we must coach them to be successful in this country” (Carlos Martínez, *Federación de Duranguenses*, personal communication, July 26, 2014). Moreover, some leaders even argue that participating in marches and rallies contribute to buttress the image of migrants as people who are unruly and do not respect the law. Some of them, like Gerardo Vázquez from *Federación Oaxaqueña de Comunidades y Organizaciones Indígenas de California* (FOCOICA) also believe that by working hard employers will help migrants regularize their status:

> You must abide by the law, they are giving you freedom to live here and they are giving you everything. We have to behave well and things will work out themselves. I have seen how employers have helped people get their papers, because they have worked many years for them. I have seen people that had little education, who worked as house cleaners who got their papers without making so much noise... We are the ones that are pulling the country ahead. We are the ones that work the most; we are the ones that consume the most. We are for an immigration reform, but we want to get it through the proper channels. We don’t like that sometimes activists want things done by force and that’s were we don’t agree (G. Vázquez, August 20, 2014).

Mr. Vázquez, like many other migrant leaders continue to emphasize their “market citizenship” as a way of showing their willingness to formally belong in the host society. Migrants are the ones that “work the most” and “consume the most.” According to the American Immigration Council (2015), the purchasing power of Latinos in California was $320 billion and undocumented migrants comprised 9.4 percent of
California’s workforce in 2012—or 1.8 million workers (American Immigration Council, 2015).

Aside from working hard, education was a recurrent theme when asked what migrants can do to secure their rights and membership in the United States. Most leaders agreed that in order to become true members their host society, migrants had to educate themselves. Education (which includes access to information, as well as acquiring a degree or finishing high school) is a key factor for acquiring membership in the United States. As Carlos Martínez from the Federación de Duranguenses explains:

We try to organize Duranguenses so that they can move forward and integrate in the United States. That’s why we have the school, why we have English courses and why we have a work relationship with the City of Huntington Park, with the mayor of Los Angeles, and with the Mexican consulate. We try to help them integrate; we help them to get to know the laws. We tell them how our situation here in the community has gotten better, but also that some things have gotten worse. We tell them about DACA, the driver’s license and help them enroll in citizenship courses… By being organized like this, [our members] can avoid being cheated or robbed, but above all they have an informed opinion on what’s happening (C. Martínez, personal Communication, July 26, 2014).

Some of the larger and older Federations, such as FCZSC and FCJSC and COFEM offer scholarships for undocumented students, while other Federations such as FCZSC, Federación de Duranguenses, Federación Veracruzana and Federación Guerrerense have Plazas Comunitarias, which is a program that was formed in partnership with the Mexican government aimed at adults who want to get their high school degree in Spanish. In some cases Plazas Comunitarias also offer English courses, GED courses, computer skills tutorials, and even skill certifications that are validated by the Mexican government. Most leaders agreed that migrants that could speak English, had more years of education or had a degree were better received in the host community:
I don’t think that petitions or phone banks will help pass the immigration reform. I think that people should go to school, educate themselves, give a good example to others and adapt to their life here, that’s how things are going to change. If we don’t do that public officials are going to see us as always, as people that only come here to work, but who don’t adapt themselves to the life here…. That’s why I teach migrants… I teach them to prepare themselves to be better, to have their own business, that’s how we are going to stand out, and how they are going to see us in a positive light. With general education, when you are driving, working or in the street, to be respectful a 100 percent… this is how we need to integrate here, that way the government will say: “they deserve to be here, they have earned it” (J. Romero, personal communication, August 5, 2014).

On the other hand, being informed in regards to the resources available to them and “how the system works” (educarse) was also a key issue for Federation leaders to help migrants integrate into their host communities. Most Federations organized information workshops for issues that are of interest of the Mexican community such as how to apply for DACA and the driver’s license, how to avoid scams from immigration lawyers or what to do in the event their vehicle were seized.

Being part of a Federation helps migrants become more informed on new policies and programs, which also empowers them when facing difficult situations such as discrimination or when people want to take advantage of them. As Efraín Jiménez states: “A citizen that is well informed, that knows his rights, a citizen that knows how much he contributes and how much he pays is more capable to defend himself, better then if he were to have a lawyer” (E. Jiménez, personal communication, August 25, 2014). Not only does education provide information on how to integrate in the destination community better, but most Federation leaders also think that by finishing school or

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60 Undocumented migrants were able to get a driver’s license until 1994. Nevertheless, that right was recovered in 2013 after The Safe and Responsible Driver Act (AB 60) was passed. Under the new law, undocumented migrants that are residents of California can apply for a driver’s license, which can be used to drive but is not allowed as proof of identification at federal facilities.
acquiring a degree, migrants become worthy members of U.S. society.

4.3. Los Angeles County: Just like home

According to Alarcón et al. (2012), the cities where migrants are better-organized may also be localities were immigrants in general do not feel as threatened. When asked if migrants were welcome in Los Angeles all interviewees agreed that they were. In Los Angeles County, immigration enforcement has been reduced in recent years. From 2005 to May 2015\(^1\) L.A. county cooperated with the detention and deportation of undocumented migrants through the 287(g) program, which authorizes the Federal Government to enter into agreements with state and local law enforcement agencies, allowing designated officers to perform immigration law enforcement functions under Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Nevertheless not all cities in L.A. County signed MOUs with ICE to implement the 287(g). Furthermore, the City of Los Angeles had internal regulations that did not allow their police department to abuse the enforcement of immigration laws. Alarcón et al. (2012, p.239) point at Special Order 40 that prohibits the LAPD from detaining individuals with the purpose of looking into the immigration status of a person. On the other hand, the TRUST Act, which went into effect in January 2014 states that undocumented migrants have to be charged with or convicted of a serious offense to be eligible for a 48-hour hold and transfer to U.S. immigration authorities for deportation. These measure are an indication to migrants that

\(^{1}\)Nevertheless, the Sheriff of LA County, Jim McDonnell announced that they would work with ICE to enter county jails that have committed serious offenses and are thus not covered by the TRUST Act. Immigration advocates have complained about letting ICE officials into county jails, however, the Sheriff will not become an extension of ICE and won’t detain anyone beyond their day of release, even if they are undocumented (Jorge Morales, 2015).
the LAPD does not represent Immigration Services and that officers will not question or arrest anyone under the suspicion of immigration status.

Since the early 2000s, legislators of California have enacted numerous bills that seek to include migrants as members of society. Since the enactment the AB540 bill in 2002, undocumented students in California are exempt from paying out-of-state tuition at public colleges and universities provided they attended at least three years of high school in the state. In 2013 the AB60 bill was passed, which allows the issuance of driver’s licenses for undocumented migrants. Other inclusive laws at the state level encompass a state-funded healthcare for children younger than 19 and a law (SB1159) that allows people without legal status to obtain law and other professional licenses, which was passed in September 2014 and must be enforced by 2016.

Furthermore, the mayor of Los Angeles, Eric Garcetti, created an Office of Immigrants Affairs in 2013 to support immigrant incorporation. Garcetti is supportive of migrants and favors a comprehensive immigration reform. During COFEM’s Binational Conference of Immigrant Affairs in 2014, Garcetti spoke the following words to attendees: “Your hard work makes the United States stronger... This is your state, this is your country, you deserve that same future, if you are willing to work hard for it, and if anyone is left behind, this mayor is going to open the arms of this city, La ciudad de Los Angeles and make sure they fulfill their destiny” (Garcetti, 2014). Garcetti’s discourse is similar to the discourse of Federations and other pro-migrant organizations. It centers on the idea that migrants are valuable market citizens (i.e. they work hard and pay taxes) and have “good character” and thus deserve to be members of the United States and the City of Los Angeles.
In Los Angeles undocumented migrants are able to live more or less normal lives. According to Carlos Martínez from Federación de Duranguenses undocumented migrants are able to buy their houses and many of them are entrepreneurs, they have pizza parlors, gardening businesses, or they own groceries shops (C. Martínez, July 26, 2014). In fact, migrant leaders that are undocumented expressed that although there is an interest in fighting for a comprehensive immigration reform, it is not something they think about every day:

Being here we are not worried about anything, we have made our life here, we have work, and we have our children. The only thing that worries us is getting papers… but I think that this is normal, if we get them that would be great but we don’t talk between us about the lack of papers. Here this is normal. What happens is that it is always in the news, they are always talking about an immigration reform, so it looks like we are always talking about that and that this is what we want. If there is a solution and we are able to regularize that would be great, but for the time being, I just think about my work, about helping at the school [where I volunteer], about my HTA. I live a normal life. With or without papers I was able to go to school and now I give lessons to other people for free.  

These developments—although not as paradigmatic as a comprehensive immigration reform—are in part the result of the civic and political activities of Federations of HTAs, as well as a the result of migrant’s “good illegal” behavior. Localities of destination benefit from “market citizens,” migrants pay taxes, in the form of income, property, sales, and taxes at the federal and state level. It is estimated that migrants contribute between $90 and $140 billion a year in federal, state, and local taxes. Many pay income taxes as well. According to the Social Security Administration’s "suspense file" (taxes that cannot be matched to workers' names and social security numbers) grew by $20 billion between 1990 and 1998 (Anchondo, 2010).

62 The source of this quote will remain anonymous given the delicate nature of the subject mater.
In the case of California, undocumented migrants paid $2.2 billion in state and local taxes in 2010, including $1.8 billion in sales taxes, $152.1 million in state income taxes, and $302.8 million in property taxes, according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy (American Immigration Council, 2015).

Federations seem to feel more comfortable directing their advocacy energies at the local bureaucracy and administrative agencies rather than the local legislature. When asked if they had contact with their local government, all Federation representatives claimed that they did and rated their relationship with the local government from good to very good. Most interviewees mentioned that they had a good relationship with José Huizar—who was born in Zacatecas and is councilman of the 14th District, which covers Downtown Los Angeles, Boyle Heights, El Sereno, Hermon, Monterey Hills, Highland Park, Eagle Rock and Glassell Park—followed by Eric Garcetti, the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles and Ricardo Lara who is a state’s senator of Duranguense origin.63 Federation leaders are able to talk to the mayors of their cities and other public officials and suggest how ways in which the local authorities can help to the well being of their community. These issues can go from the need to pave some roads or better the trash service, to issues regarding excess in law enforcement. For example, one of the leaders of Federación Duranguense states:

We have communication with the mayor [in Huntington Park] we can talk to her and other public officials in the city. They are understanding and know about us, so they talk to the police in regards to [excessive law enforcement]… Even before, when you were stopped at a checkpoint and they saw that you didn’t have a license, they took your car away, but let

63 According to Bada, Fox, Donnelly and Selee (2010, pp. 51, 52), there has been a significant rise in Latino elected officials throughout the United States. According to statistics from the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, the number of Latino elected officials jumped 37 percent from 1996 to 2007.
you go home. In other places like Riverside, Rialto or Palm Springs they would ask for your papers. Our community is really more organized today (C. Martínez, personal communication, July 26, 2014).

Later thanks to the fact that they were organized and through constant complaints, the sheriff’s department eventually stopped organizing traffic checkpoints in Huntington Park and Lynwood. Furthermore, at the beginning of the month, Jhonny Pineda, a Huntington Park councilman, formally appointed two undocumented men to two of the cities commissions: education and parks and recreation (Cindy Carcamo And Ruben Vives, 2015).

In another case, the members of FECADEMICH organized to help the mayor of Maywood\(^6\) Felipe Aguirre stay in office.

When Aguirre had just started his term as Mayor in Maywood, some started to campaign to throw him out of office, they made a recall election [in 2008]. He told all the organizations how things were... and then we started to go door to door to our people, asking them: “How do you feel about the [improvements in our city]? Do you know that it was Felipe Aguirre who did all those things and they want to remove him? Sign here to help him stay in office” (L. Sandoval, personal communication, August 4, 2014).

Aguirre was the first mayor in Los Angeles County that declared its city a Sanctuary City\(^7\) and also stopped the confiscation of cars of people that didn’t have a driver’s license.

Another way Federation leaders have been able to come in contact with local

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\(^6\) Around 96 percent of the population in Maywood is Latino, it is one of the cities with the most Latinos in Los Angeles County.

\(^7\) In general, in Sanctuary cities local authorities and public officials do not ask questions about an individual’s immigration status and do not inform ICE of the presence of undocumented immigrants in their area. One of the main goals of this policy is to facilitate cooperation between migrants and the police department. In Los Angeles County there are 15 cities that are considered Sanctuary cities: Bell Gardens, City of Industry, City of Commerce, Downey, Lakewood, Los Angeles, Long Beach, Lynwood, Maywood, Montebello, Norwalk, Paramount, Pico Rivera, South Gate and Vernon.
officials is because many Federation leaders—as stated in Chapter 2—are small business entrepreneurs or managers. According to Efraín Jiménez people that have small businesses are usually naturalized citizens and they get involved in local politics because new policy initiatives can affect their businesses (E. Jiménez, personal communication, August 25, 2014). Furthermore, COFEM and the Mexican Consulate have also helped Federations in establishing connections with U.S. elected officials. COFEM invites elected officials to its Binational Conference of Immigrant Affairs that is organized annually and the consulate organizes meetings and other cultural events.

An important number of Federations have developed relationships with local authorities because of the events they organize. Many authors, such as Jones-Correa (2005) and Marrow (2009), have noted that migrants are able to incorporate to U.S. through their daily dealings with government offices, such as schools, the police department, hospitals, etc. Public officials provide this kind of services regardless of the immigration status and this helps to their incorporation in the United States (Jones-Correa, 2005, p.14). As discussed in Chapter 1, this is known as bureaucratic incorporation. In the specific case of Federations, migrant leaders have to go through a bureaucratic process in order to acquire permits or proclamations, which familiarizes them with government officials; consequently migrant leaders start building relationships with them. For example, in order to do an event, such as the Feria del Mole or the Guelaguetza or to organize a soccer tournament, leaders must acquire permits to use

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66 In 2014 Eric Garcetti, mayor of Los Angeles City and Kevin de Leon, Senator of California, attended the event. Both congratulated COFEM and its members for being part of an organization that seeks to empower the Mexican community in both sides of the border and encouraged them to keep the good work. “This conference is the strong and united voice of the Latino community and it is sending a strong message to the Congress and the President, that they should finish what they started.”
public spaces. On the other hand by strengthening their relations with local government officials, Federations can sometimes acquire permits or rent public spaces for free or at a reduced fee and councilmen sometimes also help to speed up the issuance of permits. Another popular thing to do during cultural events or fairs is to issue proclamations, which are also given by the city government and are usually accompanied by a few worlds of the mayor or a public officer that comes in representation of the local government. Furthermore, Federation leaders invite public officials, such as councilmen and people from the sheriff’s office and the mayor’s office to their events to strengthen their relationship and because having local public officials at their events gives them more visibility and is a way of showing that the Federation has acquired prominence in the community.

On the other hand, according to Isái Pazos and other Federation leaders, local governments in the United States benefit from Federation events as well: “It helps to better the image of their community and Federations organize different cultural and other activities for the whole community” (I. Pazos, personal communication, August 1, 2014). Local government officials have also shown interest in the Plazas Comunitarias program from the Guerrero and Colima Federations. As Juan Romero, from the Federación Guerrerense recalls:

We invited the local authorities [form Long Beach] and from then on we established a relationship. They saw our programs and the Plaza Comunitaria. They said they want to help us; they want to give us a bigger office space for the program. I think that if we demonstrate that we are well mannered and that we can adapt to the system, then they have no problem with us. They don’t care if we are migrants, they are looking out for the community. As long as the Long Beach community is in peace and there are good services he is going to be happy. When he sees we have community activities, he supports us (J. Romero, personal communication,
Local officials are interested in the activities of Federations, because they also provide services to the people living in their communities at a very low cost or even for free. Furthermore, programs like the *Plaza Comunitaria* are open not just to Mexican migrants, but to any person that wishes to continue with his or her education. Both parties benefit from interacting with each other. Federations obtain resources at a low cost for their members and public recognition by having members of the local government in their events, while government officials benefit because cultural activities raise the profile of their communities. Moreover, Federations help to provide education and other services to a vulnerable sector of their communities. On the other hand, although HTAs tend to have large numbers of undocumented migrants, according to many Federations there is also an important number of citizens in their organizations. Besides, undocumented members might have family and friends that are U.S. citizens, which is another reason why local politicians are interested in their relations with Federations. Finally, these interactions show that public officials are open to collaboration with their constituencies.

Los Angeles County is a place where migrants nowadays feel welcome. Federations in Los Angeles County have also been able to claim membership in their communities by focusing on the “good character” of migrants, their market citizenship and through bureaucratic incorporation. The activities of Federations, such as festivals, cultural events and the creation of *Plazas Comunitarias* have put local authorities in touch with Federation leaders (either through the Mexican consulate or because most of these activities require government permits), which have made local, public officials
more receptive of the migrant population. In the case of Los Angeles County this has translated in making some districts a more welcoming place for immigrants.

4.4. Concluding Remarks

As Alarcón et al. (2012, p.360) argue, there is a nexus between pro-migrant policies and the capacity of migrants to organize and demand their rights. Federations have played important role in the promotion of public policies that benefit migrants. Although Federations acknowledge that their members feel apathetic toward political participation and that advocating for an immigration reform is a secondary goal, some Federations leaders do engage in these activities through COFEM and are able to meet with public officials in order to advocate for legislation such as the AB540, the driver’s license for undocumented migrants and other pro-migrant legislation. Furthermore, organizations such as COFEM have tried to instill their members the value of political participation and have encouraged them to take part in campaigns that seek to help migrants acquire political, civic and social rights in their host land.

Nevertheless, the capacity of migrant organizations must be seen not only in terms of Federations being able to get their members to engage in non-electoral political activities. We must also take into account that Federations help to form migrants with “good character.” Federations help their members become successful and productive members of their host society i.e. good market citizens. Finally, by engaging in these kind of civic activities and by organizing cultural events, Federation leaders have been able to negotiate their membership in the county of Los Angeles with local government officials, through bureaucratic incorporation.
CONCLUDING REMARKS

Throughout this research I have argued that HTAs have become relevant political actors capable of negotiating their formal membership in their sending and receiving communities. Through their market citizenship migrants were able to negotiate their political rights in Mexico at a federal level and in some states they have been able to run for public office at a local level. In Mexico, migrants continue to exercise their market citizenship and many Federation leaders have become important political players who can vote, run for office or shape the public opinion in their localities. Nevertheless, Federation leaders are aware that the Mexican government is still reluctant to fully collaborate with migrant leaders. Federation leaders affirm that Mexican public officials are afraid of the potential power of migrants and in some cases have tried to hinder them from exercising formal membership. Formal membership is thus not a stage but a continuous process of negotiation between migrants and the State. Furthermore, migrant leaders have to bargain with different government actors who not always have the same attitudes towards migrants. Consular officials, for example, have helped to professionalize, formalize and institutionalize HTAs and Federations, so that they can become effective political actors on both sides of the border. However, when dealing with some mayors and governors, migrants have found that there is still resistance towards migrant full participation in their home localities.

In the case of the United States, this process has been more complex. Federations have fought for being recognized as members of the community and have engaged in non-electoral political participation when they feel threatened, especially when anti-
immigrant laws are passed, such as Proposition 187 in California and the HR4437. Nevertheless, my field research has led me to conclude that contrary to what scholars such as Bada (2014), Alarcón et al (2012) and Viramontes (2008) point out, most Federations are not becoming more politically active in Los Angeles county. Although some leaders believe that political participation is important, members think that there is not much to gained from taking part in non-electoral political activities, and given the voluntary nature of these organizations, members just do not have the time to invest in a more complex political campaign that goes beyond demanding a comprehensive immigration reform. On the other hand, being a non-profit also seems to pose an additional barrier to political participation, since members believe that this bars them from participating in political activities.

Nevertheless, migrant organizations have sought other strategies of inclusion, such as emphasizing their value in the host society as market citizens and encouraging migrants to show “good character” in order to be seen as “less illegal.” These strategies and the programs and activities that stem from them, such as the organization of cultural activities and education programs have put Federations in contact with local government officials, which in turn have made them more receptive of the migrant population. Moreover, Federation leaders’ involvement with the Mexican government has provided them with experience to negotiate with U.S. authorities for further formal inclusion. Authorities in some localities, such as Los Angeles County, have answered to these different strategies by making their districts a more welcoming place for immigrants (by suspending raids at the workplace or providing drivers licenses for undocumented immigrants), which has decreased their sense of vulnerability in Los Angeles County.
Most of my interviewees expressed that Mexican migrants felt at home in Los Angeles and perhaps this has also caused the sense of urgency regarding an immigration reform to stymie. According to Federation leaders, undocumented migrants think that as long as they are able to work and drive they don’t care that much about formalizing their membership in the community. They believe that a comprehensive immigration reform will be enacted in time, regardless of marches or rallies.

What does these experiences tell us about the importance of citizenship? In the case of Mexico, Federations have campaigned strongly in order to obtain formal membership in their home State and migrants continue to negotiate further inclusion in the political process in their localities in Mexico, while still invoking their market citizenship as the basis for their legitimacy as members. It is thus clear that Federations or at least migrant leaders feel that there is an important value in being formally recognized as persons with full-bearing rights in their home country. In the case of the United States, migrants were very politically active in the beginning of the twenty-first century, engaging in rallies and advocacy campaigns. However the activism has diminished in the last ten years, which doesn’t mean it has stopped, only that Federations, because of their constraints, feel cannot fully engage in political campaigns.

As stated before, Joppke (2013) argues that migrants do not think that political integration is as important as social and economic integration. Migrants are not that interested in acquiring political rights, as long as they are able earn a salary. For them the basis of their demands of belonging lies in their market citizenship and to a lesser extent in their ability to become educated (learn English, earn a degree or a certification). They feel that by working hard and demonstrating their “good character” the will be eventually
rewarded with formal membership. This emphasis in the importance of market
citizenship as the basis of membership suggests that in post-Fordist economies —such as
the cases of Mexico and the United States— people’s financial contributions to their
societies have become a key element for groups to negotiate their belonging, rather than
invoking *jus solis* or *jus sanguinis*, migrants invoke their right to belong as workers or
investors.

However, acquiring formal membership is something that migrants should see as
a priority, citizenship in the end confers the right to territorial belonging, the right of non-
deportation. Citizenship gives migrants the right to have rights, the right to belong to the
political community. And even though there have been cases of deportation of citizens, at
least by being officially recognized as part of the polity, migrants have a legal basis to
fight for equality.

In regards to the impact of government policies in migrants and migrant
organizations this study has argued that while migrants are able to shape policies in the
home and host country, it is the State the one that has “allows” migrant organizations to
develop and that the governments attitudes towards migrants (either at the local, state or
federal level) shape their strategies and activities. In order to assess the validity of this
claim, future studies could do a comparative study between Federations in localities that
have different policies in regards to migrant incorporation.
## APPENDIX A: LIST OF INTERVIEWED ORGANIZATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Non-profit</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Member clubs</th>
<th>Founding date</th>
<th>Meetings</th>
<th>Meeting point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alianza De Clubes Duranguenses</td>
<td>Salvador Ramirez</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1,800 to 2,000</td>
<td>NS/NQR</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Casa Durango</td>
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<td>Asociación de Michoacanos en California</td>
<td>Salvador Esparza</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>NS/NQR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federación Duranguense</td>
<td>Carlos Martinez</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1,500 to 2,000</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Plaza Comunitaria</td>
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<td>Federación Californiana de Michoacanos (FECADEMICH)</td>
<td>Luis Sandoval</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NS/NQR</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4 times a month plus videoconferences</td>
<td>Police station</td>
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<td>Federación Chihuahua</td>
<td>Josefina Herrera</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NS/NQR</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Once or twice a month</td>
<td>Members' homes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federación de Clubes de Colima</td>
<td>Gonzalo Farías</td>
<td>In proces s</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Casa Colima</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Federación de Clubes Jaliscienses del Sur de California (FCJSC)</td>
<td>Pina Hernández/ Salvador García</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Casa Jalisco</td>
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<td>Federación Zacatecana del Sur de California (FZSC)</td>
<td>Efrain Jiménez/ Guadalupe Gómez</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>2 times a month</td>
<td>They have a building in East LA</td>
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<td>Federación de clubes y asociaciones de Michoacán (FECADEMIN)</td>
<td>Francisco Moreno</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NS/NQR</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Personal office</td>
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<td>Federación de Yucatán</td>
<td>María de Loria</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NS/NQR</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Centro Cultural Eek Mayab</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federación Guerrerense</td>
<td>Juan Romero</td>
<td>In proces s</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Members' homes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federación Hidalguense</td>
<td>Sylvia Marín</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>NS/NQR</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Federación Oaxaqueña de Comunidades y Organizaciones Indígenas de California (FOCOICA)</td>
<td>Gerardo Vázquez</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>40'000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Sporadic, no set calendar</td>
<td>They rent a building</td>
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<td>Federación Veracruzana</td>
<td>Ángel Morales</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
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<td>Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos de la Costa Oeste</td>
<td>Carlos Sifuentes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NS/NQR</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>NS/NQR</td>
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<td>Federación Guanajuatense</td>
<td>Tony Gutiérrez</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NS/NQR</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Members' homes</td>
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<td>Fraternidad Sinaloense</td>
<td>Mario Cárdenas</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>NS/NQR</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>2 times a month</td>
<td>Personal office</td>
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<td>Organización de Tlaxcaltecas USA</td>
<td>Abel García</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>At Casa Tlaxcala, but has nothing to do with the Mexican government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Activity Details</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>Unión de Poblanos en el Exterior (UPEXT)</td>
<td>Alfredo Gómez</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Sporadic, no set calendar</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
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<td>Organización Regional Oaxaqueña (ORO)</td>
<td>Isai Pazos</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>200 to 300</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>5 to 8 times a year</td>
<td>Police department of the City or at the Council office. They used to have an office but it was too expensive</td>
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<td>Council of Mexican Federations (COFEM)</td>
<td>Francisco Moreno</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Staff and meetings with Federation presidents once a month/One annual reunion with all HTA members.</td>
<td>They have an office in Placita Olvera</td>
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<td>Vamos Unidos USA</td>
<td>Juan José Gutiérrez</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A) Personal questions

1. How old are you?
2. Where were you born?
3. How many years of education do you have?
4. How well do you speak English?
5. When did you migrate to the United States?
6. Do you vote in the United States?
7. Do you vote in Mexico?
8. How many times a year do you travel to Mexico?

B) Characteristics of the organization

1. When was your organization created?
2. What are the main goals of your organization?
3. What is the structure of your organization?
4. Does your organization have any paid staff or do they volunteer?
5. How much of your time do you devote to your organization?
6. Do you think that your organization has changed its focus and activities since its creation? How have things changed?
7. How have the organization members reacted towards these changes?
8. Is your organization involved in any kind of civic or political activities in the United States (for example, organizing rallies, campaigns for a comprehensive immigration reform, voter registration)?

C) The Mexican community in the United States

1. Has the migrant community become more or less interested in issues regarding their host locality?
2. In 2006 an important number of migrants rallied for a comprehensive immigration reform. However, as time goes by, less people participate in rallies and other political campaigns. Why do you think this is so?
3. What problems and difficulties has the Mexican community faced when it comes to political and civic participation in the United States?
4. Is it possible for Federations and HTAs to help undocumented migrants to defend their rights?

D) Federations and HTAs

1. Does your organization have a relationship with other community organizations or Federations?
2. Do you think that HTAs and Federations have changed their goals and activities as time has passed? How have things changed?
3. Some people believe that HTAs and Federations should only focus on cultural activities and on helping their hometowns; others think that these organizations should focus on fighting for their rights in the United States. What do you think about this?
4. What difficulties and problems do HTAs and Federations face when it comes to political and civic participation in the United States?

5. Why have some HTAs and Federations become more active in regards to civic and political participation in the United States in comparison to others?

6. In your opinion, what factors explain this change?

E) Relationship with the Mexican government

1. Does your organization have any contact with the Mexican consulate?

2. How would you describe your relationship with the Mexican government?

3. How often do you meet with members of the Mexican consulate?

F) Local authorities

1. Do you think that migrants are welcome in Los Angeles County?

2. Does your organization have a relationship with local authorities, such as councilmen/councilwomen, mayors, legislators, governors or any other public official? How would you describe this relationship?

3. Have you contacted local authorities to express your concerns on issues regarding immigration issues in the United States (immigration reform, raids, detentions, driver’s license?)
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