

Remittances and Votes: Emigrant political participation in Mexico

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Abstract

Few recent studies have shown how Mexico, like many other Latin American countries at the beginning of this century, has adopted new policies and programmes in order to maintain and (re)build economic, social and cultural bonds with its migrant communities in the US, who represent about 15 percent of Mexico's population. Less research has been conducted on the constitutional reforms and electoral laws that allow Mexicans abroad to participate politically in their home country's domestic affairs from afar. Employing a transnationalist approach to international migration and democratization studies, this thesis is the first major study of the politics of Mexican emigration to the US and the impact of migrants' electoral participation in their home country's affairs presented in political and institutional terms.

The main question is how and with what consequences did the Mexican state extend formal political membership to its emigrant population both at the national and sub-national level? Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, this thesis shows that the implementation of emigrants' political rights in Mexico has resulted from cross-border coalition formations between US-based political migrant groups and domestic non-PRI political parties (mainly the centre-left PRD) in a context of democratization and decentralization unfolding in Mexico, as well as the country's insertion in the global economy. In turn, although only a small number of Mexican migrants have taken advantage of these opportunities for cross-border political action to date, the opening up of the Mexican political system creates new challenges to the incipient democratic practice. For instance, the growing influence of migrants and migrant organisations in domestic politics, the complexities of

representing and being accountable to constituencies abroad and to a limited extent, the transformation of traditional political structures, especially in communities with high levels of emigration.

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To my dad

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Abbreviations

CDPME	Coalición por los Derechos Políticos de los Mexicanos en el Extranjero (Coalition for the Political Rights of Mexicans Abroad)
COFIPE	Código Federal de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales (Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures)
COGAMIM	Coordinación General de Atención al Migrante Michoacano (General Coordination of Attention to the Michoacano Migrant)
COVE	Coordinación del Voto en el Exterior (Coordination Unit of the Vote Abroad)
FCZ	Frente Cívico Záratecano (Záratecan Civic Front)
FCZSC	Federación de Clubes Záratecanos el Sur de California (Federation of Záratecan Clubs of Southern California)
FREBIMICH	Frente Binacional Michoacano (Bi-national Michoacano Front)
GATS	General Agreement on Trade and Services
HTA	Hometown Association
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IEE	Instituto Estatal Electoral (State Electoral Institute)
IFE	Instituto Federal Electoral (Federal Electoral Institute)
ILO	International Labor Organization
IME	Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (Institute of Mexicans Abroad)
INM	Instituto Nacional de Migración (National Institute for Migration)
IRCA	Immigration Reform and Control Act
LULAC	League of United Latin American Citizens
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NCLR	National Council of La Raza
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OEAM	Oficina Estatal de Atención al Migrante (State Office for Migrant Attention)

PAN	Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party)
PCME	Programa de las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Exterior (Programme of Mexican Communities Abroad)
PRD	Partido Revolucionario Democrático (Party of the Democratic Revolution)
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party)
PT	Partido del Trabajo (Workers' Party)
PVEM	Partido Verde Ecologista de México (Mexico's Green Party)
RCM	Regional Conference on Migration
SEDESOL	Secretaría de Desarrollo Social (Ministry of Social Development)
SRE	Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Ministry of Foreign Relations)

Chapter 1

1. Introduction

In the year 2000, marking a new phase in Mexican history with the toppling of the PRI and initiating a new democratization era, President Vicente Fox of the National Action Party (PAN) proclaimed himself not only as the leader of 100 million Mexicans in Mexico, but also of the 23 million of Mexican origin living in the United States. PRI President Ernesto Zedillo had already said in the 1990's that 'the Mexican nation extends beyond the territory enclosed by its borders' (Cited in Leiken 2000). In a very general sense, these remarks have captured the dilemma that faces the Mexican state attempting to (re)incorporate its migrant citizens back into the national political map. In the last two decades, the change of attitude of the Mexican government towards migrants has become clearly discernible, in which the perception of 'the migrant', as inscribed in the discourses and practices of the Mexican state, shifted from being that of a 'traitor' to the fatherland and entitled to no national and citizen rights to being a 'hero' promoted as an 'extraterritorial citizen' (Fitzgerald 2000)¹. The change has been represented by a series of legal reforms (constitutional and electoral) and policy initiatives that promote the political, economic, cultural and social participation of Mexican migrants into the domestic sphere, as well as legitimising discourses and practices of the main political parties, state institutions and civil society organisations. Political parties have opened

¹ Mexican president Vicente Fox in his first visit to the United States gave a controversial discourse calling migrants 'heroic paisanos abroad'. See New York Times (2000). Mexican president praises migrant 'heroes'. The New York Times. New York.

committees in Mexican migrant communities, while Mexican politicians have regularly campaigned among expatriates to gain their political and financial support. In this respect, increasing migratory movements are changing political institutions as well as the notion of membership in both the country of origin and the reception country. It is also a reflection of the diverging effects of economic globalisation, which in theory pushes states towards opening up their borders to international labour. However, whether countries of reception try to manage and restrict immigration flows due to domestic security concerns (in particular in the post-9/11 era), countries of origin try to secure and strengthen their ties with their émigrés whose remittances have become an important source of capital (Hollifield 2004).

Mexico has gone beyond its earlier initiatives that attempted to forge patriotic feelings among its expatriate community to institutionalise emigrant political participation in domestic affairs from afar. Constitutional reforms and electoral laws have been adopted both at the national and sub-national levels welcoming the migrant as a new actor in Mexican politics. At the national level, an absentee vote bill allowed Mexican migrants to vote for presidential elections in Mexico for the first time in 2006. At the sub-national level, albeit asymmetrically, more far-reaching migrants' political rights bills have been adopted. For instance, in the migrant-sending state of Zacatecas a bill known as the 'Migrant Law', approved in 2003, allows expatriates from this state to run for elections from abroad and have parliamentary representation in the local congress by using an innovative formula of 'bi-national' residency. In the state of Michoacán, a 2007 electoral reform allows Michoacano migrants to vote for state governor from abroad. Similar absentee voting

systems for local elections are currently being negotiated and adopted in other Mexican migrant sending states.

The central question in this thesis is how and with what consequences did the Mexican state extend formal political membership to its migrant population both at the national and sub-national level? And how does the case of Mexico differ from other countries in the region? Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, this thesis shows that the implementation of emigrants' political rights in Mexico has resulted from cross-border coalition formations between US-based political migrant groups and domestic non-PRI political parties (mainly the centre-left PRD), in a context of democratization and decentralization unfolding in Mexico, as well as the country's insertion in the global economy. In turn, although only a small number of Mexican migrants have taken advantage of these opportunities for cross-border political action to date, the opening up of the Mexican political system creates new challenges to the incipient democratic practice. For instance, the growing influence of migrants and migrant organisations in domestic politics, the complexities of representing and being accountable to constituencies abroad and to a limited extent, the transformation of traditional political structures especially in communities with high levels of emigration.

By means of analysing the main determinants that guarantee the approval of a migrants' political rights bill, both at the federal and at the sub-national level and its political implications, I pursue a dual analytical agenda. Firstly, I analyse the main protagonists that play a key role in the formulation, negotiation, and eventual approval of migrants' political rights' bills and their main motivations. Secondly, I

explore the actual results of the implementation of such bills and analyse how they have influenced the political system. I do this both at the national and sub-national levels, exploring the case of the vote abroad bill for presidential elections adopted at the federal level in 2005, the 2003 'Migrant Bill' implemented in the state of Zacatecas and the 2007 vote abroad for governorship elections in the state of Michoacán.

Granting the right to Mexican expatriates to participate politically in domestic affairs adds a new dimension to politics at home. Mexico at the beginning of this century is the country with the largest number of people living past its physical frontiers, the majority of them residing in the United States². An estimated 9.18 and 11.5 million of Mexican-born persons live in this neighbour country³. However, if we add that figure to the estimated number of US-born citizens of Mexican-origin residing in the United States, there were approximately 28.3 million people in 2000 (born either in Mexico or in the United States) with close consanguineous ties with Mexico⁴. In fact, about 15 percent of Mexicans of working age live in this country and they represent about 30 percent of US foreign-born population (US-Mexico Binational Council 2004, p.1). In addition, in 2007 Mexico received about 24 billion dollars in migrants' remittances, which is the country's second major source of foreign income; the first being oil exports, which represent 2.5 percent of the country's GDP.

² Figures according to the United Nations Population Division

³ 9.18 million is the data from US Bureau's Census 2000 and 11.5 million from the American Community Survey 2006.

⁴ People of Mexican-origin according to the 2006 American Community Survey

On the other hand, Mexico is currently undertaking a democratic transition for which extending the franchise to Mexicans abroad and granting other forms of direct political participation in the country's domestic affairs has prompted the debate on whether to deepen or widen democracy. Mexico's democratic transition has been far from homogenous leaving institutions as well as a number of states where corruption, nepotism and political clientelism are still common activities. However, as the country struggles for democratic development, it aims at incorporating previously excluded social groups back into the new national political map.

The Mexican case has not developed in isolation; state-led initiatives towards institutionalised forms of migrants' political inclusion such as the enactment of dual nationality and citizenship is currently a global trend. At present time, 115 countries have legal provisions in place to allow external voting, the majority only granted this right in the last two decades (IDEA 2007). In a similar way, the number of countries granting dual nationality is rapidly increasing. Sending countries' initiatives to maintain, create and rebuild bonds with their migrant communities have also been supported by an emergent body of international norms on migrants' political rights – various Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO); an attempt to regularise high-skilled migration under the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS); to control illegal migration, human smuggling and trafficking within the context of the United Nations Convention on Transnational Crime (United Nations 2001). In particular, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families which entered into force in July 2003 explicitly signals that: 'migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to participate in public affairs of their State of origin and

to vote and to be elected at elections of that State, in accordance with its legislation’ (United Nations 1990, Art. 41). Although this right is restricted to documented migrants, it is, nonetheless, the first international instrument that explicitly refers to migrants’ right to participate in their home country’s domestic political affairs despite the fact that they do not reside within the national territory. These developments in international law have prompted the debate on whether political participation is to be linked to the country of residency or of origin (see for instance Spiro 15 March 2006; Rubio-Marin 2006).

In this thesis, I use Ostergaard-Nielsen’s definition of ‘political transnational practices’ as ‘the various forms of direct cross-border participation in the politics of their country of origin by both migrants and refugees as well as the indirect participation via the political institutions of the host country (or international organisations)’ (Ostergaard-Nielsen 2001). Here, however, “transnational” is used in common sense terms as “cross-border”. State policies that encourage migrant political participation in domestic affairs pose a challenge to our understanding of the nation-state order. By institutionalising transnational political engagement the state itself is contesting traditional notions and the meaning of ‘liberal citizenship’ (as a singular membership in a sovereign polity), as well as the concept of ‘nation’ and ‘national territory’. It seems that in a globalised world, being classed as a migrant does not appear to be an obstacle to active participation within two nations in two distinct countries as postmodern political subjects (Santamaria Gomez 2003). The common shift in state policies especially aimed at migrant political participation in the domestic ambit combined with the persistent movement of people, shows very clearly that in this stage of globalisation, nations, cultures and economies across

borders are remarkably mixed and not ‘national’ in the standard sense (Gomez and Zackrison 2003). These processes support Baubock’s notion of ‘transnational citizenship’ and Tambini’s ‘post-national citizenship’ that refer to new forms of citizenship participation and representation beyond the national level facilitated by international and supra-national institutions and the human rights discourse (Baubock 1994; Tambini 2001; Baubock 2003; Baubock 2005; Baubock February 2002). These citizenship practices have mainly developed in the case of the European Union whose legal institutions allow member countries’ citizens (or EU citizens) to participate in local and parliamentary elections (Soysal 1994; Castles and Davidson 2000; Fox 2005).

The focus of this thesis, however, is exclusively on institutionalised cross-border channels of political participation that connect Mexican emigrants with their country or regions of origin in Mexico. I divide the various forms of migrants’ transnational political engagement, that is to say, cross-border political participation by Mexican citizens in their home country; into formal and informal (see Table 1.1. below). Formal forms of participation are highly institutionalised, usually endorsed by the sending country in constitutional reforms or electoral laws and involve electorally related political means such as absentee voting, political representation in the legislature and the right to stand for elections. In other words, formal electoral participation would focus on migrants’ right to vote or to be voted for in their country of origin. Informal forms of transnational political participation, on the other hand, refer to both electoral and non-electoral activities. The former would include membership in a political party in the country of origin, monetary contributions to these parties and an active involvement in political campaigning whether lobbying

the government in the country of reception for political issues affecting their home country, or directly influencing political developments at home. Informal non-electoral activities consist mainly in non-governmental activities such as membership in hometown civic associations, monetary contributions to public projects in the community of origin and regular membership in state or charity organizations sponsoring projects in the country of origin. I consider non-electoral activities as political because, as Levitt rightly observes, they represent mechanisms to uphold high status and political influence in the migrants' local communities (Levitt 1997) and more often than not, they are supported by the state.

Table 1.1 Types of emigrant political participation

Types of Emigrant Political Participation		
	Formal	Informal
	Adopted by the state Enshrined in constitutional or institutional rules	Migrant initiatives Not institutionalised
Electoral	Dual nationality Absentee voting (ballot box; postal voting; electronic vote, etc.) Parliamentary representation Right to run for elections	Membership in political parties of the country of origin Monetary contributions for political purposes Political campaigning and lobbying in the country of origin
Non-Electoral	Remittances matching programmes Institutions and offices created for migrant representation	Membership in HTAs and charity organisations that implement projects in the country of origin Collective remittances

Own elaboration

The main difference between formal and informal means of transnational political participation is the degree of the sending country's involvement. Given that electorally-related formal types of transnational political participation need to be

supported by constitutional reforms or electoral laws, they would require the political will of different domestic actors. An analysis into the dynamics of legal reforms and electoral laws that favour directly formal cross-border political participation would help us understand how states of origin respond to transnationalising and globalising processes and to what extent they decide to open the door to ‘the migrant’ as a new actor in domestic politics. In particular, the justification for this study is twofold. First, in contrast to other forms of cross-border or transnational participation in the cultural, social and economic realms, the increasing practice of emigrant political participation (not only involving the diplomatic body and the military abroad) is something relatively new, facilitated in turn by the technological advances in the means of transportation and communication that have accelerated globalizing processes in the last few decades⁵. Secondly, enshrining migrants’ political rights in constitutional and electoral rules demonstrates the state willingness to open up the political system to non-resident citizens in the long run. In this way, the results of this thesis aim at expanding our understanding of the impact of international migration on domestic and international politics. Furthermore, the evidence presented here offers central normative questions for political theorists specifically related to the notion and the meaning of the ‘nation-state’, ‘residency’ and ‘citizenship’.

⁵ External voting rights were initially restricted to military personnel (such as the cases of the United Kingdom in 1918, New Zealand, Canada in 1915 and the United States in 1942), especially during the First and Second World Wars and government administrators (such as the case of the French administrators in Rhineland in 1924)). They were also inherited from colonial powers to newly independent countries (the United Kingdom passed such legislation to Malaysia). See also IDEA (2007). Voting from Abroad: The International IDEA Handbook. IDEA and the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico. Stockholm, International IDEA.

The growth of the number of Mexican migrants in the United States and the recent Mexican laws that allow them to have dual nationality and citizenship have created controversies in academia and the policy world. However, most scholarship has focused on the impact of this group in the US political, economic, social and cultural life and mainly the economic impact (through the transfer of remittances) that Mexican migrants have in their country of reception (Heer 1996; Pickus 1998; Borjas 1999; Huntington 2004), rather than embarking on projects on the kind of politics involved and the state-society relations that are being renegotiated across boundaries and their implications. Furthermore, the few existing studies on cross-border political participation have been mainly approached from a sociological and anthropological perspective and rarely from a political science standpoint. Important contributions on the Mexican case have relied on ethnographic accounts and have focused mainly on how migrants develop transnational political practices and connections, as well as the moral dimension of citizenship claims at the translocal level, that is to say, within their communities of origin (R Smith R. 1995; Fitzgerald 2000; Goldring 2002; Bakker and Smith 2003; Castaneda 2003; Smith 2003 ; Castaneda 2004; Smith 2005; Smith and Bakker 2005; Castaneda 2006; Smith and Bakker 2008). These studies mainly illustrate how informal forms of transnational political engagement take place; both electorally-related activities, such as migrants' involvement with local governments, and non-electoral mechanisms, such as their participation in hometown associations and migrant groups, as well as the sponsorship of local public works. However, they do not provide a full account of the role of the state in the transnationalisation of the political system, specifically the dynamics that lead to the institutionalisation of emigrant political participation and the consequences for the practice of democracy that derive from it. That is to say,

the reasons for extending political membership to citizens abroad and how migrants respond to formal cross-border channels of political participation such as absentee voting, parliamentary representation at home or running for elections in their country or regions of origin.

Therefore, this thesis represents the first major study of the politics of Mexican emigration to the US and the impact of migrants' political participation in their home country's affairs. There are two disciplines that can help us examine why Mexico has institutionalised migrants' political participation in domestic affairs through the adoption of national and local legislations at a time in which it has undertaken a democratic transition, these are transnationalism and democratization theories. In the transnationalist approach, earlier and current work has tended to focus on the migrants' side, their role as active political participants and as direct international investors, as well as the impact of their hometown associations. Yet, very few transnationalist scholars have concentrated on the role of the state and its institutional efforts to reincorporate Mexican migrants into the nation and the political logic behind it (Smith R. 1998; Smith R. 2001; Smith R. 2003; Smith and Bakker 2008). This study is one of the very few works on Mexico that does this. The field of democratization, on the other hand, offers an understanding of the political logic behind the extension of political rights to previously excluded social actors, although it fails to explain why the state would pursue the construction of a nation beyond its current borders, such as granting political rights to people that do not reside within the state territory. Before I explore these two fields of study in the next chapter, firstly, I offer an account of the status of migrant political rights in the Latin American region.

1.1. Emigrant political participation in Latin America

As I have already mentioned, currently, a growing number of states are adopting strategies to maintain, create and rebuild bonds with their expatriate communities and create patriotic sentiments amongst them. Certain migrant political participation provisions are already widespread throughout the world such as dual nationality and external voting rights. We should note that dual nationality does not necessarily entail political participation. ‘Nationality’ refers to the legal status of state membership, thus dual nationality only refers to the capacity to hold memberships in two (or more) states (Spiro 1998). ‘Citizenship’, in contrast, refers to the member’s rights and duties within the state. Thus, there is a special distinction between dual nationality and migrants’ right to vote or to be voted for in their states of origin. In Latin America, in particular, countries with a high diaspora presence in the US as well as Europe have recently granted more political rights – dual nationality, the right to vote and, to a lesser extent, to be voted for – to their expatriates. Migrants’ political inclusion has become a regional phenomenon that also reflects the new social and economic changes both in the countries of origin and in reception countries. This section maps out the different practices in migrants’ political rights and external voting in the region and attempts to find out what have been the main motives for the extension of the franchise. In particular, whether institutionalised emigrant political participation has responded to individual causes or if it has been a regional trend.

The majority of Latin American countries have adopted dual nationality after 1990. However, we can identify three ‘early-adopters’ or countries that passed dual nationality laws before this date: Uruguay (1919), Panama (1972), and El Salvador

(1983) (Jones-Correa 2001). ‘Late-adopters’ or countries that have approved dual nationality post-1990 are on the rise. At the time of writing, seven Latin American countries recognise dual nationality, these are: Brazil (1996), Costa Rica (1995), the Dominican Republic (1994), Ecuador (1998), Mexico (1996), and Peru (1995). There are a few countries in which a restricted form of dual nationality is allowed. The case of Chile is special. It only allows those people that have lost their Chilean nationality because they have adopted a new one to recover it, it does not grant dual nationality *per se* except with Spain ((DICOEX) 2008). El Salvador only allows dual nationality in a few cases where there is a bi-national cooperation agreement with the country of reception (Vono de Vilhena 2006). Similarly, Guatemala only recognises dual nationality with other nations in Central America.

Migrant political rights in the form of voting from abroad and getting elected are an even more recent phenomenon in the region. We can only identify two ‘early adopters’ of voting rights: Colombia and Brazil. Colombia approved the right to vote for presidential elections as early as 1961 (Law 39, 1961), although it was not implemented until 1991 when the Colombian constituent assembly created a global extra-territorial district, dual nationality was also recognised that same year (Guarnizo, Portes et al. May 2003). Subsequently, Colombia granted migrants the right to elect congressmen in 1997 and have parliamentary representation in the Lower House in 2001 (Hazan 2001; Torres 2006; Escobar April 2004). Brazil, on the other hand, extended the franchise to residents abroad since 1965 (Law 4.737, Chapter VII, Art. 225-233), but in contrast to Colombia, it has not adopted a comprehensive approach to migrant political participation (Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003). The countries that have extended the franchise to residents abroad since the

beginning of the new millennium are Argentina (Law 24.007, 1993), Bolivia (Art. 97 Electoral Code, Law 1984), Dominican Republic (Electoral Law 275, Chapter XI, Art. 83-85), Ecuador (Law 81, 2002), El Salvador, Honduras (Decrees 72-2001; 44-2004), Mexico, Nicaragua (Art. 122, Electoral Law 331, 2000), Panama, Peru (Organic Electoral Law 26859-98) and Venezuela (Art. 44, Organic Law of Voting and Political Participation). Panama only introduced external voting by law in 2007 and it will be implemented for the first time in the presidential election of 2009 (El Panama America 2007). There are also a few countries in which the absentee vote is currently being debated in Congress. In Chile, the external vote is one of the four main priorities in the 2006-2010 government plan in relation to the Chilean diaspora, and it is being debated in the chamber of deputies (DICOEX) 2008. In a similar way, the Uruguayan government sent a bill to Congress in 2005 supporting the postal vote; the bill also enjoys strong support from migrant groups (Website of the Ministry of External Relations 2008). Figure 1.2 shows the formal types of emigrant political participation (electoral and non-electoral) that have been adopted in the Latin American region so far.

Figure 1.1 Latin American countries using formal mechanisms of emigrant political participation

Selected Latin American Countries									
Country	Electoral						Non-Electoral		
	Dual-nationality	Voting Rights provisions	Voting rights are implemented	Voting in presidential elections only	Voting in legislative and presidential	Ballot-box in embassies	Postal vote only	Parliamentary representation	Remittances matching programmes
Argentina									
Bolivia									
Brazil									
Chile	*1								
Colombia									
Costa Rica									
Dominican Republic									
Ecuador									
El Salvador	*2								*6
Falkland Islands									
Guatemala	*3								
Guyana		*4							
Honduras									
Mexico								*7	*8
Nicaragua									
Panama									
Peru									
Uruguay									
Venezuela				*5					

*1 non-loss of nationality only dual nationality with Spain; *2 on reciprocal basis; *3 only with other Central American countries; *4 only civil servants and full-time students abroad; *5 for presidential recall only; *6 'Unidos por la Solidaridad' (United for Solidarity) implemented by the national development agency FISDL in 1999; *7 '3x1' matching funds programme implemented by SEDESOL in 1999; *8 Dirección General de Atención a las Comunidades en el Exterior (Directorate General of Attention to the Communities Abroad—DGACE).

Own elaboration. Sources: IDEA Handbook 2007, Various government websites

What most of these countries do have in common is that most dual citizenship and voting rights bills have been highly debated in the legislature. Furthermore, in some cases they have faced opposition, which has also led to a wide gap between the

actual approval of migrant voting rights and their eventual implementation. The Dominican Republic, for instance, passed an electoral bill in 1997 allowing the external vote to elect president and vice-president, but it was not until 2004 when the necessary legislation was approved to implement this right on time for presidential elections the same year. Ecuador established the right to vote from abroad for presidential elections in 1998 at the time in which it also adopted a dual nationality law reforming constitutional articles 10 and 11. However, additional legislation was not implemented until 2001 and Ecuadorian expatriates were only able to vote for presidential elections for the first time in October 2006 (Torres 22 November 2006; Ecuador's Ministry of Exterior website 2006). El Salvador, on the other hand, has adopted external voting rights, yet it does not have the necessary legislation to implement it (Vono de Vilhena 2006). It is the same case with Nicaragua, in which a law enacted in 2000 provides the possibility for citizens who are temporarily absent from the country to vote in presidential and legislative elections. However, a strict set of requirements have to be met in order for the electoral authority to decide to carry out elections abroad, which has not yet taken place (IDEA 2007). In the case of Mexico, the debate on whether and how to implement migrants' right to vote from abroad lasted almost eight years – since the first legal initiative was handed in congress in 1998, until the final vote abroad bill was approved in mid-2005. However, in 1996 a constitutional reform to article 36 already allowed Mexicans to vote outside their original electoral districts.

In addition, external voting rights have varied in the type of elections to which they apply as well as the voting procedure. However, in most countries in the region the actual terms of engagement and the conditions for the exercise of these rights are

highly restrictive which has had a negative impact on the degree to which the rights have been exercised so far (Aleinikoff and Klusmeyer 2000; Aleinikoff 2001; Aleinikoff, Martin et al. 2003). The most common practice in Latin America is to allow external voting for presidential elections only (see figure 1.2. above). There are a few exceptions, in Argentina expatriates can vote for both presidential and legislative elections, whilst in Colombia and Peru citizens abroad can also vote for referendums (IDEA 2007). On the other hand, most countries in the region favour the use of conventional personal voting at a polling station that is especially set up; for example, at a diplomatic mission or other designated places. So far only Mexico and Panama have endorsed the postal vote.

Furthermore, a few Latin American countries not only allow their citizens abroad to vote, but also they have specific congressional representation. We should note, nonetheless, that migrant legislative representation involves the right to be voted for, but not necessarily the right to vote (Fox 2005). Colombia has reserved one seat out of 166 for migrant political representation in congress. Ecuador and Panama have 6 seats out of 130 (4.6%). However, in the latter it will be implemented in the 2009 elections. Mexico is the only country in which migrant political rights have been adopted both at the federal and local levels, which has created different layers of rights. All Mexicans can vote for presidential elections as long as they meet all requirements, but Michoacano migrants can also vote for state governor and migrants from Mexico City can elect the head of government. In the Mexican state of Zacatecas, the Zacatecan migrant community, which exceeds the number of their home counterparts, have two migrant seats in the local congress to represent their

interests at home. Zacatecans can run for local elections (except for the mayorship), but an absentee voting system has not been implemented yet.

Questions arise, however, about why most Latin American states have granted political rights to their expatriates in the last two decades? Are these developments the result of similar sets of internal and external pressures or a regional trend? Before surveying the existing literature that has focused on Latin American case studies in order to map out patterns of convergence and divergence, let me show how migrant political rights have entered into regional inter-state discussions on migrant issues. First, 'La Paz Declaration' that emerged from the Fifth South American Conference on Migration, which took place in Bolivia in 2004, mentions that 'for the sake of migration governance, the importance of creating or consolidating policies and programmes seeking permanent and increasing work lines with nationals living abroad, underscoring the fact that the linking with emigrants is a part of migration management' (South American Conferences on Migration). This conference stressed the importance of moving from temporary policies and programmes of '*acercamiento*' ('proximity') to implementing permanent strategies to forge links with migrant communities abroad. Subsequently, in the Sixth South American conference that took place in Paraguay in May 2006, it was clear the emphasis was on forging links with emigrant nationals for the benefit of skills transfer and development in the communities of origin. One of the commitments in the 'Paraguay Declaration' was to 'work for the recognition of citizenship rights of migrants both from origin and destination countries to an enlarged citizenship (the right to vote when allowed by national legislation), not only in sending but in receiving countries as well' (South American Conferences on Migration). What was interesting during

those discussions was the view that ensuring political rights was not only the responsibility of the country of origin, but also the host country and instead of using the terms 'dual nationality' and 'dual citizenship', it highlighted the benefits of an 'enlarged citizenship'. In addition, North American and Central American countries cooperate under the regional conference on migration (RCM). In its eleventh regional conference in El Salvador in May 2006, RMC countries acknowledged the positive contribution of migrants and highlighted the importance of programmes that link nationals abroad with their communities of origin (Regional Conference on Migration).

Secondly, at the international level, Latin American countries have also been active advocates of the UN Convention on the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (in force since July 2003), which, as we have seen, recognises migrants' right to vote and be voted for in their home country's elections. This convention has legal effects in the countries that ratify it. Up until now, not a single major host and developed country has ratified the convention making it one of the weakest human rights instruments. It has been welcomed, nonetheless, by sending countries in Latin America, Africa and to a lesser extent in Eastern Europe (37 parties in total) (United Nations 2008). The Latin American countries that have ratified this convention are mainly those that already grant substantial political rights to their citizens abroad such as Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and Uruguay (United Nations 2008).

However, the late consensus on migrant's political rights by sending countries in the region and their agreement and commitment as evidenced in the different regional and international instruments do not seem to show a complete picture. The few comparative studies in Latin America that have examined the shifting policies adopted in various Latin American countries towards their expatriate communities living abroad from the state perspective have highlighted either the effects of globalisation and human rights discourse, or/and national developments (Basch L., Glick Schiller et al. 1994; Guarnizo 1998; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999; Itzigsohn, Dore Cabral et al. 1999; Itzigsohn 2000; Hazan 2001; Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003; Torres 2006; Margheritis 2007). However, most of these comparative studies focus on a wide range of policies that the state of origin utilises to encourage expatriates' continued sense of membership such as ministerial and consular reforms, investment policies to channel remittances, consular protection of nationals abroad, political rights and symbolic policies. There has not been any study that looks at the legal channels of migrant political participation *per se* and the rationale behind it.

The first to analyse migrants' transnational practices and the new trend among states to integrate their populations residing abroad, by looking closely at the cases of Caribbean and Filipino populations in the New York metropolitan area, were L. Basch., N. Glick Schiller. and C. Szanton Blanc who in their pioneer work in transnational studies argued for a new type of national building, one in which the notion of nation-state encompasses not only the citizens within the traditional established territory, but also those living beyond the physical boundaries of the state – what they called 'deterritorialized nation-state' (Basch L., Glick Schiller et al. 1994). Although we will explore this concept later on, it suffices to mention that for

Basch et. al. these multiple identities are mainly the embodiment of positions of resistance against a negative context of reception, the selectivity of immigration policies and economic uncertainty as well as the adverse effects of greater penetration of global capital. In this respect, state policies of proximity are a direct response to grassroots' claims by migrants and migrant groups.

Building on the work of Basch and her associates, other scholars have mentioned the importance of national-level dynamics in home countries' development of transnational links with their expatriate populations in addition to external considerations as well as the key role of migrants and migrant groups. Itzigsohn's study on political transnationalism among migrants from Dominican Republic, Haiti and El Salvador looks into the role of the different domestic actors, in particular, political parties and state apparatus, together with US-based migrant organisations (2000). He explains that Haiti and the Dominican Republic were able to establish transnational political institutions, such as an overseas department in the former and the extension of political rights in the latter, as the right conditions were in place. In Haiti the lack of a developed party system has been compensated by the existence of grassroots civil society groups that ally with migrant groups abroad. In contrast, in El Salvador the question of reaching the emigrant community was still marginal as the lack of trust of the migrant community towards the political system restricted their influence at home. A later comparative work on Brazil, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Haiti carried out by Peggy Levitt et. al. examines the shifting policies adopted in these countries towards their expatriate communities living in the US and argue that these countries seem to respond to structural imperatives as well as the emergence of international norms (2003). Their types of policies and their scope

differ, however, due to national-level considerations such as economic capacity, state institutions and the role of political parties, as well as the degree of emigration and organisation of the migrant community in the country of reception. Thus, Brazil and Mexico might have the economic resources to pursue those policies, but in the latter the proportion of Mexicans that live abroad explains why this country has paid more attention to develop strong linkages. In the case of Dominican Republic and Haiti, migrant organisations have played a key role influencing state policies of proximity. However, Haiti's unstable political scenario deters the development of further policies.

On the contrary, recent studies on the cases of Colombia and Argentina have emphasised the role of the state and political elites. Hazan who analyses specifically the case of migrants' political rights in Colombia argues that they have taken place within the context of a country trying to reformulate the notion of the 'nation' (2001). She posits that in Colombia migrants' right to vote abroad approved in 1961 responded to the need of the state to legitimize a new political order and its goal to reincorporate political elites that had left the country during the long period of political violence and a military dictatorship (Hazan 2001). Also, the right to dual citizenship and the right to vote for and have a parliamentary representative approved in 1991 were efforts carried out by the Colombian elites to reform the state machinery and extend political participation. That is why this constitutional reform was accompanied by the acknowledgment of other demands for recognition made by ethnic minorities such as the indigenous and black population. In a similar vein, Ana Margheritis, who identifies a similar policy shift in Argentina towards its population in Spain argues that in this case, it has been the state, under the government of Nestor

Kirchner, that has initiated political transnationalism, not migrants. In her own words: ‘the state, rather than grassroots movements, has been the engine of transnationalism’ (Margheritis 2007, p. 99; Website of the Ministry of Interior 2008). She maintains that this move has gone hand in hand with the human rights discourse and, in her words, ‘unfinished processes of democratic consolidation’ (Margheritis 2007, p.100).

To sum up, the handful of comparative studies in the Latin American region on the recent policies that aim at reaching out to migrant communities abroad and incorporate them into the national political map illustrate that a different mix of factors have determined such policies in the various countries studied. In particular, however, they refer to the size and organisation of migrant communities, the role of political parties, state apparatus and economic capacity, as well as the effect of the global economy and international law. Differences arise regarding whether such policies of proximity respond to grassroots movements by migrant groups or follow a ‘top-down’ perspective implemented by state actors. What we can observe is that countries in the region have responded individually to external and domestic factors, at least initially. In the last couple of years, however, Latin American countries have been able to interact with each other in the various regional and international migration conferences. During the Congressional debate on external voting rights in Bolivia, for instance, Mexican civil servants, who participated in the External Voting Commission during the 2006 Mexico’s presidential elections, were invited to talk about their experience. What this suggests is that formal transnational political channels are only beginning to open and it is only a matter of time before more Latin American countries join the transnational political field.

Mexico, as we have seen, falls into the group of countries that are building a new relationship with its migrant community, leading to a reformulation of the Mexican nation. In contrast to other countries in the region, Mexico has adopted migrants' political rights bills at the federal and, asymmetrically, at the sub-national level. Therefore, these factors make it a good case study in order to discover the main variables and determinants in the incorporation of the migrant as a new political actor and the implications on an incipient democratic political system. A convergence point with other Latin American countries that have granted political rights to their emigrants is the fact that such legal reforms have come into being during democratic transitions and the countries' insertion in the global economy. Specifically, in the case of Mexico, particular migrant groups have been created with political goals, in both the country of reception and origin, which have formed coalitions with non-PRI political parties, principally the centre-left PRD. The reason that makes the Mexican case unique, however, are the dynamics that lead to the implementation of emigrant political participation and its effects on the political system. The rationale is threefold. Firstly, the long history of Mexico-US migration and state intervention has influenced Mexican hometown associations and migrant groups' to develop their own forms of consolidation and activism. Secondly, the construction of political linkages with Mexicans abroad also responds to the closer bilateral relationship between the two countries, enhanced by the NAFTA and Mexico's insertion in the global economy. Lastly, the asymmetric and at times, contradictory forms of formal emigrant political participation are directly influenced by the particular pattern of democratization and decentralization that has taken place in Mexico. This theoretical framework is exhibited in the following chapter.

1.2. **Research strategy**

The unique characteristics of emigrant political participation in Mexico dictate the need for a two-level analysis. That is, formal forms of emigrant political participation adopted a) at the national and b) sub-national levels. There is the relevance of exploring an in-depth case study of emigrant political participation in Mexico since it has been implemented unevenly among migrant sending states ('*estados*') in the country. This thesis, however, sacrifices undertaking other country case studies in depth, although points of convergence and divergence with other countries in the Latin American region are discussed in the concluding chapter. At the same time, the scope of these levels is dictated by two main aims. These are to uncover both the determinants of emigrant political participation as well as some of the consequences that derive from it on the incipient democratic system in Mexico.

Addressing the first research objective, I examine the determinants for emigrant political participation in Mexico. I explore how Mexican migrants and migrant groups have formulated and put forward their demands. Who are, for instance, those groups that lobby for political participation in Mexico? Who do they represent and what are their motivations? What are their strategies and means for lobbying at the Congress in their country of origin? Do migrant groups' strategies in the different contexts converge or diverge? And what is their relationship with governments and political parties? In addition, I explore the motivations of political parties, national and local governments, state institutions and social civil society groups to support migrants' demands and act in favour of their implementation. How do domestic

political actors act upon migrants' and migrant groups demands? What are the main motivations for supporting or opposing migrants' political rights? How does migrant political inclusion become part of their political agendas?

The second aim of this study is how migrants respond to formal forms of political participation in their country of origin. Given that most of the legal reforms on migrants' political rights are still very recent, this analysis presents some limitations. However, it gives some indications of whether emigrant political participation is likely to influence domestic political developments and dynamics in Mexico. Given the different emigrant political participation formulas presented in this study, their implications also vary. The main questions addressed here are: To what extent do Mexican migrants respond to institutionalised opportunities for political participation at home? How do local political actors try to influence emigrant political participation? Who are those migrants that participate – whether by voting, running for elections, or occupying a parliamentary seat? Does the new insertion of 'the migrant' as a new political participant change domestic political dynamics and order?

There is one conceptual path which proves useful in the study of the determinants and consequences of emigrant political participation, that is, the concept of a transnational social space in which migrants and migrant groups, local governments and political parties are interlinked. According to Faist, 'the concept of transnational social space aims towards a recognition of the practice of migrants and stayers connecting both worlds and the activities of institutions such as nation-states that try to control these spaces' (Faist, 2000, p. 12). The concept of transnational social space as well as later migration studies have questioned methodological nationalism, that

is, whether the nation-state is to be seen as the point of departure for migration research (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002; Glick Schiller, Caglar et al. 2006). This framework facilitates viewing international migration and its consequences in an increasing globalised world where the actions and events in the region of origin and destination impact on one another. Understanding the migration phenomenon outside the realist perspective of defined nation-states helps us grasp initiatives to foster political inclusion and participation of groups that live outside the state territory and, in turn, the interest and response of (some) citizens abroad to have a voice over political developments in their country of origin. Furthermore, it helps explain how difficult it is in recent years to classify a country as of origin or of destination and the fact that more and more people decide to live a transnational life, that is, moving back and forth (see for instance Pries 2004).

Although Faist's concept of transnational social space provides the tools to explain how the strengthening and building up of new (political) linkages takes place (2000), it complements other empirical frameworks that explain how migratory movements originate in the first place and how they are sustained over long periods of time. This thesis understands Mexico-to-US migration in terms of migration network analysis complemented by migration system approaches. The latter, on the one hand, highlights 'the existence of linkages between countries other than people, such as trade and security alliances, colonial ties (Portes and Walton 1981), and flows of goods, services, information and ideas' (Faist 2000, p.51). The former, on the other, explains how migratory movements can persist as prospective migrants are supported by kin and friends abroad and how emigration is embedded into family and cultural traditions (Palloni, Massey et al. 2001).

Thus, the findings of this thesis are based on a detailed empirical analysis of the determinants and implications of emigrant political participation in the Mexican context. The empirical research of this thesis was undertaken during fieldwork in several rounds between 2005 and 2008 (see Annex 1 for a selected list of interviews). During this time, I carried out 77 interviews, mainly in Mexico: Mexico City, Zacatecas and Michoacán. The interviews were carried out with national and local legislators (in the case of the federal absentee vote bill, with both deputies and senators); local governments; federal governmental institutions such as the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME for its acronym in Spanish), the National Institute of Migration (INI for its acronym in Spanish), Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL for its acronym in Spanish); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE for its acronym in Spanish); local migrant institutions such as the Institute of Michocano Migrants Abroad and federal and state electoral institutes, as well as members of migrant lobby groups; presidents of hometown associations and migrant leaders. Most interviews were carried out during legislative negotiations (with the exception of the Zacatecan migrant political rights' bill that was approved in 2003) and during the early implementation stage. Responses were, thus, meant to capture opinions whilst events were still unfolding. In addition, it was possible to visit electoral authorities during the period of implementation. Due to a limited research budget, interviews with migrant leaders and presidents of hometown associations and federations were carried out during short visits in Los Angeles (in 2007) and Chicago (in 2008). Complementary interviews and follow-ups were carried out via telephone. Virtually all interviews were carried out in Spanish (apart from a few words and sentences in English) and I am responsible for all the translations.

In addition, during fieldwork visits I was able to review primary research material such as parliamentary archives, governmental offices' reports, newspaper databases and transnational local media. In the case of Zacatecas, I was also granted access to migrant deputies' political agendas and future proposals and legal initiatives. Again, all this material was supplied in Spanish, for which I am responsible for the translations cited in this work. In this thesis I utilise qualitative, and to a lesser extent, quantitative methodologies (descriptive statistics). An unpublished survey among Mexican emigrants on absentee voting in the 2006 presidential election, whose results are presented in chapter five, was provided by the Commission of the Vote Abroad ('*Comision del Voto en el Extranjero*'- COVE) of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE for its acronym in Spanish).

1.3. Thesis structure

The study of emigrant political participation in Mexico requires defining particular concepts and theory building. Chapter 2 reviews the main literature looking into the transnationalism approach and Mexico's pattern of democratization to construct a conceptual framework of migrant politics in Mexico, which serves as the theoretical foundation for the empirical case studies. Chapter 3 provides a historical overview of the Mexican state policies towards Mexican migrants in the US. It shows that although the Mexican state has varied in response in different periods in history, the current phase starting in 1988 – characterised by efforts towards the cultural, economic and political participation of migrants from abroad – has no precedent. It demonstrates that in the contemporary period current politically constructed state

policies at the federal and state levels have not only been created to mediate the flows of transnational migration as well as cultural production and human rights protection, but also (increasingly) political practice across borders.

Chapter 4 and 5 are dedicated to the case of the vote abroad bill for presidential elections adopted at the national level in 2005. Chapter 4 analyses the almost eight-year negotiation period of the vote abroad bill and identifies who were the main actors and their interests in influencing and shaping this bill. It illustrates how non-PRI parties and successful migrant groups' involvement – in particular the migrant lobby group '*Coalicion para los Derechos Politicos de los Mexicanos en el Extranjero*'—were key determinants that led to the approval of the vote abroad legislation in 2005. Chapter 5 looks at the first Mexican vote abroad experience for the presidential election in 2006, which was characterised by a remarkably low turnout. It offers a discussion of why Mexican migrants failed to avail themselves of this opportunity for political action and identifies those migrants that did participate. The main finding is that mainly educated and affluent migrants with permanent (and most likely legal) residence in the US tend to vote. This analysis helps to reveal whether the original intentions of legislators and advocates of the vote abroad bill were met and, on the other hand, which political actors benefited as a result. The socio-economic characteristics of the Mexican migrant voter explain why there was a marked preference for PAN's Felipe Calderon's over other political options, as higher income and education levels are predictors of PAN support.

Chapter 6, 7 and 8 shift the focus to the implementation of migrant political rights at the sub-national level. Chapters 6 and 7 concentrate on the case of la *Ley Migrante*

(‘Migrant Law’) in Zacatecas adopted in 2003, whereas chapter 8 considers the case of the absentee voting law for governorship in the state of Michoacán approved in 2007. Chapter 6 explores the dynamics that led to the implementation of the “Migrant Law” and how it has institutionalised migrant political participation in Zacatecas. I demonstrate that three steps have been necessary for the adoption of this bill: political organisation of the migrant community (the main lobby organization was the *‘Frente Civico Zacatecano’*), a significant flow of collective remittances and the experience of a change of government and emergence of party politics. Chapter 7 addresses the question of whether the institutionalised intervention of migrants in Zácatecan politics has changed its political order and to what extent this is transparent and compatible with democratic principles. I illustrate how the institutionalisation of migrant political participation in local affairs, by allowing local legislative representation (two migrant seats) and migrants’ right to run for electoral positions (except governorship), transforms political structures, not only due to the inclusion of new political actors (migrant organisations and migrant candidates), but also challenging old social hierarchies and realigning power structures at home, albeit only to a limited extent, as well as lifting borders between constituencies at home and abroad. Chapter 8 then looks at the case of Michoacán, a Mexican state where there is an electoral law that explicitly grants migrants’ political rights establishing an absentee voting mechanism for governorship elections. This case serves to test the argument that the interaction of a centre-left PRD government with strong presence in the local congress and politically and economically active migrant organisations – in this case the *‘Frente Binacional Michoacano’* in a context of democratic contestation would guarantee the implementation of a migrant political rights bill at the local level.

Chapter 9 draws together the thesis' findings on why and how the Mexican state has extended formal political membership to its migrant population both at the national and sub-national level and what the consequences have been on the dynamics of the political system and Mexico's incipient democracy. It also poses critical questions about the future prospects of migrant politics in Mexico and compares this case study to other countries in the region. Finally, it highlights the main contributions to the field and opportunities for further research.

Chapter 2

2. Mexico's Pattern of Democratization and Migrant Politics

We should look into how we can account for the political incorporation of non-resident citizens into the domestic political map from fields that can provide us with appropriate conceptual framework for examining long-term processes of cross-border migration, migrants' political participation from abroad and its implications. I turn to the transnationalist approach to cross-border migrant political participation and secondly, Mexico's pattern of democratization and migrant politics.

2.1. The Transnationalist Approach and the Mexican case

Facing the need to analyse migration and related processes from a perspective unbound by national borders a growing number of scholars have in recent years advocated a transnational approach (see for instance Basch L., Glick Schiller et al. 1994; Guarnizo 1998; Guarnizo and Smith 1998; Mahler 1998; Portes, Guarnizo et al. 1999; Vertovec 1999; Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003; Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003; Smith 2003 ; Levitt and Nyberg-Sorensen 2004; Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004).

‘Transnationalism’ and ‘transnational’ have become common terms often displayed in titles of conferences, books, discussion panels and scholarly meetings. However, given that this field is in its infancy, it is still filled with theoretical ambiguity and analytical confusion. By contemplating the fact that political adaptation to a new

country does not necessarily exclude political involvement in the country of origin, the growing literature on transnationalism provides new vocabulary and research tools for examining the causes and implications of the institutionalisation of cross-border migrant political participation. Transnationalism or transnational migration, in its broader definition, refers to the whole set of political, economic, cultural and social networks and institutions that connect migrants' countries of origin and of destination and influence not only those that have settled in the new country and those who move back and forth, but also those who never move (Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999, p.344). It has been suggested, this new pattern of migration, responds to a global capitalist economy, as well as significant technological advances and the facilitation of international travel (Basch L., Glick Schiller et al. 1994).

In particular, the transnational approach seems to contradict orthodox approaches to immigrant incorporation and settlement. Traditional theoretical approaches to immigration, especially push-pull and assimilation theories were created from a methodological nationalism perspective, in other words, these were based on the assumption that the world was divided into well-defined national political units (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). Migrants who settled in a new country, were eventually expected to assimilate into the dominant society's socio-cultural and economic systems while simultaneously giving up their previous cultural practices and political loyalties (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). Transnationalism, on the other hand, stresses the fact that migrants, even though they settle in a new state, do not necessarily lose their political, economic, social and cultural connections with their country of origin. Most literature on international migration has been dominated by issues of citizenship, integration and participation of immigrants within their

countries or reception (Ireland, 1994, Koopmans and Statham, 2001, Soysal 1994); only in the last two decades migrants' transnational linkages with their countries of origin has become a new subject in this field.

However, we should be careful not to view transnational migration as an alternative to assimilation in the country of reception, rather we should grasp the two phenomena as parallel forms of adaptation within a new context that provides opportunities for long-distance membership. It still remains unknown to what extent migrants engage into transnational practices and for how long and whether second and third generation descendants still choose to participate in developments that take place in their parents' places of origin. Up to now, most research on transnationalism has mostly relied on sociological and ethnographic accounts, which does not illustrate to what extent the phenomenon is occurring (with the exception of a few quantitative studies. See for instance, Guarnizo, Portes et al. May 2003). A few studies, nonetheless, point out that it is only a very small proportion of migrants that maintain linkages with their places of origin beyond sending remittances home and those that do so seem to fall into the category of well-established, mostly well-educated and economically successful in the country of reception (Porters 2002; Guarnizo, Portes et al. May 2003).

Although transnationalism encompasses all social, cultural, economic and political aspects, my focus is on political transnationalism, that is to say, political linkages between state of origin and their citizens abroad, and, in particular, how institutional channels are constructed to maintain a transnational political system. As we have seen in the previous section, there have been a number of studies from the

transnational perspective that have looked at how Latin American sending countries seek to include economically, socially, culturally or politically their diasporas mainly located in the US and in Europe (Basch L., Glick Schiller et al. 1994; Guarnizo 1998; Itzigsohn, Dore Cabral et al. 1999; Itzigsohn 2000; Hazan 2001; Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003; Torres 2006; Margheritis 2007; Guarnizo, Portes et al. May 2003). Fewer studies have been carried out across the Atlantic, in the European context (Østergaard-Nielsen 2000; Østergaard-Nielsen 2002; Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003). What most of these studies have in common, albeit only to a limited extent, is an emphasis on migrants' agency and the grassroots dimension in the negotiation for more spaces for cultural, social, economic and political inclusion at home.

Previously, scholars have tried to define transnational political activities by the intensity of migrants' activities. Itzigsohn, for instance, refers to 'broad' political practices as those meetings or events taking place occasionally to 'narrow' forms of political involvement which mean more direct initiatives, such as membership in political parties or groups (Itzigsohn, Dore Cabral et al. 1999; Porters 1999; Itzigsohn 2000). Ostergaard-Nielsen, on the other hand, proposes four types of migrants' political practices (30 June - 1 July 2001; 2001; 2003). Broadly, 'immigrant politics' would refer to activities carried out in order to improve their political and economic situation in the country of reception. 'Homeland politics' are those activities aimed at opposing or supporting domestic or foreign policy of the homeland. 'Diaspora politics' would be an extension of the latter, it would refer to those groups that cannot participate in politics of their home country or belong to stateless groups. 'Translocal politics' pertain to those activities carried by hometown organisations that aim at improving the economic situation of their local

communities. Although my focus is mainly on the institutionalisation of homeland politics, I consider this nomenclature unable to show the role of the state as well as the level of institutionalisation of migrants' cross-border political practices. As I will show in my case studies of Zacatecas and Michoacán, it is often difficult to distinguish between the economic and political influence of migrant groups, which illustrates that, more often than not, 'homeland politics' and 'translocal politics' go hand in hand.

Some political scientists have also addressed the debate on transnational political participation in their country or communities of origin versus Latino politics in the US (Jones-Correa 1998; Jones-Correa 2001; Jones-Correa 2002; Smith 2007). Importantly, the earlier tendency to perceive the former as carried out by recently arrived migrants and hometown associations, whilst the latter as dominated by Hispanic citizens and Latino organisations, has been proved wrong. Instead, migrants' involvement in politics at home and in their country of reception is not mutually exclusive (Smith 2007). Jones-Correa, for instance, illustrates how Latino groups and hometown organisations have at times campaigned for similar goals such as an immigration reform in the US (1998; 2001; 2002). DeSipio argues that members of migrant organisations that engage in politics at home are also most likely to be involved in electoral politics in the US (2006). M. P. Smith goes further by arguing that Mexican migrant leaders of hometown associations who have gained dual citizenship, express dual allegiance (or at times dual reluctance) to both countries in which they engage politically (2007). Thus, although the focus of this thesis is mainly on migrants' involvement in their home country's and communities' political developments, I view transnationalism as a practice that does not necessarily

exclude integration in the country of reception. This helps us understand why, more often than not, well-established Mexican migrants with a long period of residence in the US have been the main advocates for political participation in Mexico and repeatedly use the discourse of regional integration to justify their demands for further political participation in their country of origin.

2.1.1. Political transnationalism and translocality in the Mexican case

Mexican migrants in the US and their influence on domestic and local politics across the South border have been a recurrent case in transnationalist studies in recent years. Despite the rich and significant implications for political science and theory, existing research has been mainly approached from anthropological and sociological perspectives and mainly relied on ethnographic accounts. Most of these studies single out the role of Mexican migrants and hometown associations in the formation of transnational communities, as well as their involvement in the reformulation of state/society relationships at the local level. In his analysis of the Mexican case before the change of federal government took place, Goldring (2002) already pointed out the function of sub-national linkages. In his own words: 'the state hegemonic project involves the largely symbolic reincorporation of *paisanos* living abroad back into the nation but depends on provincial and municipal authorities and transmigrant organisations for implementation. Because these vary, the project has been implemented unevenly'. What differentiates this process from the new post-authoritarian era is the increasing autonomy that sending states enjoy pursuing unique policies and constitutional reforms that extend political membership independently from the position of the federal government and national legislation.

As I demonstrate in this thesis, the institutionalisation of Mexican migrants' political incorporation has varied according to uneven democratization and decentralization processes.

There are three main bodies of literature and perspectives that have addressed the case of Mexican migrants and transnational political practices. The first group focuses on migrant citizenship practices and their demands for inclusion in local politics in everyday life (Fitzgerald 2000; Castañeda 2004; Fitzgerald 2004; Fitzgerald 2004; Castañeda 2006; Smith and Bakker 2008). Fitzgerald, for instance, addresses migrants' moral claims for extra-territorial citizenship in the context of the Mexican state of Michoacán (Fitzgerald 2000). In a similar vein, Alejandra Castañeda describes migrants' transnational practices and discusses how they challenge state definitions and practices of citizenship making reference to the case of migrants from Aguililla (Michoacán, Mexico) and their community based in Redwood City (California) (Castañeda 2006). Also, Castaneda's work illustrates to what extent migrants' citizenship practices are affected by immigration reforms in the US and citizenship reforms (such as dual nationality rights) in Mexico. She argues that 'citizenship is constructed by nation-states and by migrant's transnational practices and the embodiment of law' (Castañeda 2004). Michael Peter Smith and Matt Bakker address similar issues with ethnographic accounts from the Mexican states of Guanajuato and Zacatecas and their main places of destination in California (Smith and Bakker 2008). Similar to this approach, but from a state perspective, R. Smith identifies those institutional determinants, such as state policies of the country of origin, that have contributed to and shaped migrants' transnational economic,

social and cultural engagements and migrants' political claims for membership (Smith R. 2001; Smith R. 2003).

A second body of literature, mainly authored by migrant political rights advocates and Mexican academics – at times the protagonists of the migrants' rights movement in Mexico – concentrates on migrants' demands for transnational voting rights and dual citizenship, as well as the significance of these claims for Mexican communities in the US (Moctezuma Longoria 2001; Martínez Saldaña and Ross Pineda 2002; Bada 2003; Martinez Saldaña 2003; Martinez Saldaña 2003; Badillo Moreno 2004; Moctezuma 2004). Raul Ross, Badillo Moreno and Martínez Saldaña have provided useful historical accounts of migrant rights' activism across borders, as well as their relations with local governments and political parties (Martínez Saldaña and Ross Pineda 2002; Martínez Saldaña 2003; Badillo Moreno 2004; Martínez Saldaña 2005). Moctezuma Longoria's prominent work on the notion and practice of binationality among Mexican migrants from the state of Zacatecas influenced the content and shape of the 'Migrant Bill' adopted there in 2003 (Moctezuma Longoria 2001; Moctezuma Longoria 2004; Moctezuma 2004). This literature is rich on migrant activists' views on the extension of political rights to Mexicans abroad as well as their perceptions of democratization processes at home. A third group of scholars have largely focused on Mexican hometown associations' involvement in their local communities and their impact on local development (Guarnizo 2003; Goldring 2004; Orozco 2004; Orozco and Lapointe 2004; Rivera-Salgado, Bada et al. 2005; Caglar 2006). The transformation of migrant groups' economic power into political leverage in their local communities' affairs requires more elaboration.

Collective remittances and the state

Hometown associations' donations for communities' celebrations and infrastructure projects and, less often, productive schemes are alleged to increase emigrants' political leverage in their communities of origin. Anecdotal case studies of migrant leaders and hometown associations participating in their local communities' economic development and political affairs frequently appear in transnationalism scholars' ethnographic accounts (Smith R. 1995; Fitzgerald 2005; Smith R. 2006). Yet, this argument has not been assessed to any extent. In this thesis, however, I demonstrate how migrant groups – whilst lobbying for more political rights back home – use their economic involvement in the local communities' development as a bargaining position; which is, more often than not, also picked up by non-PRI political parties (mainly the centre-left PRD) as a motive to support their demands.

'Collective remittances' is the term coined to refer to those donations sent by migrant groups or hometown associations to finance projects in their local communities (Moctezuma Longoria 2001; Goldring 2004; Jimenez-Cuen 2005). In contrast to individual remittances which are private transferences that emigrants make to their family or kin that have stayed behind. However, the main distinction is that the latter are private transfers in which the state has no reason to intervene, apart from negotiating lower transfer costs⁶. Their intrinsic private character has restrained the tendency to see individual remittances as 'the new development mantra' (Kapur

⁶ The Mexican government has undertaken considerable actions to increase remittances-sending by lowering tariffs and promoting official banking transfers. For instance, the '*matricula consular*', under the US-Mexico Partnership for Prosperity Program, allows Mexican migrants since 2002 to open bank accounts in the US regardless of their immigration status. In addition, transfers costs from the US to Mexico have lowered by 60 percent since 1999. See Report, W. B. (2006). Global economic prospects. Implications of remittances and migration. Washington D.C., World Bank. p. 137.

2005, p.331) (See also Guarnizo 2003; Goldring 2004; Gammage 2006). In particular, the 2007 declaration adopted at the VII Conference on South American Migrations mentions that ‘remittances are private financial flows, the product of migrant population’s work, which are used to improve the quality of life of the recipients, and, therefore, should not be considered official aid for development, under any circumstances’ (South American Conferences on Migration, website 2008).

Collective remittances, on the other hand, fall directly into the state’s sphere of responsibility for the well-being of citizens. In particular, it undermines local governments’ monopoly over public works and services. Although collective transfers have never reached the level of private individual remittances⁷, their effects, nonetheless, are tangible mainly in small and rural communities with a long emigration tradition and with organised natives abroad – although not necessarily in the poorest (Aparicio and Meseguer 2008). In a few small migrant sending communities, migrant associations’ donations exceed the local government’s yearly budget. It has been shown that in communities of under 3,000 inhabitants, hometown associations’ contributions have reached an average of 59 percent of the municipal budget spending on public works (Table 1, Orozco and Lapointe 2003, p. 6). Although the phenomenon of collective remittances has presented the paradox of

⁷ Individual remittances reached USD 18.1 billion in Mexico in 2004 (World Bank, 2006). Over 1 million households receive remittances and for about 40 percent of them migrants’ remittances are the only source of income (CONAPO). On the other hand, collective remittances (total funds in the 3X1 program) amounted USD 43.5 million in 2002 (IOM, 2005). Total funds for the programme are expected to reach USD 135 million in 2008 (including funds from migrant organisations) (SEDESOL, Segundo Informe Trimestral, 2008). The programme takes place in 27 of the Mexican states (SEDESOL, 2008). The percentage of municipalities that participate in the ‘3X1’ program has increased from 10 percent in 2002 to 18 percent in 2005 (Aparicio and Mesenguer, 2008, p. 11).

whose responsibility it is to look after citizens' wellbeing. As Delgado Wise and Marquez mention in the case of collective remittances (and individual remittances) 'poverty and marginalization are alleviated, and the state is partially released from its obligation of participating in social development tasks' (Delgado Wise and Marquez Covarrubias 2007, p. 674). In contrast to the private sector, migrant groups and associations do not expect anything in return, apart from, perhaps, reaffirming their identity and local recognition (Bada 2004), which, in turn, is likely to enhance their reputation as benefactors (Sana 2005).

The Mexican state has responded, however, by matching such collective remittances by each level of government – federal, state and municipal – in a programme known as 'Citizen Initiative 3x1'. Until now, there is only another Latin American country, El Salvador, where a similar matching funds programme exists⁸. However, Colombian, Peruvian and Ecuadorian organisations in Italy are promoting similar matching funds schemes with their home countries in the education sector (Garcia Zamora 2007). Although the origins of the '3 for 1' programme in Mexico are explored in more detail in chapter 6, it suffices to mention that this programme was first implemented at the sub-national level in the state of Zacatecas and then expanded to other Mexican migrant sending states.

Do collective remittances actually have any effect on democratic practice? This question has recently been explored regarding individual remittances. A recent study carried out on the effects of individual remittances on political participation of those

⁸ 'Unidos por la Solidaridad' (United for Solidarity) implemented by the national development agency FISDL in 1999

left-behind in Mexico reveals that remittances-receivers and people that expect to emigrate are less likely to vote in elections (Bravo 2008) (See also Adida and Girod 2006 for a similar finding). On the other hand, it has been pointed out that municipalities with a high proportion of remittances-receivers households are more prone to vote for a non-PRI political party (Pfutze 2008). Thus, individual remittances can have ambiguous effects on the country of origin's democratic life, lowering voting turnout among those that stayed behind, but also encouraging political change. Conversely, research into the political economy of collective remittances is still in its infancy. As Goldring suggests there is a need to bring 'politics back into the study of migrants in development' (Goldring 2008, p. 12). However, the dynamics of collective remittances are different as 'it allows organised migrants to participate as new social actors that operate in two countries for the social development of their communities of origin' (Garcia Zamora 2007, p. 167). As economic development is discussed by government representatives and migrant groups, as well as people that live in such communities, accountability and ownership increases. From their inception three key issues have arisen in negotiations between migrant groups or hometown associations and the different levels of governments. These are: Who decides what projects to sponsor? Who is in charge of the funds? Who is responsible for the implementation and results? Thus, negotiations between both parties have resulted in debates on ownership, project selection, decision-making, democracy, transparency and accountability issues.

On this basis, it has been argued that migrant groups and hometown associations' participation in government matching funds programmes has given them a political voice (Burgess 2005). In particular, migrant leaders and presidents of hometown

associations gain exposure and experience dealing with politicians and government representatives, which also strengthens their negotiation skills. For instance, Rivera-Salgado and his associates show how hometown associations' economic participation in '3 for 1' or '4 for 1' state programmes have helped them gain increasing political leverage in their communities of origin (2005). On the other hand, it has been pointed out that collective remittances can foster political clientelism and corporatism across borders (Goldring 2002) and, more often than not, can exclude recipient communities from decision-making processes (Garcia Zamora 2007). Evidence has been presented to show that matching fund programmes are indeed politicized. Given the tripartite character of the programme, party label does matter when deciding projects and allocating resources. Between 2002 and 2006, a period in which there was a PAN federal government, PAN-governed states and municipalities were more likely to participate in the 3X1 programme and localities with larger PAN and PRD support were more prone to receive more funds than their PRI counterparts (Aparicio and Meseguer 2008).

However, coupled with their political bias, remittances matching funds programmes have placed migrants and migrant groups at the centre of the re-emergence of party politics. As I will show in this thesis, collective remittances have been a determinant of the extension of migrant political rights in the country and, in particular, the implementation of migrant political participation formulas at the sub-national level. The latter, a distinctive feature of emigrant political participation in Mexico. As remittances matching programmes are expanded to other Mexican migrant sending states, more migrant groups and hometown associations feed their demands for 'no

'taxation without representation' by often referring to their participation in '3X1' programmes.

To sum up, whilst the growing literature presented here provides useful insights into migrants' political and economic ties with their communities of origin and the politics of translocality, it is, nonetheless, mainly grass-roots agency oriented. This, in turn, gives theoretical priority to the role of migrants and informal forms of transnational political participation (such as their membership in HTA's). Thus, in my analysis of the adoption of migrant political rights, this literature is useful to explain migrants' involvement in campaigning for political rights at home and their justifications, but it does not provide the other side of the story; that is to say, an explanation why state actors would respond to those demands for inclusion and membership and which political context would guarantee their approval.

2.1.2. Political transnationalism and the role of the state of origin

As political transnationalism has been mainly studied through the lens of migrants and migrant groups, there is a tendency to view the role of the home country and domestic actors as secondary. The problem with this is that it overlooks the fact that governments and their policies define membership into the nation and ultimately decide who belongs and has a political voice in the country's internal affairs. In the introductory article of the special issue on 'transnationalism' published in 1999 by the Journal of Ethnic and Racial studies (1999), Portes, Guranizo and Landolt maintained that 'for methodological reasons, we deem it appropriate to define that the individual and his/her support networks as the proper unit of analysis in this

area'. In recent years, however, a number of transnationalist studies have increasingly tried to acknowledge the role of the state as a key actor in the development of transnational linkages and the construction of a transnational space (Smith R. 1997; Smith R. 1998; Itzigsohn 2000; Smith R. 2001; Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003; Levitt and Nyberg-Sorensen 2004; Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004). In particular, through the formulation of various programmes and consular and domestic policies. This perspective has evolved from the notion of a 'deterritorialized' nation-state envisaged by Basch et al in the early 1990's. Recent research questions the post-national discourse on de-territorialization as it contradicts the logic of national sovereignty and overestimates the power that states have to impact their citizens abroad, who have, at least momentarily, accepted to live under another state's rules.

Thus, a group of transnational scholars have proposed a distinction between the political strategies employed by migrant groups and the sending state. Goldring's (2002) study of the reformulation of the Mexican state-migrants relation and the policy shift towards the incorporation of the Mexican expatriate community during the Salinas and Zedillo administrations identifies 'migrant-led' versus 'state-led' transnationalist processes. He defines state-led transnationalism as 'institutionalized national policies and programmes that attempt to expand the scope of a national state's political, economic, social and moral regulation to include emigrants and their descendants outside the national territory' (Goldring 2002). Guarnizo (1997), for instance, advocates the notion of 'transnationalism from below' to refer to the grass-roots initiatives by immigrants and their home country counterparts and

‘transnationalism from above’ to explain the efforts carried out by institutional actors such as states and multinational corporations.

My study of the institutionalisation of migrants’ political participation in Mexico illustrates, however, that migrant political rights’ negotiations involve a complex process that cannot be viewed from a dichotomous perspective. Instead, empirical evidence shows how migrant leaders and migrant organisations tend to form coalitions with certain political parties when this would guarantee the legal endorsement of their political participation and representation in their country or place of origin. At the same time, migrant leaders continuously swing from positions in the migrant civil society sector, as well as within state institutions and political parties in both countries. Thus, when migrant political rights are implemented it is the result of both dynamics that continuously overlap and nourish one another and as, I demonstrate have as a consequence the extension of Mexican political institutions to reach out to Mexicans abroad and with it the enlargement of the state apparatus and bureaucracy in the form of consular service in the neighbouring country.

State-focused transnationalist studies have also attempted to distinguish the new state policies of sending countries towards their communities living abroad (Smith R. 1997; Goldring 1998; Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003; Gamlen 2006). As it has been identified, these new policies aim at maintaining links and encourage a sense of membership and loyalty without imposing a need to return. Previously, state efforts focused on trying to reach out to expatriates encouraging or facilitating return to their homeland, or simply offering protection from human rights abuses. In his extensive work in transnational practices, Smith classifies the former as ‘global nations

policies' and the latter as 'homeland policies' (Smith R. 1997; see also Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003). Goldring (1998) makes a similar distinction between 'policies of introversion', which extend protection to temporary residents in the US and 'policies of extension', which extend protection to settled migrant communities and thus redefine membership in the country of origin (Goldring 1998). Gamlen, on the other hand, offers a classification of what he refers to as 'diaspora engagement policies' into different sub-groups, such as those policies that aim at building up 'capacity' or the appropriate environment to cultivate cross-border practices; for instance, symbolisms used by the country of origin to gain the appreciation and trust of the expatriate community and institutions created to facilitate those exchanges. He also distinguishes what forms part of emigrants' citizenship practices such as the extension of rights (political, civic and social) and the demand of obligations, mainly related to the transfer of fiscal and financial assistance to the country of origin or lobbying the country of reception to advance the home country's interests (2006).

Although these distinctions have been useful to highlight a new practice among sending countries as well as to reflect an increasingly widespread beneficial view on emigration also supported at the international level by UN discourses (United Nations 14-15 September 2006). Some of the terminology employed, such as 'global nation' and 'policies of extension', fails to convey the real intentions behind the adoption of such policies. The case of Mexico where migrants' political participation, albeit limited, has been institutionalised at the federal and local levels, shows how certain policies and reforms are not the result of one single actor, the state, that aims at extending or constructing a global nation. Instead, in a post-PRI authoritarian era, new and increasingly autonomous actors have emerged or

undergone significant transformations – such as state institutions, federal and state governments, political parties, media and public opinion and civil society. In this respect, their motivations to incorporate the migrant population are diverse, but mainly aim at advancing their particular economic and political interests *at home*. It is, however, in this new context of democratic contestation in Mexico that migrant leaders and their organisations have found a window of opportunity to put forward their demands for political inclusion and participation.

Thus, this thesis attempts to re-vindicate the role of the political process within nation-states towards their populations abroad. By analysing particular domestic laws on migrant political participation both at the national and sub-national levels I attempt to further uncover the interaction of domestic political actors and external players such as migrant groups at the different levels of government (national and state level). One of the main arguments put forward here is that the formation of a cross-border coalition between US-based migrant groups and non-PRI parties is the main trigger for the adoption of a migrants' political rights bill. In this way, I follow a similar line of work as Itzigsohn in his study of political transnationalism among migrants from Dominican Republic, Haiti and El Salvador, and Peggy Levitt et al in Brazil, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, as they do not take the role of the state as a single variable, but instead look into the role of the distinct domestic actors (2000; 2003).

Therefore, to examine how the Mexican state has adopted legal reforms to allow migrants' political participation at home and their implications, it is necessary to use an instituted process perspective that provides the framework for analysing the

different stages in which such initiatives are debated, negotiated and implemented. Thus, it is necessary to look into how migrant politics affect Mexico's processes of democratic contestation which take place unevenly within the country. Here, a pure transnational perspective cannot fully and satisfactorily explain how policies on migrants' political participation are formulated and implemented within a changing Mexican state, or how the extension of political membership coincides with processes of struggle and contestation that have characterised Mexico's pattern of democratization.

2.2. Mexico's pattern of democratization and migrant politics

We should, in turn, look into Mexico's pattern of democratization to explain why the Mexican political system has reframed the terms for membership to the Mexican nation – not only in terms of who is included and excluded from this membership, but also how this membership has been translated into the legal language. The move towards the inclusion of 28 million Mexicans and the attempt to return them to the category of Mexican citizens marks, directly or indirectly, a new dimension in the country's democratic sphere.

However, first of all, it is important to view Mexico's pattern of democratization as a multidimensional set of structures. As Whitehead mentions we need not a fixed concept, but instead a 'floating but anchored' conception of democracy (Whitehead 2003, p.3). In this way, democratization is understood as a process not entirely defined by a fixed goal – for instance, the 'two turnover test', which refers to two successive peaceful transfers of government between contending parties after the exit

of an authoritarian regime – but rather by a complex and fluid process, which leads towards the implementation of strong democratic institutions, a trustworthy electoral system, a consistent set of legal reforms and the enactment of the rule of law which would favour a more participative political environment (Whitehead 2003). This way, the actual people play a key role in the democratization movement. As Whitehead mentions ‘before a democratic transition can begin there must be a political community receptive to democratic aspiration’ (Whitehead 2003, p.65). The move towards the perception of the Mexican migrant population in the United States as a significant political actor reinforces the view that the re-definition of national membership and citizenship are key components in Mexico’s democratic transition. As it has been noted, citizenship is intrinsically bound with democracy (in its liberal version), in which, as Falk rightly asserts, the more democracy the better quality of citizenship and vice versa (Falk 1994).

Many studies from the pre-democratization era in Mexico demonstrate that most emigration policy was undertaken by the chief executive and his close advisors (Corwin 1978; Garcia 1980; Morales 1981). However, as I will illustrate, the gradual and uneven fading of the PRI hegemony and the once-seen ‘perfect’ authoritarian rule have led to the emergence of new social actors (political parties and new interest groups) that are able to have an impact, albeit to a certain extent, on the outcome of emigration policies. In addition, emigration policy and law making are distancing from the apex of the national executive to take place in local governments and legislatures, as well as being discussed in public forums amongst expatriate communities in the US. Thus, this represents a move from interpreting Mexican emigration policies from a 'state-centric' perspective to a limited pluralist approach.

In this way, the passage of constitutional reforms and electoral laws that extend political rights to Mexican migrants have been proposed, supported and negotiated within a context of a democratic transition unfolding in Mexico. The relation between Mexican political actors and the Mexican expatriate population in the US changed dramatically after the 1988 presidential election (Fitzgerald, p. 526), in which the PRI's Carlos Salinas de Gortari was granted the victory over the centre-left opposition candidate and PRI defector Cuauhtémoc Cardenas under widespread suspicious of fraud and corruption (Von Sauer 1992). Cuauhtémoc Cardenas – the son of the most deified post-revolutionary president, Lazaro Cardenas – had much support amongst the Mexican migrant communities in the US after he campaigned in California and Chicago, encouraging migrant supporters to advise their relatives and friends back home to vote for him in exchange for dual nationality rights and the right to vote from abroad (Jones-Correa 2000).

It is claimed that Cardenas' support amongst Mexican circles in the US prompted the PRI national government to reformulate its policy towards Mexicans abroad (Dresser 1993). On the other hand, however, I would also argue that Mexicans in the US represented an ideal ally in the implementation of the neo-liberal economic project that Salinas had in mind. At the turn of a political transition, migration policies and laws have been decided not only because of political concerns, but also increasingly because of their economic implications. The administration of PRI President Salinas (1988-94) targeted for the first time working-class migrants and Mexican Americans through innovative policies and programmes (Fitzgerald 2004). His successor and last PRI president after more than 70 years of the party's continuous rule, Ernesto

Zedillo Ponce de Leon (1994-2000), went even further by supporting the dual nationality laws passed by the federal congress in 1996 which allowed Mexicans to maintain their Mexican nationality even if they adopted a new one (constitutional reform to Art 30, 32 and 37). Also, that same year an electoral reform permitted Mexicans citizens to vote outside their electoral district (reform to Art. 36), which opened up the possibility of extending the franchise to Mexicans abroad.

Although the next chapter outlines in more depth this policy shift towards the Mexican community in the US, it is important to note that even though policies adopted by PRI's Salinas' and Zedillo's administrations acknowledged the significance of the Mexican expatriate community in the US for the country's economic and political development and efforts were carried out to secure their economic rights in their home country, migrants' political rights remained curtailed. At the national level, it was not until the PRI lost the majority of seats in the national congress when legal initiatives to secure the vote abroad were proposed – mostly by the opposition (centre-left PRD and PAN) (Perez Godoy 1998). It was also not until Mexico experienced a change of national government in the year 2000 with the historical victory of PAN's Vicente Fox, that the right to vote from abroad for presidential elections became one of the main issues for legislative debate and was then finally approved in 2005. Similarly, the negotiation and approval of migrants' political rights bills at the sub-national level have taken place in migrant sending states where there has been a change of government and a centre-left PRD local government has been elected with significant presence in the legislature. However, as in the case of Michoacán and Zacatecas where not a single party holds the absolute majority in the local congress, migrants' political rights bills are subject to

intense negotiation. That is not to say that the institutionalisation of migrants' political rights in Mexico is the consequence of a change of national government, but instead it has been facilitated by all the changes that have accompanied the gradual and uneven fading of the PRI hegemony. In this way, the adoption of different forms of migrant political rights adds to the fast increasing number of constitutional reforms and new electoral laws that attempt to set up the new rules of the game in '*Mexico democrático*' (democratic Mexico).

Thus, we should perhaps reformulate our question as why when a regime is undergoing change, do political and social actors with different motivations and interests reach agreement on the need to extend political rights to previously excluded social groups? Also, why would they do so to incorporate a social group that is not present within the boundaries of the state? The extension of political rights to include those citizens that live past the boundaries of the state adds a significant dimension in the study of democratizations within the contemporary context. Scholars such as T. H. Marshall, Mann, Rokkan and B. Turner have debated the extension of political citizenship rights in democratizing nations mainly in the European context (Marshall 1950; Rokkan, with Campbell et al. 1970; Mann 1987; Turner 1993). However, there have not been any attempts to understand how, in recent years, countries that go through democratization processes ultimately decide to grant political rights to nationals that do not live within the territory of the state. In addition, there has not been any systematic study on how migrant politics in Mexico affects democratization processes in the country.

I would argue that the extension of political rights to non-resident citizens is in significant part the result of sending state's reactions to economic globalisation and transnationalisation processes and, simultaneously, to internal political transformations. At the same time as the Mexican state undergoes a democratic transition, like other countries in the Latin American region, it has had to deal with the economic and political consequences of emigration within a globalised context. As we have seen, most Latin American countries that have implemented 'dual nationality laws' and migrants' voting rights, have done so at a time when they have undertaken a democratic transition or a radical reformulation of their political system, as well as adapted to the requirements of the global economy. Even in the case of Colombia, the Latin American country that adopted these policies much earlier, it did so at a time when there was a reformulation of the notion of the 'nation' as Hazan suggests (2001). To put it another way, during times when the nation has experienced the reconstruction of the political project, which would occur due to either/or simultaneous internal ideological struggles and ongoing democratization processes, the question of who gets to participate in the formulation of the 'nation' becomes of paramount importance.

Thus, the creation of strong democratic institutions and competitive politics are the minimum requirements to set up the participative political environment necessary for the debate on who gets to belong to the 'nation'. What Mexico has experienced since the late 1980's is a gradual and uneven dismantling of the old political order, which mainly consisted in the hegemony of a single political party (the PRI) and the concentration of authority in one institution – the presidency – that monopolised the other legislative organs in policy-making process. The continuous endurance of this

system was guaranteed by an institutionalised mechanism for power transfer which involved no re-election, but instead the president's appointment of his successor ('*el dedazo*'), as well as a façade of liberal-democratic institutions and control of the labour sector through state-corporatist associations which impeded the formation and participation of opposition groups (Lawson 2000). What a democratic transition in Mexico has meant, amongst many other things, is not only the revival of political parties and an increasing presence of civil society organisations and interest groups, but also the transformation of the roles of the presidency and the legislative chambers. Although the president still retains significant influence, the policy and law making process has returned to the legislature. However, in contrast to other Latin American countries where there has been an expansion of political rights to residents abroad, in Mexico the institutionalisation of emigrant political participation has also taken place at the sub-national level. In the case of Mexico, the renewal of federalism has meant that local governments have been able to gain more autonomy over local issues and to address them with local policy solutions, as illustrated in the cases of Zacatecas and Michoacán.

For the approval of migrants' political rights, thus, the existence of a democratic political system has been necessary in which different and autonomous actors could express their views and be able to negotiate, even if they do so only according to their own interests. As Sara Schatz mentions in the case of Mexico 'democratization, as an emergent form of political authority, accelerates when multiple social actors with different motives (possessing simultaneous ethical, political, utilitarian, and instrumental dimensions) are able to agree' (Schatz 2000, p.98). The remarkable feature of the negotiations on migrants' political rights, at the national and sub-

national level, in which not only the Mexican government and migrant groups have been involved, but also civil society groups, domestic political parties as well as the media and public opinion, is that they have taken place in a transnational political space, that is to say, they have involved actors and their interests from both sides of the border.

In line with the conflict theory perspective in democratization studies (Przeworski 1986 and Schmitter and Karl 1994 p. 174), that is the view that social actors are unpredictable, but their movements are guided by the maximisation of their interests, I show how adopted migrants' political rights bills in the national and sub-national scenarios have been the result of the minimum common denominator of the main actors' immediate political and economic objectives (such as votes and remittances), mediated by the importance that this issue has had on public opinion. In other words, the different political participants in these processes provide support for migrants' political rights' bills only when this matches their motivations and particular interests. Yet, it is difficult to predict their political behaviour and strategy due to the importance that this issue has played in bi-national public opinion.

In contrast to other studies that have analysed law and policy making processes in Mexico in the new democratic era (Nacif 2005; Nacif March 2003), my study of migrants' political rights offers the first institutional study that takes into consideration not only domestic actors, that is to say, the role of government, political parties, public opinion, media and civil society groups, but also it places emphasis on the increasing political leverage of migrant organisations, which is the main point of departure of transnationalist studies. Populations abroad have also been

significant democratizing forces, although it has not been possible to assess to what extent they have had an impact at home. The history of democratization indicates, however, that pressures for greater democracy more often than not emerge from oppositional civil society and very rarely from the state itself. This study, thus, considers migrant leaders and migrant groups as an autonomous actor in law and policy making processes in Mexico and shows how through their transnational political strategies they have been able to influence domestic policy and law making processes in Mexico within both ‘transnational’ and ‘translocal’ contexts.

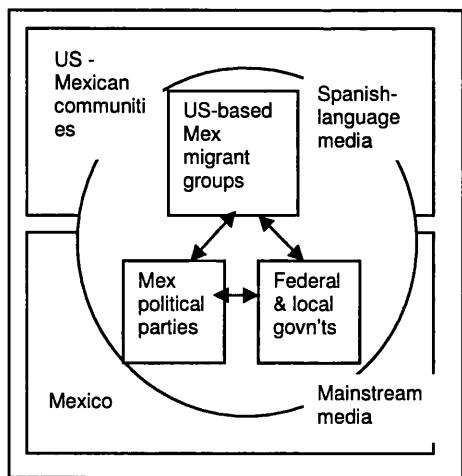
2.3. Towards a model of migrant politics in Mexico

As we have seen, both the transnational approach and democratization theories offer us important tools to understand why Mexico as a country of origin extends political membership to Mexicans abroad from afar and over the long term. On the one hand, transnational studies on the Mexican case point at the importance of the size and organisation of the migrant community and the interest of government and political party actors in gaining migrants’ political and economic support. However, the transnationalist perspective focuses on the role of migrants and migrant groups in the reformulation of Mexican state-society relations by asserting claims of membership, but it does not succeed in clarifying the role of domestic actors and the dynamics behind their support for granting political rights to residents abroad.

On the other hand, the component of democratization theories relating to the ever-increasing proportion of the population becoming involved in the process of decision making tells us why political participation in post-authoritarian Mexico requires the

involvement of previously excluded social groups. New political actors during a regime change establish the new rules of the game in the form of constitutional reforms and electoral laws that might include some and exclude others, but it falls short in acknowledging how the formulation of new rules of political participation might be affected by non-resident social groups and what are the effects of the extension of political membership to groups abroad on the incipient democratic system. Also, accompanying decentralization processes have given increasing autonomy to sending states ('estados'), which are able to pursue unique policies and constitutional reforms that extend political membership to their populations abroad independently from the position of the federal government and national legislation. Thus, the institutionalisation of Mexican migrants' political incorporation has varied according to uneven democratization and decentralization processes. Figure 1.1 shows the main actors in the politics of migrant citizenship both at the nation and sub-national levels.

Figure 2.1 Main actors in the politics of migrant citizenship



Therefore, this thesis contributes to both transnationalism approaches to migrant political participation in their home country and democratization theories' accounts for the extension of political membership in the light of recent constitutional and electoral reforms in Mexico. By using the transnationalist approach from a political science standpoint I am able to contextualise the policy making dynamics in Mexico concerning the political rights of Mexican migrants. I show how certain migrant groups have been created for strictly political purposes and serve as catalysts for political change by lobbying for reforms in national (the Senate and Chamber of Deputies) and local congresses. Migrant groups *per se*, however, are not responsible for the approval of migrants' rights bills, which also depend on a context of political change and a divided government.

As a result, this study adds a new dimension to democratization processes in Mexico by showing to what extent policy making dynamics have altered under a divided government. It shows how in early stages of democratization the position of the different political actors is often unpredictable. However, two points are evident, political spaces have opened up for the participation of new social groups such as the migrant lobby and a more independent media. Secondly, '*los estados*' (states) have become more independent to be able to approach local issues differently from the national government. As figure 1.2 shows there are mainly three conditions that secure the approval of a migrant's rights bill, these are: 1) the economic and political impact of migrant organisations and the creation of strong state institutions to serve them; 2) a change of government and the absence of an absolute majority in the legislative; and 3) an eventual cross-border political coalition between migrant groups and a non-PRI political party.

Table 2.1 Determinants of the adoption of migrant political rights in Mexican sending states

	Non-change of government	Change of government and divided government; existence of state institutions to cater migrant population
Strong presence of US-based migrant organisations in economic and political developments	No change; lobbying against government (i.e. Oaxaca)	Formation of cross-border political coalitions and extension of migrant political rights (i.e. Zacatecas and Michoacán)
No strong presence of US-based migrant organisations	No change (i.e. Hidalgo)	No change; leads to the organisation of migrants (i.e. San Luis Potosí)

Own elaboration

Thus, the main actors in this study are federal and local governments, political parties, migrant organisations and public opinion affected by both mainstream and a transnational media. I now briefly describe each of these actors and their role in migrant politics.

Federal and local governments

The weakening of the federal executive and the dismissal of presidentialism in contemporary Mexico has meant that local governments have gained more independence from the federal government to develop their own rules and laws, albeit to a certain extent. As Lawson describes: 'democratization has not been a homogenous process. It has been different across regions or levels of government' (Lawson 2000). Federal and local governments are then used in this analysis as single actors that play a key role in defining the notion of 'home' and setting the boundaries of citizenship within their own jurisdictions. Ultimately, sending states ('estados') are the ones that feel more directly the effects of individual and collective

remittances and negotiate infrastructure or development projects with migrant leaders and representatives of migrant organisations. At the same time, migrant groups in the form of hometown associations seem to test primarily their influence in local politics, as it responds to their primary attachment, where they might still maintain kinship and friendship networks. I argue that the unevenness of the transnationalisation of the political system in Mexico (taking into account only those states that experience emigration) responds directly to both different degrees of democratization and, on the other hand, to the local effects of international migration and historical exposure to sustained emigration flows.

Political parties

The prohibition of re-election in consecutive terms in the Mexican constitution strengthens the importance of the role of political parties in policy and law making dynamics in Mexico's new multiparty democracy. Mexican politicians have to rely on the party label to advance their own careers, which might also result in the coherence of political motivations at the party level. On the other hand, however, during the democratic transition, common disagreements and conflicting positions on relevant issues, as well as the lack of a consistent party's project have often led most Mexican political parties to experience internal fracture and ruptures. For instance, during the 2006 presidential elections, two different strands of the PRI party could be identified, each one supporting different potential candidates (see chapter 4). Similarly, during the change of leadership of the PRD party in 2008, a number of old and new streams emerged such as the '*Nueva Izquierda*' (New Left), '*Izquierda Unida*' (United Left), '*Foro Nuevo Sol*' (New Sun Forum), '*Corriente de Izquierda*

Democratica' (Democratic Left Stream), '*Los Civicos*' (the Civic) and '*Grupo de Accion Politica*' (Group of Political Action) (Palma and Balderas 2008).

As it has been suggested in various country studies in Latin America, opposition parties play an important role in the inclusion of the migrant population (Itzigsohn 2000; Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003). It is becoming a common practice for political parties in many Latin American countries to court for migrants' financial support and votes abroad and to open chapters in various American cities with high numbers of migrant supporters. The case of Mexico does not differ in this regard. The PRI opposition to establish formal forms of migrant political participation, disguised in many rhetorical statements in support of migrants rights, was publicly known (Smith R. 1998; Goldring 2002; Escobar April 2004). However, efforts by the centre-left PRD and the PAN to materialise migrant political inclusion are less well documented.

Migrant organisations

In the case of Mexico, although most migrant organisations emerged first as meeting points for Mexican expatriate communities in different US cities, later they became transnational organisations with a fundraising capacity in the US that could support public-related works in their local communities in Mexico (Itzigsohn 2000; Moctezuma Longoria 2001; Goldring 2002; Fitzgerald 2004; Orozco and Lapointe 2004; A. Portes 2005; Rivera-Salgado, Bada et al. 2005; Caglar 2006; Williams January 2004). Apart from their social role in the country of reception, the transnational character of migrant groups and hometown associations has increasingly made them act as intermediaries between the migrant communities and

the state of origin. However, it was not until this new millennium that federations of hometown associations actually opened political branches. As I will show, the political arms of well-established Federations such as the Zacatecan and Michoacano have been decisive actors in the approval of migrants' political rights in those Mexican states, as well as the '*Coalicion por los Derechos Politicos de los Mexicanos en el Exterior*' in the adoption of the vote abroad bill for presidential elections. Migrant groups, I argue, fulfil a central role in involving migrant communities in (mainly local) political affairs in the country of origin.

In contrast to the way that transnational advocacy networks operate, which according to the analysis of Keck, M. and Skink, K. consists of a "boomerang" approach, in which civil society campaigns can get rid of authoritarian regimes or advance their own goals and interests by reaching out across borders and use international pressure to open up the domestic political space (1998; 2002), that is, forming partnerships with local civil society, governments and international institutions which multiply their chances of advancing their goals. The advocacy networks of migrant groups, on the other hand, rely on both US-based members, as well as those that can be physically present in Mexico; however, their campaigns are put forward from both fronts. In Mexico, by lobbying legislators and other political figures, whilst in the US, by coordinating with the various Spanish-language media and keeping the migrant community aware of their campaign progress in Mexico.

Although I consider migrant organisations as transnational political actors in my study, it is important not to see them as a homogenous political block with the same interests and motivations. The Mexican migrant population in the US encompasses

diverse racial/ethnic categories, class positions, sexualities and forms of state authorization for entering the US. As this study shows, interests actually diverge clearly between certain Mexican migrant groups and Mexican-American or Latino groups, which became evident, in particular, during the debate for migrants' political rights in Mexico (see chapter 4).

Mainstream and transnational media and bi-national public opinion

Public opinion on the political incorporation of Mexicans abroad has been shaped by two different types of media: mainstream and transnational. The former relates to the changing role of mass media in Mexico whereas the latter refers to Spanish-language media that can be simultaneously reproduced across both sides of the border, albeit at the local level.

The emergence of independent media in Mexico has not been total and remains far from democratic – monopolies, corruption and other legacies of the old-regime still exist. However, increasingly, media in Mexico is being used by both government officials and civic activists to advance their goals. As Lawson mentions 'government officials are keenly aware of the need to "sell" their policies through the media. Likewise, most civic activists seem to understand that calling attention to their causes through the media is one of the best ways to influence officials and effect change' (Lawson 2004, p.398). The mass media has played a crucial role in the debate on migrants' political inclusion by bringing home the image of the Mexican migrant in the US. In the last decade, the nightly news have brought images of how those Mexicans abroad live and express their Mexican identity through the celebration of various national days, just in the same way as their home counterparts. National

newspapers, for example, have dedicated sections for migration issues (i.e. the national newspaper '*La Jornada*'). Also, the Mexican media has been able to awaken the sympathy of those that stayed behind by showing images of the human rights abuses that have taken place in the frontier. For instance, the case of the televised episode of a woman being beaten by border patrol police in Riverside, California in 1996 (see Fernández de Castro 1997).

Transnational media, on the other hand, relies largely on local media to transmit information on migration issues simultaneously in Mexican communities in the US and in their communities of origin in Mexico (for more on transnational media or migrants' media see Harold Riggins 1992; Georgiou and Silverstone 2007). It mainly consists of Spanish-language television channels broadcast in both countries, radio stations that can be heard simultaneously both sides of the border, as well as Spanish-language newspapers that are published in American cities with a high concentration of Mexican immigrants. Transnational media and Spanish-language publications in the US have been frequently directly used by migrant political rights activists to raise awareness of their claims and raise support amongst the Mexican communities in the US. Also, important channels of communication such as '*MX Sin Fronteras*' have been created by prominent migrant leaders and migrants' political rights supporters.

The next chapter offers a historical perspective regarding how the Mexican state has responded to the continuous flow of people for more than a hundred years. In particular, it identifies the distinct phases in Mexican emigration policy and shows how the contemporary period beginning in 1988 marks a change in the Mexican

state's relationship with its diaspora, by implementing policies and programmes that aim at re-creating and strengthening bonds with Mexican communities abroad without necessarily implying a need of return. This turn in emigration policy has converged with Mexico's internal changes due to democratization processes, as well as the country's insertion in the global economy and increased economic integration with the US through the signing of the NAFTA and migrants' remittances.

Chapter 3

3. Policy antecedents and current state initiatives on migrant citizenship

‘We have been known as ‘*braceros*’, traitors, ‘*pochos*’, but now they know us as ‘*paisanos*’’ (‘neighbouring brothers’) (cited in Lizarzaburu 2004). ... ‘Now we are powerful enough to make a difference’ (unstructured interview, July 2006). These remarks made by Guadalupe Gomez, a Mexican migrant worker in the United States and director of the ‘*Federación de Clubes Zácatecanos*’ (umbrella organisation for Zácatecan hometown associations), illustrates how the Mexican state perspectives towards migrants have changed dramatically in the last few years. The history of Mexican emigration to the US is exceptional, not only in terms of the numbers and reasons causing it, but also by the economic, political, social and cultural consequences it has brought for both countries bordering the Rio Bravo⁹ (See Annex 2 for descriptive statistics on Mexico-US migration over history). In particular, Mexico, after the experience of nearly 150 years of continuous exodus, faces a reality in which its physical national borders are being tested as its social, political and economic spaces stretch out to include those ‘*paisanos*’ abroad.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the posture of the Mexican state in the face of this continuous flow of nationals since 1848, the year marked by the American annexation of parts of Mexico and the establishment of a new legal border between both countries. I argue that although the Mexican state has varied in response during

⁹ Also known as ‘Rio Grande’ in the United States

different periods through history, the current phase starting in 1988, which is characterised by institutionalised efforts towards the economic, cultural and political participation of migrants from abroad, has no precedent. As I show, in no other period in Mexican history, has the state been actively involved in policies and activities to attempt to incorporate its migrant citizens in the cultural, social, economic and political life of the state; also, as it has already been pointed out, without necessarily imposing on them a permanent return to their homeland (Sherman 1999). The unique period, in which the Mexican state has concentrated in the creation of a nation that encompasses also those Mexicans residents in the US, only began in 1988 with the Salinas administration and was preceded according to most researchers by a long period of nationalist policies that focused mainly on the protection of Mexican citizens abroad. Another significant change in Mexican emigration policy in this new phase is that decision-making also takes place at legislative level, rather than only being decided by the executive (the president and his close advisors). Particularly, with the change of national government in the year 2000, emigration policies and initiatives of 'proximity' have increasingly been formulated at the legislature and at the sub-national level of government.

We can, thus, identify four periods in which government approach towards emigration varied, given the different facets of the phenomenon in those times, such as: 1) Mexico's loss of its Northern territory and 'open border' policy during revolutionary Mexico (1848-1910); 2) the 'Great Repatriation' period (1917-1932); 3) the 'Bracero' programme (1942-1964) and 4) the '*Pocho*' illegality phase (1964-1988). In this chapter, I provide a short account of the Mexican state policy responses to Mexico-US migration in these periods and explain how they differ from

the current pro-emigration government attitude and its well-defined and institutionalised initiatives on migrant political inclusion from abroad. Next, I examine how the 1996 constitutional reforms on dual nationality and the debate on migrant political participation have been the result of new economic imperatives in Mexico and the product of competitive politics, nonexistent in Mexico before the democratic transition began in 1997, which have shifted the notion of 'Mexicannnes' from being territorially-based to one equivalent of membership.

As I show government behaviour for much of the 20th century pursued a nationalist emigration policy that mostly focused on migrant protection and was based on the belief that migratory movements to the North would only be temporary. In contrast, this current period is characterised by four main features. First, the degree of institutionalisation in state initiatives to incorporate Mexicans abroad without imposing a need to return. Second, these initiatives, programmes and legal reforms follow more directly an economic logic in the implementation of a neo-liberal project, as well as legitimising concerns of social inclusion prompted by a democratic transition. Third, in contrast to other periods in Mexican emigration, in which the executive and closer advisors were responsible for policy decisions, in the contemporary period, new social actors (such as US-based migrant groups and hometown associations) have been able to influence such initiatives. Finally, uneven democratization and decentralization processes, as well as the local impact of migrant lobby groups have given more independence to federal states to formulate their own initiatives and programmes towards their communities abroad.

3.1. The history of Mexico-US migration and Mexico's emigration policy

3.1.1. Mexico's loss of its Northern territory and 'open border' policy during revolutionary Mexico

We can trace back the beginning of the migration phenomenon to 1848, when Mexico not only lost half of its territory to the US, but also 75, 000 Mexican nationals (approximately 22 percent of the total population in the Southwest region) who were officially transformed into US citizens with the signing of the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty (McWilliams 1976; Morales 1981, p.59-60)¹⁰. Five years later, another part of the Mexican territory, '*La Mesilla*', was purchased. However, as Gomez signals, culture, traditions and language were among the things that the population born in California, Arizona, Texas and New Mexico did not easily give up in the early years (Gomez and Zackrison 2003). Spanish was the most widely spoken language by the Mexican communities and they continued publishing their local newspapers in this language. They also kept practicing Catholicism and continued celebrating Mexican patriotic celebrations like 'September, the 15th' (Mexican Independence day) and 'May, the 5th' (the Battle of Puebla). Attracted by the similarity of cultures and physical proximity, Mexicans on the other side of the border continued migrating into these areas. This situation persisted up until the end of the Mexican revolution in 1921.

10. The Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty guaranteed Mexicans that lived in those territories equal rights according to the American constitution, also the right to exercise their religion and enjoy liberty and properties (Art. VIII, IX of the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty)

Before the Mexican revolution began, the Mexican government had no interest in stopping Mexican nationals from emigrating to American lands. Especially during the Porfirio Diaz's dictatorship (1876-1910), emigration was seen as a normal part of the free market's functioning and also a moral right to return to the 'lost territories'.

In fact, up until the early 1920s, the Mexican-American border was not more than a theoretical notion, 'Mexicans entered and left the United States at will, without passports' (Yossi 1999-2000, p.673). In 1909, Porfirio Diaz and US President Howard Taft signed an agreement that authorised the movement of 1,000 Mexicans to work in plantations located in Nebraska and Colorado (Garcia y Griego 1983). In contrast to Diaz's lack of formal policies on emigration, economic policies that aimed at the liberalisation of the market and expatriation of national lands were formulated by the dozens¹¹. According to Hall and Coever, 'by 1910, foreigners – mostly Americans – owned about one-seventh of the land surface of Mexico' (Hall and Coerver 1988, p.12). Consular services together with Diaz' business connections in the US, were simply used to spy on his exiled revolutionary opponents, most notably Francisco Madero and the Flores Magon brothers.

With the end of the revolution, the resulting government adopted a nationalist approach to emigration policy that was going to be maintained, albeit to a certain extent, by consecutive governments until 1988. Venustiano Carranza (1915-1920) made it clear that the Mexican government would not prohibit emigration which was

¹¹ Land policies during the 'Porfiriato' were shaped by the Decree on Colonization and Demarcation Companies of 1883 and the Law on the Occupation and Alienation of Barren Lands of 1894. See Assies, W. (2008). "Land Tenure and Tenure Regimes in Mexico: An Overview." Journal of Agrarian Change 8(1): 33-63.

indeed a right endorsed in the 1917 Constitution¹² (Diario Oficial de la Federacion 5 February 1917, Article 11), but would instead control it by favouring officially authorized emigration through contract protection and by simultaneously discouraging additional emigration flows through dissuasion campaigns. Thus, if migratory movements were to persist, the Mexican government would be in charge of the number of and conditions in which Mexican emigrants would work abroad, however, emigration would only be accepted on temporary basis. The 1917 Constitution made it explicit that Mexicans wanting to undertake work abroad should have a written contract before leaving, stipulating minimum wage and maximum hours of work, the employer had also to cover for the worker's health care and return costs to Mexico¹³ (Diario Oficial de la Federacion 5 February 1917, Article 123).

In line with this, Venustiano Carranza resisted the special American exceptions for contract labour in force during 1917 and 1921, when the neighbouring country unilaterally targeted Mexican labour to fill out jobs during the First World War¹⁴. The Mexican government attempted to prevent and control recruitment by representatives of American employers within the Mexican territory by insisting that Mexican labourers should have passports and contracts, often refusing the issuance

¹² Article 11. 'Everyone has the right to enter and leave the Republic, to travel through its territory and to change his residence without necessity of a letter of security, passport, safe-conduct or any other similar requirement. The exercise of this right shall be subordinated to the powers of the judiciary, in cases of civil or criminal liability, and to those of the administrative authorities insofar as concerns the limitations imposed by the laws regarding emigration, immigration and public health of the country, or in regard to undesirable aliens resident in the country.' 1917 Constitution.

¹³ Article 123, section A. XXVI. 'Every labour contract made between a Mexican and a foreign employer must be notarized by a competent municipal authority and countersigned by the consul of the nation to which the worker intends to go, because, in addition to the ordinary stipulations, it shall be clearly specified that the expenses of repatriation shall be borne by the contracting employer'. 1917 Constitution.

¹⁴ In 1918 Mexican immigrants were also exempt from the 1917 Selective Service Act that forced foreigners to enrol in the US army

of passports without the required documentation and setting up check points on the railways leading to the Northern frontier (Corwin 1978). Most of these efforts were in vain, by 1920, there were at least half a million Mexican settlers in the US not counting the number of Mexicans that were there before 1900, out of a Mexican population of 14.30 million people, that was 3.5 percent of the total population (Corwin 1978).

Public opinion in this new revolutionary order was important to avert further movements of Mexicans to the US. Mexican emigrants were not to be blamed for abandoning '*la patria*' (fatherland), but instead they were perceived as victims of Mexican go-betweens or '*coyotes*', or simply seduced by American wages. According to Corwin, the Mexican government made use of the press as well as emerging labour unions (i.e. *Confederacion de Obreros Mexicanos* (CROM)) to warn aspiring emigrants and their families of the dangers, as well as discrimination and exploitation that they could experience on the other side of the Rio Grande (Corwin 1978).

3.1.2. The 'Great Repatriation' and Mexico's policy of return

As the Great Depression struck the US economy in the late 1920s and 1930s producing a major unemployment which peaked at 24.9 percent in 1933, the immigration context in this country became highly negative. The US Government substantially cut immigration into the country and on the other hand, immigrants became targets for discrimination and removals. In 1921 the US Congress passed the national origins based Quota Act aimed at limiting the migration of Jews, Southern

and Eastern Europeans to the US. In 1924 this was modified to also ban all immigration from Asia (East Asians and Asian Indians). In California, in particular, government officials claimed that Mexican immigrants made up the majority of the California unemployed. White trade unions claimed that Mexican immigrants were taking jobs that should go to white men. Mexican immigrants in the US, as well as Mexican-Americans were openly targeted by President Herbert Hoover as a source of the great economic crisis of the 1920's (Hoffman 1974). Mexican diplomacy was able to prevent a quota on Mexican nationals by agreeing to raise awareness of rising unemployment in the US, as well as the new threat of deportation penalties resulting from the Alien Registry Act passed by the American congress in March 1929. However, the Mexican government did not want permanent emigration of nationals, but rather it favoured a temporary workers' scheme regulated through bilateral cooperation (Garcia y Griego 1992).

The American government of that time not only believed that Mexican emigrants increased competition with native workers for jobs, but it also feared that a large scale immigration would be one of the outcomes of the Mexican revolution – as many Mexicans would flee the armed conflict and also as other potential migrants would take advantage of the unstable situation to get into the US via Mexico. The American government thus decided to carry out a large-scale deportation and to enforce greater control in the border zones. Between 1917 and 1932 the 'Great Repatriation' involved the return to Mexico of 150,000 Mexicans residing in Los Angeles, including many who had already become American citizens (Sanchez 1993, p.120). In addition, in 1924 four mounted guards started to patrol 2,000 miles of the Mexican-American frontier. By 1930, however, the number of people of Mexican-

origin had already reached more than 1.5 million, out of a total Mexican population of 17 million, which was almost 9 percent of the total Mexican population (Sanchez 1993).

The response of the Mexican government during the ‘Great Repatriation’ was to retreat into its own territory (Gomez and Zackrison 2003). To come to the rescue of unemployed and destitute Mexicans was, as Garcia and Griego has put it, ‘a legitimating act by a nascent revolutionary state’ (Garcia y Griego 1992, p.88). The Mexican government undertook a policy approach towards its emigrants and Mexican-Americans that matched the interests of the American government. The government not only cooperated with its American counterpart in the repatriation of its nationals, but also formulated policies to discourage future emigration. The Mexican government particularly became eager to recover and integrate its Mexican sojourners. One of the outcomes of the revolution was to view Mexican rural migrants as potentially productive nationals who could modernize and transform the country and the nation. As Sherman argues ‘the primary goal of policy toward emigrants had to do with obtaining political legitimacy domestically at a time of major nation-building in the wake of the Revolution’ (Sherman 1999, p.840). In the most explicit sense, these efforts intensified during the administration of Obregon (1920-1924) and Calles (1924-1928).

A key component of Mexico’s policy on emigration in this period was the establishment of consular services for migrants to assist them against abuses and even help them to receive unemployment compensation, dismissal pay and casualty remuneration. According to Sherman the protection of migrants abroad became an

official consular duty in 1916 with subsequent laws passed in 1923 and 1924 (Sherman 1999, p.853). In 1920, President Alvaro Obregon (1920-1924) instituted among Mexican consulates the promotion of Spanish language and Mexican culture among its expatriates (Sanchez 1993). Obregon also sought to work in partnership with Mexican and Mexican-American organisations such as '*Alianza Hispanoamericana*' with the purpose of preserving Mexican culture among Mexican communities in the US, as well as helping unemployed Mexican immigrants and providing assistance in voluntary returns (Cardoso 1980, p.106). Mexican consuls, in turn, were encouraged to foster the creation of Honorary Commissions, whose role was to report any form of discrimination against Mexican workers in the US, as well as to carry out Mexican celebrations and other cultural activities (Cardoso 1980). Here again, the underlying message was to reinforce the view that labour migration should only take place for short periods, in which time the Mexican consulates would try to protect Mexican nationals abroad and organise cultural events to improve their social well-being until they returned home.

In order to convert Mexican returnees into productive nationals the state aimed at policies to subsidize and facilitate repatriation. Among them, Obregon's government financed the return of an estimated 100,000 Mexicans (out of 400,000 Mexicans that expressed interest in returning) in 1921 (at a cost for the Mexican government of around \$2.5 million) (Morales 1981). For most of the 1920's the Mexican foreign ministry continued facilitating the resettlement of returnees and in 1930 created the Consultative Council on Migration. In 1932, the Migration Service of the Government Ministry created the National Repatriation Committee to raise money to aid and employ returnees; participants included members of the Government and

Public Health ministries, organizations such as the Red Cross and the national chamber of commerce as well as private citizens. In 1936, Cardenas' government (1934-1940) instituted a program of colonization of under-populated areas with expelled Mexicans (under the 1936 General Population Law). As Morales notes, a few colonies were created to receive the new arrivals such as the '*18 de Marzo*' settlement located in Tamaulipas, which was one of the most successful. However, only 5 percent of returnees chose to settle in one of these planned colonies and most of them returned to their communities of origin (Morales 1981, p.94). At the same time, by 1939 there was an amendment to the Law of Nationality and Naturalisation to facilitate emigrants' permanent return, which allowed those returning Mexican-born emigrants who had lost their Mexican nationality when acquiring the US citizenship to recover their Mexican nationality with the condition of re-establishing their residence in Mexico¹⁵. It is important to highlight that this legislation, however, did not apply to American-born descendants.

At the same time, the Mexican post-revolution government also tried to prevent more emigration through the formulation of federal and state policies (such as tax requirements), accompanied by an intense information campaign about the dangers and difficulties that Mexican workers would encounter in the US. Administrative measures were also employed to deter emigrant flows. New migration offices were opened inside busy train stations, which were common departure points in Mexico (such as Guanajuato, Sonora, Guadalajara, Monterrey and Coahuila) during the administrations of Obregon and Portes Gil (Cardoso 1980).

¹⁵ Reform to Article 27, Ley de Nacionalidad y Naturalización, 22/9/1939

The media and general public opinion during the repatriation period also seemed to support the government's attitude. Mexican newspaper editorials and even fiction books used emotive language to criticise the loss of Mexican citizens¹⁶. As Cardoso describes: 'Editorial writers labelled expatriation as "suicidal" and "sterilizing and prejudicial" for Mexico' (Cardoso 1980, p. 104). Most Mexican demographers such as Gilberto Loyo also emphasized the negative effects of Mexican emigration, which were against the nationalist goals of the Revolution. On the other hand, Manuel Gamio pointed out the benefits of temporary emigration in his two books 'The Mexican Immigrant' and 'Mexican Immigration'. Nonetheless, what most Mexican scholars had in common was that once the new order of the revolution succeeded, it was going to bring enough jobs in the industry and agriculture and as a result Mexican workers would not have any incentive to emigrate (Cardoso 1980).

In contrast to other periods, during the 'Great Repatriation' the Mexican government and specifically the executive became policy active on the Mexico-to-US migration phenomenon. Scholars of Mexican emigration mention how the Mexican state between the 1920's and early 1930's took account of its Mexican émigrés for the first time, as part of the need to re-formulate the Mexican nation after the revolution (Corwin 1978; Cardoso 1980; Garcia y Griego 1992; Sherman 1999; Cano and Delano 2005). Although, to be fully considered as Mexican those people not only had to maintain their loyalty to Mexico, as well as their language and culture, but also had to eventually return to their homeland. This approach changed dramatically with the implementation of the '*bracero*' programme in the 1940s, when once again the Mexican state lost sight of its Mexican nationals abroad.

¹⁶ Fiction books such as the short story 'El Repatriado' (The Expelled) by Rafael Munoz

3.1.3. The '*bracero*' programme

The '*bracero*' programme, which began in 1942 and was renewed several times until 1964 when it was finally unilaterally terminated by the US, was essentially a programme which recruited Mexican labourers mainly to work in the agricultural industry on a temporary basis (Bean 1990). The aim of the programme was to remedy the severe labour shortage that experienced the US during the Second World War. '*Braceros*' were also entitled to the rights of the Mexican 1917 Constitution as previously mentioned. According to Massey, 4.5 million Mexicans worked as '*braceros*', but perhaps many more crossed the border illegally in this period (Massey, Alarcon et al. 1987).

The reason why the Mexican government agreed on the implementation of the '*bracero* programme' was threefold. Firstly, the programme met the requirements of the Mexican government, in other words, it was a bilateral programme that would allow the Mexican government to have some control over migratory movements, as well as providing official protection to Mexican workers abroad and enforcing its temporary nature. In addition, it provided a safety valve to population growth and the effects of land reforms. Secondly, economic benefits such as workers' remittances played an important part. This feature acquired even more importance during President Aleman's (1946-1952) industrialization project, which involved less resources destined to rural areas from where most emigrants originated. Thus, the rural zones could benefit from *braceros*' remittances as well as human capital once they returned to their places of origin. Thirdly, the government of Avila Camacho (1940-1946) declared the war against the Axis Powers on May 22, 1942. Thus, the

provision of Mexican workers to the Northern neighbour was seen as a way to cooperate in the war effort (Morales 1981, p.46).

Surprisingly enough, during the '*bracero*' programme a period of inactivity and inattention to emigrants began. It was only in the first years of the programme that the Mexican government was willing to secure good working conditions for migrants, but as Mexicans continued to cross the border without an actual contract, government officials became increasingly disinterested. For instance, only seven months after the programme began, the Mexican government terminated the agreement citing as causes widespread discrimination against Mexicans and internal pressures against the treaty. Mexican authorities were able to re-negotiate the agreement securing better treatment of their co-nationals. In July 1943, the Mexican government also protested against discriminatory practices in the state of Texas against Mexicans and halted migration movements to this state under the '*bracero* programme'¹⁷.

By the 1950's such measures vanished even though *bracero* workers continued being target of mistreatment and discrimination; the Mexican government did not devote enough resources to oversee the implementation and development of the programme and no governmental organization was created to deal with *braceros'* claims. In contrast to previous years, the consular protection services decreased and even consuls were reluctant to get involved in the *braceros'* issues. Moreover, illegal Mexican workers increasingly exceeded those contracted legally under the '*bracero*

¹⁷ It should be noted that Texas was not affected by these measures as employers were able to recruit illegal Mexicans that continued to cross the border.

programme'. Between September 1942 and December 1947, 219,600 Mexicans were hired as braceros, but 372,922 undocumented Mexicans were apprehended by the US authorities during those years (Cornelius 1978, p.4). Thus, as illegal migration rapidly increased, the Mexican government became less interested in securing the workers' rights of those who migrated without official approval (Garcia y Griego 1983). Public opinion also shifted from seeing emigrants as being subject to exploitation and widespread discrimination in the US to simply ignore the loss of nationals in the country. As Corwin mentions '(...) after 1954 the Mexican public shrugged its shoulders as if to say: "Let'em go, it's no longer a national tragedy"' (Corwin 1978, p. 186).

3.1.4. The '*Pocho*' Illegality Phase

After the US unilaterally terminated the 'bracero programme' in 1964, the migration phenomenon between the two neighbours became mainly undocumented, both as people continued to cross the border illegally to work and as an increasing number of Mexicans overstayed their work visas due to continued demand by US employers. It was also influenced by two events: firstly, the amendments to the American Immigration and Nationality Act, which among other things, abolished the national origins quota system and replaced it with a visa system with higher numbers and secondly, Mexico's persistent and exacerbating poverty in certain regions. Between 1960 and 1975, 700,000 Mexicans entered the US legally and anywhere from 1 to 6 million crossed illegally. In 1970 there were 760,000 documented Mexican-born immigrants in the US and in 1980, there were 2,199,000 (Massey, Alarcon et al. 1987, p.43; Sherman 1999, p.850).

This period, which I term the '*pocho*' illegality phase, from 1964 to 1988, was characterised by no salient state initiative involved in fostering links with nationals abroad apart from a few shallow intentions. It was a period when the view of Mexican emigrants as '*pochos*' – a derogative term which means that a Mexican migrant is neither Mexican nor American – was envisaged not only by the general public, but also by the state. Jorge Castaneda attributes this attitude to the strong national self-confidence manifested in Mexico's foreign policy in those years, when Mexico portrayed itself as an adherent to Third World causes and when foreign policy differences with the US became discernible (Castaneda 1988, p.58). In addition, Mexican elites wanted to avoid provoking retaliatory US intervention by becoming too involved in the affairs of their compatriots abroad.

Only in the 1970's during President Luis Echeverria's time in office (1970-1976) some attention was devoted to Mexican-Americans in the US. Echeverria was a fervent nationalist and left-wing social reformer, who became a prominent spokesman for Third World Countries (and the author of a far-reaching Charter of the Economic Rights and Obligations of States). Echeverria's leftward position was also reflected in his pro-human and work rights attitude and his protectionist policies towards Mexican emigration and Mexican immigrants in the US. In his view – there were no illegal Mexicans in the US, but rather undocumented workers that subsidised the American economy. Echeverria advocated the re-establishment of the 'bracero programme' and offered various services for Mexican families abroad through Mexican consulates (Sherman 1999). He opposed the Rodino bills (under consideration in the American congress since 1973) which attempted to penalize

employers of illegal workers and in response he implemented stricter immigration regulations that mostly affected American pensioners, business executives and “hippies” based in Mexico (Corwin 1978).

Echeverria also established relationships with some prominent Chicano leaders and created a programme for the distribution of Mexican books to libraries in the US; tours of artworks and artists; conferences with Mexican and Chicano intellectuals. Some governmental ministerial agencies were also requested to become engaged in Mexican-Americans’ issues. The labour Ministry started studies on the emigration phenomenon in order to formulate better ways to collaborate with Chicano organisations and, on the other hand, the Ministry of Education created a special programme to grant scholarships to ‘Chicanos’ (Mexican-Americans) to study in Mexico, which was later known as the ‘Cultural Programme of the Frontiers’ (Gomez Arau and Trigueros 2000). In addition, the 1974 amendment to the Law of Nationality and Naturalization gave second and third generation Mexicans abroad the same preferential naturalization as Latin Americans, which meant a two years residency requirement rather than five¹⁸.

His successor Jose Lopez Portillo (1976-1982) tried to continue some of his policies such as the sponsoring of Chicano students in Mexico. However, he lacked the interest and organisation to effectively address the needs of Mexican-Americans. His administration also perceived migratory movements as part of the process to regulate population growth. As Corwin points out ‘...although some leaders of editorial opinion, like the national *Excelsior*, could still sputter pro-natalist sentiments, most

¹⁸ Reform to Article 21, Ley de Nacionalidad y Naturalizacion, 12/11/1974

Mexican leaders in economic planning, public health, and social security programmes (the latter do not cover the poor) had come around to support the surplus-people interpretation, and the need to defuse the population bomb in Mexican cities' (Corwin 1978, p.208). On the other hand, US President Carter's amnesty and sanctions proposals delivered to Congress in 1977, which among other measures included a two-tier system to regulate illegal immigration; this offered permanent residence to those that had arrived before 1970, as well as a 'non-deportable' status and conditional permanent residence after a five year provisional period, to those that arrived between 1970 and 1976 (Fragomen 1977). This, in turn, attracted thousands of Mexicans to the border hoping to benefit from it.

In the same vein, President Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) only manifested interest in Mexican communities in the US during the political campaigning of the 1988 presidential elections with a project entitled '*Impacto 88*' (Impact 88), which consisted in bringing the Mexican community together and gaining their political support (Gomez Arau and Trigueros 2000). Something we should mention here is that most, if not all, of these efforts during the late 1970's and early 1980's targeted the Mexican-American community, that is, those who had already acquired American citizenship or were permanent residents in the neighbouring country, leaving unattended the Mexican migrants who continued to arrive in great numbers. This was a common feature of the ruling party's (PRI) foreign policy until the political balance started to swing in the lead up to the presidential elections of 1988. Nevertheless, the number of documented and undocumented Mexican migrants increased significantly between the end of the 'bracero programme' (1964) and 1986 despite successive modifications to the US Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965,

1976, 1978, and 1980. According to Massey and Duran, between 1964 and 1986, the number of legal Mexican immigrants increased from 38,000 to 67,000 per year and over the same period annual gross undocumented migration rose from 87,000 to 3.8 million (Durand, Massey et al. 1999).

Table 3.1 Selected Mexico's national emigration policies 1948-1988

Period	Selected Mexico' emigration policies	Context of reception in the US
Mexico's Loss of its Northern Territory in 1848 and Revolutionary Mexico	'Open border' policy during the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz (1876-1910) 1909 bilateral agreement; 1,000 Mexicans to work in plantations in the US states of Nebraska and Colorado	US controls Northern Territory and buys ' <i>La Mesilla</i> ' Guadalupe Hidalgo treaty guaranteed Mexicans equal rights according to the American constitution
Post-Revolution	The 1917 Constitution endorsed the right to emigrate but under certain requirements (written contract mentioning minimum wage and maximum number of hours, employer to cover worker's health care and return costs) Mexican nationality was lost upon acquiring a new nationality Administrative measures to deter emigration	First World War American exceptions for contract labour in 1917 and 1921
'Great Repatriation' (1917-1932)	Policies to facilitate the return of 150,000 Mexicans Consular services for migrants and honorary commissions Foreign policy to promote Mexican culture Amendments to the Law of Nationality and Naturalisation in 1939	Great depression in the US economy in 1920's and 1930's National Origins Based Quota Act (1921,1924) Large scale deportation of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans
'Bracero Programme' (1942-1964)	Bilateral programme for Mexican labourers to work in the agricultural industry (4.5 million Mexicans)	Second World War
'Pochos' Illegality Phase (1964-1988)	Characterised by non-salient initiative Echeverria's policies to strengthen relationships with	Replacement of national origins quota system with a visa system Rodino bills (amnesty and

	Chicano leaders (i.e. Cultural Programme of the Frontiers)	sanctions) debated in the American congress since 1973
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Own elaboration

As displayed in the table above state policies towards Mexicans abroad, especially after the revolution, were based on nationalist interests – emigration was to be, if not avoided, at least controlled; also, on the other hand, once across the border Mexicans were encouraged to maintain and embrace their Mexicanness through their language, celebrations and religious practices with the support of the Mexican consulates. The approach of the Mexican government was based on the belief, for the most part of the 20th century, that Mexico-to-US migration was only temporary and once the country benefited from the results of the revolution, migratory movements were to stop. In addition, protection of Mexican nationals abroad and emphasis on return also became common practices in Mexican emigration policy. Most importantly, most emigration policy decisions, before the democratic transition started, were taken by the federal executive and his close advisors.

3.2. The change in Mexico's emigration policy

Since the late 1980's the Mexican state has initiated a re-encounter with '*el Mexico de afuera*' (the Mexico beyond state boundaries). The recent shift in the Mexican state's attitude towards its expatriates indicates a move away from both limited attention to migrants (as most of the 20th century) and emphasis on return (as during the Repatriation period) to economic incorporation and yet political participation of Mexican migrants from abroad. I argue that these new state policies not only differ from previous ones due to their nature and purpose, but also by the manner in which they have come into being. As I demonstrate, current state policies seek to maintain

strong links with Mexicans in the US without encouraging return. This is a finding consistent with previous research (Sherman 1999). Current state policies, programs and even constitutional reforms on migrants' participation have been the result of the interplay of new political actors such as opposition political parties and migrant associations in the US and, more often than not, they have been firstly conceived at the state and local levels. Thus, three main characteristics are salient in this period. First, emigration policy responds not only to political, but also to economic considerations. A second main characteristic is the unprecedented level of institutionalisation of new state initiatives. Thirdly, the formulation of emigration policies not only takes place at the federal, but also at the state level.

This new approach to emigration policy, I would argue, responds to three main events. That is, the changing dynamics of Mexico-to-US migration in the late 1980's and 1990's and the negative context of reception in the US and, on the other side of the border, to Mexico's democratization and decentralization processes and the country's insertion in the global economy. Mexico's economic and political changes were felt among the Mexican communities in the US, where, on the one hand, Mexicans and Mexican-Americans realised that they were targets for new Mexican political actors' interests and on the other, a political 'voice' in Mexico became a valued commodity in the US (fieldwork interviews).

3.2.1. Changing Mexico-US migration patterns and the US context of reception

To begin with, the situation of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the US has changed dramatically since the mid 1980's, mainly due to US immigration policies

that aim at curtailing the number of undocumented immigrants already in the country, as well as limiting further undocumented immigration flows. Amongst other features the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which was the result of the Simpson-Rodino bill reintroduced in 1985, implemented strict measures to stop undocumented immigrant flows and restrict job opportunities to those that could have still made it across the frontier. For instance, it allocated new resources to the US Border Patrol for enforcement along the Mexico-US border and implemented sanctions to employers that knowingly hired undocumented workers.

The IRCA also opened up the possibility of legislation to those undocumented migrants who had entered the US before 1 January 1982 (under the Legally Authorised Worker programme, so-called LAW) and a special amnesty to those who had worked for 90 days in agriculture during the year preceding 1 May 1986 (known as the Special Agricultural Worker Program or SAW). Mexican immigrants were the main beneficiaries of such immigration reform. 70 percent (1.2 million) of those legalised under the LAW programme were Mexican, as well as 80 percent (1.1 million) of those that were granted amnesty under the SAW programme (Durand, Massey et al. 1999, p.522). In turn, those Mexican heads of families that regularised their immigration status were later able to bring their wives and children. For instance, 52,000 dependants were allowed to join their relatives in the US in 1992, 55,000 dependants followed in 1993 and 34,000 in 1994. Undocumented immigration, however, exceeded legal immigration channels at an average of 300,000 persons per year (Durand, Massey et al. 1999, p.525). In addition, the expansion of the H-2A programme, an agricultural ‘bracero-like guest worker programme’, increased from 2,000 permits for Mexican nationals in 1986 to 6,000 in

1995 (Durand, Massey et al. 1999, p. 526). By 1996, there were 4.7 million authorised Mexicans in the US (Durand and Massey 1992).

According to Massey and Durand, the main impact of IRCA was to transform Mexican temporary migration pattern to permanent settlement for both documented and undocumented Mexicans. The reason is twofold. On the one hand, those that had recently legalised had to take English and civics classes in order to qualify for their Green Card¹⁹ and by bringing their families to the US; they had less incentives to go back to Mexico. On the other hand, border enforcement made it too dangerous and costly for undocumented Mexican migrants to cross back and forth (Massey, Durand et al. 2002).

Fundamentally, the 1990's saw a surge in the number of US policies that try to restrict rights to immigrants. In particular, the Californian proposition 187 (1993), which included certain provisions such as preventing illegal immigrants from attending public schools, receiving social services and subsidized health care, also required that law enforcement authorities, school administrators and medical workers turn in suspected illegal immigrants to federal and state authorities. Although Proposition 187 was exclusively Californian, entangled in the courts and never fully enacted, from the very moment of its formal launching in 1993 it had negative effects on the well-being of immigrants in California and other American states. The legacy of California's Proposition 187 materialised in the 1996 US Congress legislation on immigration. In August of that year, the US Congress passed a welfare reform – the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act – that imposed

¹⁹ United States Permanent Resident Card

new restrictions on benefits to documented migrants. In addition, in September of the same year, the Congress approved the Illegal Immigration and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIAIRA), which apart from making illegal immigrants ineligible for most non-emergency public aid, also enforced policing of the border and changed the conditions of deportation – migrants could be deported without a hearing and they had to be able to demonstrate continuous presence of at least seven years before being able to appeal a deportation decision (Legomsky 1997). Although by 1997 some of the provisions, especially for documented migrants, had been partially restored, still a negative context of reception was perceived.

However, despite a more restrictive environment, after five generations Mexicans in the US were not only significant in numbers, but they were also more organised and had more political power and influence than they once did. There were well-known Mexican-American leaders and leading business people, who differed from Mexican emigrants recently arrived with either documented or undocumented status. In addition, a network of hundreds of hometown associations, mainly from traditional sending states – i.e. Zacatecas, Michoacán, Guadalajara and Guanajuato – were well established and politically and socially active in the US. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported in 1995 the existence of 262 hometown associations from 23 different states. The Zacatecan hometown clubs doubled in number in only one decade. In 1976-78 there were 15 to 20 Zacatecan hometown clubs and in 1990 they grew to 43, with 40,000 members, representing 31 out of the 56 municipalities in the state. Mexican hometown clubs, by definition have been the bridge between local communities in Mexico and those in the US. According to Arau and Paz Trigeros, Mexican hometown clubs have played a larger role in politics at home since the

1970s when they became better organised and more politically conscious (2000).

According to the large literature on Mexican hometown clubs, their main goal is to invest in important celebrations at home, as well as in the realisation of development and infrastructure projects to improve the general welfare of their communities of origin. However, as Arau and Trigueros argue, some of them have gone even further, by giving place to a reconfiguration of local power relationships and strengthening the political status of migrants at home (2000). In fact, hometown clubs have been key actors in the development of the new state policies in migrants' cultural, economic and political participation, both by offering creative initiatives that have been later on supported by the state and by serving as enforcers of state policies and programmes in the ground.

3.2.2. Political and economic transformations in the country of origin

Thus, the changing profile of the Mexican community in the US was able to feel the political and economic changes in their home country. Four major events are necessary to point out in order to illustrate how the Mexican political engine found itself during the late 1980's and 1990's. Firstly, the 1988 presidential and state elections challenged the PRI's previously iron grip on political power. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' presidential campaign questioned the political legitimacy of the PRI, which was widely accused of committing electoral fraud by declaring Carlos Salinas the winner. In addition, the PRI lost for the first time a gubernatorial election in the state of Baja California Norte where a PAN governor was elected (Rodríguez and Ward 1995). Secondly, the mystery surrounding the killings of Cardinal Posadas Ocampo in 1993 and of PRI Presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio a year later prompted a political crisis in the country, which deepened with the Zapatista

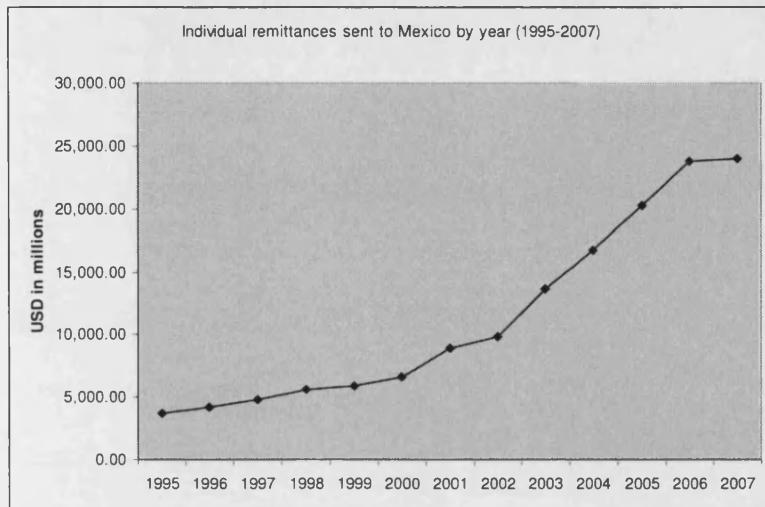
movement. Thirdly, in the mid-term elections held in July 1997, the PRI lost its majority in the Chamber of Deputies and the centre-left PRD had a stunning success in Mexico City (*Distrito Federal*), where voters could elect their head of government for the first time since the revolution, as the result of the 1996 electoral reforms (Secretaría Nacional de Asuntos Electorales 1997). Finally, in the year 2000 the PRI lost the presidency after more than 70 years of continuous rule to Vicente Fox of the PAN.

On the other hand, after the election of Miguel de la Madrid, a neo-liberal regime in Mexico gradually replaced previous protectionist policies. This new model of export-led development was first embraced by Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) and expanded further under President Salinas (1988-1994). Mexico joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1986 and in 1989 started negotiations with the governments of Canada and the US to create a free trade zone. The North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was implemented in 1994 with the goal of removing (gradually) most trade and investment barriers between Mexico, the United States and Canada. Although the agreement did not include any chapter on labour migration, except for investors and business people (Chapter XVI), it was commonly expected that Mexico's economy would be able to develop and strengthen which would in turn lead to the creation of new jobs²⁰. In contrast, despite the gains from free trade and closer ties with the US for dynamic urban regions especially in the Northern border, economic re-structuring also meant for millions of Mexicans loss of

²⁰According to neo-classical economic theory, free trade and increased investment would lead to income growth and jobs creation, thus diminishing pressures to emigrate. It has been argued that, in the long-run, these dynamics would first produce a migration hump, relatively small and short, and then a decrease in the number of emigrants (See Martin, P. 2001).

jobs, economic instability and hardship that again forced them to seek better opportunities elsewhere. At the same time, individual remittances started becoming more visible due to growing emigration flows from Mexico, increment in the amount remitted home and an increasing proportion of remittances sent through official means, that is, through banks and remittances transfer companies. The latter also as a result of lower remittances transfer costs – to send \$300 in the US-Mexico corridor fell from \$26 in 1999 to \$12 in 2004 (Ratha 2007, p.8). As shown in Figure 3.1 below, remittances flows to Mexico increased from \$3.7 billion in 1995 to \$24 billion in 2007 (Bank of Mexico, 2008) (for a more detailed description of individual remittances sent to Mexico see Annex 3). Individual remittances represent the second source of foreign income, only after the revenue obtained from oil exports, but exceeding direct foreign investment. In 2005, Mexico led the list of emigration countries (with the highest absolute number of nationals abroad) and in the last decade it has been among the three top remittances-receivers in the world (with India and China) (Ratha and Zhimei 2008). Also relevant was the fact that individual remittances provided a safety net during the financial crises that used to accompany presidential change in the last few decades. For instance, during the ‘peso crisis’ in 1995 the consumption of remittances in Mexico increased by more than half a percent (Figure 3, Ratha 2007, p. 4).

Figure 3.1 Individual remittances sent to Mexico (1996-2007)



Own elaboration. Source: Bank of Mexico, *Remesas Familiares*, statistics, 2008

Political and economic changes in Mexico had clear repercussions on Mexicans and Mexican-Americans abroad. In particular, Mexico's entrance in the global economy and the growing family remittances received gave more attention to the Mexican community in the US. President Salinas turned to Mexican-American organisations and leaders to serve as a lobby during the NAFTA negotiations. Moreover, Mexican migrants' interest in domestic politics was clearly shown during centre-left PRD candidate Cardenas campaign in 1988. During his campaign, Cardenas looked to Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in California and Texas for support. Redefining Mexican concerns for a US audience, Cardenas spoke of the frustrations of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans who felt disenfranchised in the US and ignored by Mexico (Sepulveda 1991, p.50; Dresser 1993). The Mexican community, which until then had experienced Mexico's government as a unified entity with clear policies, was now confronted with a choice between the PRI and the PRD. The majority of those who paid attention to Mexican domestic affairs opted to support Cardenas (Pew

Hispanic Centre Survey 1988). Although Cardenas was not elected president, Mexicans abroad, from then on, were aware that the political balance at home was crumbling. Mexicans in the US have also increasingly demonstrated outside Mexican consulates against political events at home, such as the assassination of Colosio, the government's military response to the Zapatista movement and more recently, against the impeachment of the PRD presidential candidate Lopez Obrador in April 2005 (Yossi 1999-2000, p. 688; Notimex 2005).

3.2.3. Politics without Borders: New state initiatives towards migrant political inclusion

Formal state policy efforts towards migrants' incorporation, however, commenced at the state level, inspired to a large extent by hometown clubs in the US. Among the pioneer states that tried to establish links with Mexican migrants were the migrant sending states, Zacatecas, Guanajuato and Oaxaca. In 1988, the PRI Governor of Zacatecas from 1986 to 1992, Genaro Borrego Estrada, formalised the '*Federacion de Clubes Zácatecanos Unidos*' and established the '2x1 programme (state funds matched every dollar raised by a US-based hometown club). He also campaigned for migrants' social welfare, signing an agreement between the '*Federacion*' and the IMSS (Mexico's medical insurance system); built the 'House of the Zácatecan' in Los Angeles and advocated the opening of a daily flight between Zacatecas and Los Angeles. In Guanajuato, the PAN governor Vicente Fox initiated a series of initiatives that were consolidated by his successors Romero Hicks and Juan Manuel Olivia Ramirez. The '*Mi Comunidad*' ('my community') program was created to channel the flow of Guanajuato's migrants' remittances into productive investments. In Oaxaca, the PRI governor Heladio Ramirez Lopez travelled continuously to

California to meet up with Oaxacan migrant leaders, and initiated the 'dollar by dollar' programme to channel Oaxacan migrants' remittances, similar to the one implemented in Zacatecas and Guanajuato.

Another aspect that the Mexican state has emphasised in this new phase is consular protection of migrants, as well as international cooperation in the formalisation of migrants' rights. Such activities can only be compared with the 'Repatriation Period' when the Mexican government, as we have seen, tried to secure the human and labour rights of its expatriates. In 1993, the '*Fundación Solidaridad Mexicana-Americana*' (Mexican-American Solidarity Foundation) was created with a clear focus on migrants' human rights advocacy. In 1991, Mexico's National Human Rights Commission issued its first report on the human rights violations of migrant workers in the US. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Mexico has also actively participated in international and multilateral efforts to institutionalise migrants' labour and human rights. The Mexican mission in Geneva was an active advocate of the 'International Convention of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families', which entered into force July 1, 2003, as well as a constant participant in UN and ILO multilateral meetings on migration issues (Martínez 12 March 2005).

In addition, the Mexican government has protested against highly publicized immigrant rights abuses in the US and raised the issue in bilateral and multilateral meetings. For instance, in response to the Minuteman Project, which consisted in recruiting US volunteers to carry out vigilante operations in Arizona to stop illegal immigrants from crossing the border, the Mexican government condemned such activities both by calling on its American counterpart to take action on the subject

and by accessing international mechanisms (Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs (CNN 2005). In April 19, 2005, Mexico presented a resolution on human rights of migrants, which was approved by the Human Rights Commission calling on states to punish groups, or individuals that unilaterally attempt to prevent migrants of their liberty, functions that can only be carried out by state officials (Mexican Mission in Geneva, interviews, April 2006).

Salinas' symbolic policies towards Mexicans abroad

Following state governments' initiatives, the executive government, in the late 1980s, implemented a series of policies on emigrants' participation at 'home' at the federal level that have continued and increased until present day. PRI President Salinas was the pioneer initiating two migrant-centred programmes of overriding importance. The '*paisano* programme' was created to change the migrants' image at home and stop the abusive behaviour of Mexican border officials towards Mexican migrants who returned home to visit or settle down permanently. As part of this programme, a brochure called '*cartilla paisano*' (migrant guide) was issued to inform returning migrants of their rights and responsibilities when interacting with hostile officials at the border.

However, the most relevant initiative was the creation in 1990 of the 'Program for Mexican Communities Abroad' (PCME) overseen by the General Directorate of Mexican Communities Abroad (DGCME), a division of the Ministry of Foreign Relations. The PCME emerged, according to Rodulfo Figueroa, from the view that the Mexican nation is 'a cultural entity not limited by its geographical borders' (Figueroa-Aramoni 1999). The programme was structured into eight project areas,

namely: community organisation, education, culture, sports, health, business contacts, information and fund raising and its main objectives were to promote projects that served as a link between the Mexican community and individuals and institutions of the private and public sectors in Mexico and to improve the images of Mexico abroad and of Mexican-Americans in Mexico (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1997) (unstructured interviews, Institute for Mexicans Abroad, June 2006).

Salinas' programmes and policies transformed Mexico into a transnational state. His efforts to incorporate migrants in the public definition of the nation, had repercussions in both countries as they were aimed at Mexicans abroad as much as at Mexicans at home. In the US, they were designed to awaken and maintain patriotic sentiments among expatriates and offer them social support. In Mexico, they were intended to change the negative image of Mexican emigrants and Mexican-Americans among nationals as these initiatives were accompanied by much publicity material and great media attention. As Shain argues the '*(Paisano)* programme is attempting to teach the other part of the state and the elite surrounding it to re-imagine the Mexicans in the United States as part of the Mexican nation' (Yossi 1999-2000, p.681). At the same time, Salinas' initiatives also focused on forging strong business ties with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (fieldwork interviews, Chicago, 2008).

Zedillo's regionalist approach on migrants' incorporation

President Zedillo not only continued Salinas' initiatives, but also went further by grouping them under the rubric of 'the Mexican nation', which figured in his 1995 State of the Union speech. In addition, he began to deploy a regionalist approach. In

order to achieve many of the objectives of the PCME, he created the State Offices for Attention to Migrants (OEAM for its acronym in Spanish), which provide a forum for emigrants to communicate with their home states. As Smith mentions 'regionalism has thus become a key socio-cultural and political structuring element of the Mexican state's transnational practices and discourses' (Smith, Peter 2003, p. 473). I would argue that this regionalism is also the consequence of both Mexico's recent decentralisation processes and new state-civil society relations. The main objectives of these state offices are, on the one hand, to strengthen the relationship between migrants abroad and Mexican state institutions by helping create and consolidate Mexican migrant groups abroad and advising them how they can become involved in public work or development projects in their communities of origin. On the other hand, these offices also try to improve the image of the migrant in sending communities and often assist expatriates' families back home on various issues such as the reception of remittances (Gomez Arau and Trigueros 2000).

In 2005, there were more than 23 active OEAM's. The one which has received the most attention is the OEAM from Guanajuato, which has facilitated the implementation of productive projects with an active and more entrepreneurial role undertaken by migrant groups (for an insight into the case of Guanajuato see Smith 2003 ; Torres and Kuznetsov 2006). Under 'my community' programme, co-financed equally by migrants and the government, but in which migrant groups carried out a more active role during the implementation and follow-up, it created 14 maquiladoras (export assembly plants), providing 339 local jobs (OECD, Economic Surveys, 2003). In the same way, this office has supported the creation of civil society organisations known as '*Casas Guanajuato*' (Guanajuato Homes), which

have been established in more than 33 US cities including Washington, California and Texas. However, the programme of mass communication with the Guanajuatense migrant has been the most innovative and successful. As Smith shows, a variety of T.V. programmes, radio broadcasts, informational brochures, newspaper sections and cultural magazines were designed by the state of Guanajuato 'to create a favourable image of itself, shape the cultural identity of the Guanajuatense migrant, and create appealing images of "home"' (Smith, Peter 2003, p. 484). The TV programme '*Me voy pa'l Norte*' (I am going North) is a weekly TV programme that portrays rural towns in Guanajuato, the migration phenomenon on both sides of the border and is broadcast by TV channels in Guanajuato and in the US. The radio programme '*Caminos de Guanajuato*' (Paths to Guanajuato) features themes of general interest to Guanajuatense migrants living in the US and broadcasts in the main Mexican migrants' host US cities. Guanajuto's migrant office was also responsible for publishing the cultural bulletins '*Pa'l Norte*' (to the North) and '*Fronteras*' (frontiers) which are distributed without charge to Guanajuatense migrants in the US.

Other OEAM's have carried out similar initiatives, but they have not been as innovative and constant. The OEAM of Zacatecas, for instance, has continued the work that Genaro Borrego started which I have mentioned above. The most recently created OEAM's have also had certain success. The OEAM of San Luis Potosi, created in 1998, inaugurated a direct flight from San Luis to Chicago (the main destination of migrants from this state), as well as negotiating the transfer of remittances at a lower cost. The OEAM of Oaxaca, created in 1999, according to Gomez Arau and Paz Trigueros, achieved that some hometown groups changed their

posture towards the Oaxacan government of Jose Murat and accepted its support in order to carry out more communitarian works at home (2000).

Fox' institutionalisation of migrant participation in domestic affairs

Under Fox, state initiatives have multiplied and covered all variety of aspects. From the very first moment he came into office, he showed determination and interest in dealing with migrants' issues as he did when he was governor of Guanajuato. As Ernesto Rodriguez mentioned in an unstructured interview, 'Salinas and Zedillo had put the migrant issue in the spotlight, but Fox simply gave it real attention and in order to do that he started creating all these institutions to study, formulate and implement the right policies and programmes in order to bring back those Mexicans in the US' (unstructured interview, July 2006). One of his first initiatives was the creation of the Presidential Office for Mexicans Abroad, which in 2003 merged with the National Council for Mexican Communities Abroad and became part of the Institute of Mexicans Abroad under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to Candido Morales, director of the Institute of Mexicans abroad, 'president Fox during his campaign received comments from paisanos that demanded a bigger volume and quality of attention to migrants in the US and in response the president invited Dr. Juan Hernandez to head the presidential office of Mexicans Abroad' (Morales August 2006).

The main feature of the Institute of Mexicans Abroad is that it directly involves Mexican migrants and Mexican-Americans in the migration-related policymaking process. The institute is made up of three main pillars. The first is the National Council of Mexican Communities Abroad, which is an inter-institutional council

where 11 members of the cabinet participate and is chaired by the president. The second is the Institute of Mexicans Abroad, which acts as the executive organ that co-ordinates and implements all the programmes, policies, and activities. It is made up of 40 people based at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mexico and 96 employees in the different Mexican consulates in the US and 4 in Canada. The third institution is the Advisory Council, which is formed by 125 elected representatives of the Mexican communities in the US (including 4 in Canada). The Advisory Council meets twice a year and its main role is to make recommendations on issues related to Mexican migrants and Mexican-Americans that are then addressed by the respective Ministry. According to Candido Morales 'after carrying out an analysis, they issue recommendations on how we should change policies to make things easier for them when they return to Mexico or while they live in the US' (Morales August 2006).

The Advisory Council is not only unprecedented in terms of the involvement of the Mexican community in the US in policymaking; around 255 recommendations were issued and addressed by the Mexican government between 2003 and 2005, but also because of its democratic nature. Most members of the Advisory Council are elected by their communities at the consular circumscriptions' level. When elections are due, the 46 Mexican consulates in the US use their registry of Mexicans living in the area and advertise the elections in the media and on the Internet. Members of the Council are appointed for a period of three years on a voluntary basis – 105 are Mexican and Mexican-American leaders in the US, 10 are members of the most renowned Latino organisations in the US²¹ and 10 are special advisors. In addition, the Council counts

²¹ Such as Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs, Hispanic National Bar Association, Hispanic Scholarship Fund, League of United Latin American Citizens, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational

with 32 representatives of the Mexican state governments. The structure of the Institute of Mexicans Abroad has thus institutionalised channels of communication between Mexican communities abroad and the Mexican government, as Cano mentions ‘the Advisory Council is the key transnational component of the IME’ (Cano and Delano 2005, p.33).

In addition, Fox attempted to reach a bilateral agreement with the US on the migration issue. Negotiations on a ‘guest worker’ initiative were well under way until the 9/11 events took place. From then on, American centred interest in security issues has led to the formulation of agreements in which migration has been restricted by security objectives. In December 2001, the US-Mexico Border Partnership Action Plan was signed by both countries, in which 22 points focused on security goals, both by strengthening the physical infrastructure and strategic facilities at the border and by exchanging intelligence information on a regular basis (Carral 2003). In the Americas Summit that took place in Monterrey in February 2004 and the meeting that also included the Canadian prime minister in March 2005, the Bush and Fox administrations have only addressed the migration issue as part of national security concerns.

To sum up, a turnaround has occurred in Mexico’s attitudes towards its émigrés since the late 1980’s with the PRI Salinas and Zedillo’s administrations and increased when an opposition party – the PAN – came into power. In the current period, the Mexican state aims at a new social construct of a nation that also includes those

Mexicans abroad, who are incorporated into the social, economic and political life of their home country. These national policies and programmes, however, have been predicated by migrants' hometown association's efforts to foster links with their places of origin, as well as local initiatives carried out mainly by migrant sending states accompanied with consular protection of Mexicans abroad.

Table 3.2 Selected policies of 'proximity' during the last three Mexican federal administrations (1988-2006)

Administration	Type of policies	Selected policies	Purpose
PRI President Salinas (1998-1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mainly symbolic ▪ Promotion of lobby 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>'Programa Paisano'</i> ▪ Programme for the Mexican Communities Abroad (1990) ▪ Negotiations with Mexican-American circles to lobby for the NAFTA passage at the US congress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve treatment of Mexicans that return home to visit or to settle permanently ▪ Promote projects that linked the Mexican community in the US with the Mexican government and private sector
PRI President Zedillo (1994-2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Symbolic ▪ Institutional ▪ Legal initiatives on dual nationality ▪ Regionalism ▪ Promotion of lobby 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1995 State of Union Speech ▪ State Offices for Attention to Natives ▪ 'Non-loss of Nationality' law (1996) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve image of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in Mexico ▪ Forum for emigrants to communicate with their home states
PAN President Fox (2000-2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Symbolic ▪ Institutional ▪ Bi-lateral negotiations ▪ Welfare protection ▪ Regionalism ▪ Promotion of migrants' investment and remittances ▪ Migrant political incorporation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presidential Office for Mexicans Abroad (in 2002, it becomes the National Council for Mexican Communities Abroad) ▪ Institute of Mexicans Abroad ▪ Campaign for 'guest-worker' agreement with the US (negotiations broke with 9/11) ▪ 2005 Vote Abroad Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Representation of Mexican migrants both in the US and in Mexico ▪ Elected representatives of the Mexican communities abroad that influence migration policy making ▪ Co-ordinate activities to promote integration between the US Mexican community and Mexico

Own elaboration

As we can observe in the table 3.2 above, in contrast to other periods, current state policies and programmes toward emigrants are incomparable in qualitative and quantitative terms. We can, however, find a few similarities with the ‘Repatriation period’ when policies on emigration and migrants’ return were part of the process of state consolidation and nation building. On the other hand, we can also argue that it has been precisely during the ‘Repatriation period’ and the contemporary one, when the Mexican state has been able to dedicate efforts towards the political construction of the nation and migrants’ participation, as in previous times defence and domestic economic matters were the highest priorities on the government’s agenda. Although in both phases, there has been a great emphasis on migrants’ incorporation in the reformulation of the notion of the Mexican nation, the main difference is that current state policies do not centre on return. In actual fact, Zedillo’s and Fox’ administrations have created governmental institutions in order to facilitate migrants’ political, social and economic participation from abroad. That is the case of the DGMCA, the state migrants’ offices, the Institute of Migrants Abroad and inter-ministerial cooperation on migrant issues. In the same vein, consulates’ activities have increased in order to provide social services abroad on a more extended scale. According to Carlos Gonzales, former head of the DGMCA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ and consulates’ purpose is ‘to enhance the efforts of Mexicans in the US to improve their standard of living and to foster relations with their communities of origin’ (Gonzalez Gutierrez 1993, p. 228). These efforts presume a permanent community of Mexican residents, thereby implying that the repatriation of this community is not a goal of state policy.

The current emphasis on migrants' transnational presence is not only factual, but also symbolic. The idea of an extraterritorial Mexican nation not bounded by its geographical borders has continuously appeared in the speeches of the last three former heads of state. Salinas argued that the diversity among Mexicans abroad must be recognised, and that 'the only thing they have in common, extraordinarily important for us, the Mexicans, are their roots, close or far' (Sherman 1999, p.858). As Sherman argues, the notion of membership, rather than common residence has been key for the re-building of the Mexican nation (Sherman 1999). As we have seen, Zedillo bestowed the name 'Mexican Nation' on his programme of relations with the Mexican community abroad and in his State of the Union speech in September 1995 declared that 'our Mexican Nation is no longer constrained by the limit of our borders'. Fox in his triumphal speech after his electoral victory proclaimed himself not only as the leader of 100 million Mexicans in Mexico, but also, of the 23 million living in the US. However, as Table 3.2 shows, the kind of policies adopted during the administrations of Salinas, Zedillo and Fox have differed. Although most of the policies implemented have survived to the following administration, each head of the state has sought to increase their scope and add more far-reaching initiatives. This pattern has also endorsed increasing initiatives at the sub-national level such as the state offices for attention to migrants. With Fox in office, however, the attention that Mexican migrants abroad received led to the creation of ministerial level offices and bureaucracies only dedicated to involve migrant representatives into migration policy making, as well as advocating migrant electoral participation.

Yet while the contemporary Mexican state policies devise new strategies to transcend geopolitical borders it has been the formalisation of these efforts, through constitutional reforms in 1996 and secondary laws, that has formally permitted Mexicans abroad to participate in Mexican economic and political life without returning permanently to Mexico. I will now discuss this issue in further detail.

3.2.4. Dual nationality and citizenship and the 1996 federal legal reforms

Mexico, according to most scholars, historically rejected dual nationality at congressional debates (Trigueros Gaisman 1996; Vargas 1998; Fitzgerald 2005). The Constitution of 1917 stated that Mexican nationality would be lost when another nationality was adopted. As we have seen, it was only in the 1939 amendments to the Law of Nationality and Naturalisation that the Mexican nationality could be recovered by those Mexican nationals that had naturalised abroad, but only upon return. However, in the second half of the 1990's, under Zedillo's administration, the Mexican Congress commenced a series of debates on the possibility of extending economic and political rights to Mexican migrants.

In this section, I begin by again pointing out the distinction that the Mexican state makes between 'nationality' and 'citizenship'; I then illustrate the Congressional debates that have taken place surrounding each term and lay emphasis on how each political party has adopted a posture regarding dual nationality and political rights of Mexican migrants. In this section, I argue that dual nationality rights in Mexico was mainly an initiative of the executive and PRI party with the purpose of encouraging Mexicans abroad to acquire the US citizenship in the context of restrictionist US

immigration policies and the less official goal of securing a Mexican lobby group in the US. In contrast, the issue of political rights (and obligations) of Mexicans abroad has involved mainly non-PRI parties (particularly the centre-left PRD) and non-governmental groups and this issue has been at the heart of democratization processes in the country.

According to the Mexican constitution, as I have mentioned earlier, nationality and citizenship are two distinct attributes. While Mexican nationality establishes membership to the nation as well as economic rights, Mexican citizenship refers to political rights and obligations, such as voting and running for elections and carrying out military service. Mexican nationality represents a mixed system of descent (*jus sanguinis*) and territory (*jus soli*)²² (Diario Oficial de la Federacion 5 February 1917). On the other hand, citizenship in Mexico is not automatic. A Mexican national can become citizen, so to say, be able to participate in governance through the right to vote and hold office, when s/he turns 18 years old and lives an ‘upright’ life (Diario Oficial de la Federacion 5 February 1917, Article 34). Thus, whereas Mexican legislators have widely agreed on allowing dual nationality (granting economic rights), much discussion has been focused on agreeing to dual citizenship (granting political rights).

The first proponent of dual nationality at the federal level was the Mexican government itself. It was an essential part of Zedillo’s ‘Mexican Nation’ plan presented in May 1995, which I have referred to previously. Zedillo claimed that

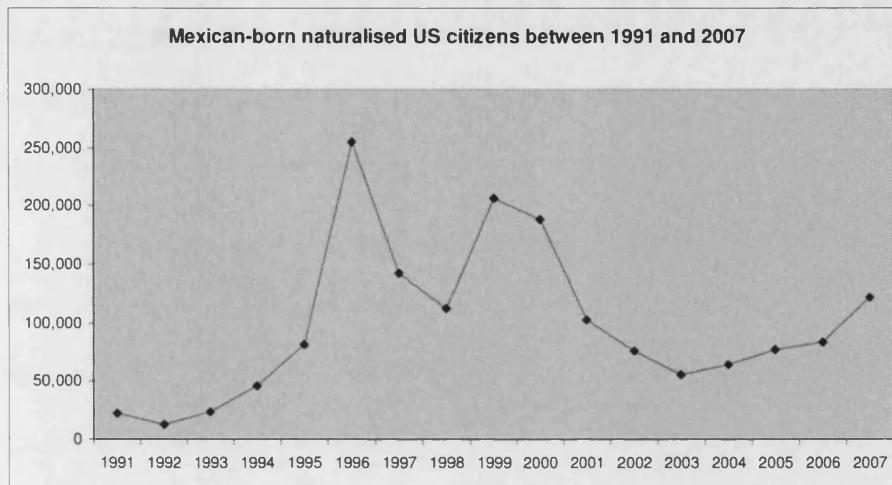
²² It should be noted that the 1917 Constitution originally mentioned residency requirements for those nationals born in Mexico to foreign parents, as well as restrictions on certain rights.

one of the main reasons for the nationality amendment was the ‘bounded-ness that Mexican migrants sustain with respect to their roots, culture, values, and national traditions’ (H. Camara de Diputados 1996). During congressional debates, the most cited reason was the hostile context of reception in the US and the historically lowest naturalisation rates of Mexicans in the US (see Figure 3.2.)²³. According to this logic, by allowing Mexicans abroad not to lose their Mexican nationality while acquiring the US citizenship, migrants could best protect their rights by voting in US elections against restrictionist measures²⁴. Nonetheless, president Zedillo also had another reason in mind. Allegedly, he told a group of Mexican-American leaders in Texas that the purpose of this law was ‘to develop a close relationship between his government and Mexican Americans, one in which they could be called upon to lobby US policy-makers on economic and political issues involving the United States and Mexico’ (Cited in Corchado 1995, Fitzgerald 2003).

²³ This is well documented in the work of Jones-Correa. See Jones-Correa, Michael ‘Institutional and Contextual Factors in Immigrant Naturalization and Voting’, *Citizenship Studies*, vol. 5, No. 1, 2001; Jones-Correa, Michael ‘Under Two Flags: Dual Nationality in Latin America and its consequences for the US’, *International Migration Review* 3 (84): 34-67

²⁴ This position is similar to other sending country initiatives. For instance, Turkey also granted dual nationality rights in order to encourage its Turkish diaspora in Germany to become German (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2001)

Figure 3.2 Mexican-born naturalised US citizen (1991-2007)



Own elaboration. Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS, Table 21, 2004); (INS, Table 32, 2007).

To consider the presidential initiative on dual nationality, all the political factions of the Chamber of Deputies decided to organise a colloquium with the participation of various deputies, the director of the Programme for Mexican Communities Abroad (PCME), Roger Diaz de Cossio, the governors of some of the main migrants' sending states (i.e. Zacatecas, Jalisco, Baja California, Oaxaca, Campeche and Michoacán), as well as a few academics. In such colloquium, two blocks were identified in relation to their position on dual nationality and citizenship. On the one hand, Diaz de Cossio, president of the PCME, and various PRI deputies supported Zedillo's proposal, which allowed Mexicans to maintain their nationality even when gaining a new one and thus, exercise full rights to own property, but no political rights. In fact, as Santamaria mentions, the PRI version was directed only toward Mexicans who were naturalised US citizens (2003, p.284). In contrast, the PRD's position was to grant all Mexican emigrants regardless of their legal status the right to have dual nationality and also to vote abroad, so to say, to hold dual citizenship. As PRD deputy Cuauhtémoc Sandoval mentioned: 'For the past fifteen years co-nationality groups holding legal residence in the United States have requested that

the Mexican government activate the legal modifications necessary for dual nationality...'. Therefore, the proposal of the PRD is all-inclusive, since these rights cannot be mutilated or segregated: dual nationality and dual citizenship' (Cited in Sandoval 1995).

However, in accordance with fieldwork interviews, Zedillo's non-loss of nationality initiative did not respond to the demand from Mexican migrant activists. According to Raul Ross, member of the Coalition of the Political Rights of Mexicans Abroad, 'when the non loss of nationality law comes into being [...], according to them, the Mexican migrants requested it, but it is not true! In reality what they wanted was that Mexicans nationalised in the US and voted here (in the US) not in Mexico' (Ross April 2008).

The 'non loss of nationality' ('*No perdida de nacionalidad*') constitutional reforms were passed 405 to 1 in the Congress of deputies at a time of increasing competitive politics. In the end, dual nationality was allowed for all migrants regardless of their legal status. This resulted in the new Nationality law on December 3rd 1996, which meant a revision and a modification of Articles 30, 32, and 37 of the Mexican constitution (and the amendment of at least 55 secondary laws). Specifically, the results of the legal reforms were that on the one hand, Mexican migrants could naturalise US citizens (or hold any other citizenship) without having to renounce to their Mexican nationality and could own property in Mexico even if they resided abroad (Articles 30, 37). On the other hand, it restricted dual nationality rights (*jus sanguinis*) to the first generation born abroad, limiting the infinity extension of dual nationals (Article 30). In addition, the new version of Article 32 made special

mention of dual nationals' restriction from occupying public office. Firstly, it mentioned that other rules and norms are to be established in order to avoid dual nationality issues. Additional legislation such as the 1998 Law of Nationality, however, does allow dual nationals to occupy public office (Article 16, Diario Oficial de la Federacion 1998) by showing a Mexican nationality certificate (Article 16), but this entails renouncing their second nationality (Article 17, Diario Oficial de la Federacion 1998). In second place, Article 32 limited dual nationals from occupying public office and functions for which the constitution shows as a requirement 'to be Mexican by birth' as these kind of jobs are 'reserved to those who hold such quality and do not acquire another nationality' (second paragraph, Article 32). Examples of such public office positions which the federal constitution requires individuals to be Mexican by birth are: the presidency, federal senators and deputies (Articles 82, 58 and 55 respectively).

It is clear that dual nationals' possibility of occupying public office was not a goal intended in the reform proposed by PRI President Zedillo. However, the ambiguous writing of Article 32 has been subject to contrasting interpretations (Cabral 2003; Editorial 2003; Najar 2003; Ross Pineda 2003; Moctezuma Longoria 2004), often according to divergent political motivations²⁵. This study shows, however, that as the debate on emigrant political participation evolves, practice has come to differ from the actual law (see the cases of Zacatecas and Michoacan in chapters 7 and 8 respectively).

²⁵ For instance, Mexican-American Eddie Varon Levy, resident in Los Angeles, California, won a federal deputy position in the year 2000 supported by the PRI. However, for the 2003 mid-term elections for federal deputies, the PRI decided not to support two candidates for the party's proportional seats, Felipe Cabral and Luis de la Garza, for having a second US nationality.

We should also bear in mind that Mexico as a federal system gives rights to states ('*estados*') to define their own concepts of nationality and citizenship in their local constitutions, as long as they do not contravene with the federal constitution and laws (Article 40 of the federal constitution). In terms of direct political participation (i.e. eligibility for political office and government employment) states are able to make their own requirements such as period of residency as well as whether dual nationals can occupy public office according to the interpretation given to the first paragraph of Article 32²⁶. For instance, in the case of the state of Zacatecas prior to the 2003 constitutional reforms, Zacatecan citizenship (and therefore electoral rights) required effective residency in the state for at least five years (Art. 13 prior to the 2003 constitutional reforms). In Michoacán, on the other hand, residency has not appeared as a requirement to occupy local public positions (Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas de la UNAM 1918).

The right to vote abroad, however, was not part of the 'non loss of nationality' law. Instead, it was a PRD and civil society initiative that appeared earlier and for the first time in the dialogue between the main political parties – PRI, PAN, PRD and PT – which led to the federal electoral reforms in August 22nd, 1996. The national political accords envisaged during the PRI Zedillo's administration were entrusted to the Ministry of the Interior (Secretaría de Gobernación). The first phase of the dialogue took place in the Seminar of the Chapultepec Castle in Mexico City, which resulted

²⁶ 'The Law will regulate the exercise of those rights that Mexican legislation endows to Mexicans who hold another nationality, and will establish the rules to avoid dual nationality conflicts'. First paragraph, Article 32, Diario Oficial de la Federación (5 February 1917). Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. Secretaría de Servicios Parlamentarios; Centro de Documentación Información y Análisis, Cámara de Diputados del H. Congreso de la Unión.

in a proposal for electoral reform that consisted of 60 points. Point 58 raised by Munoz Ledo, president of the PRD party, mentioned ‘to evaluate the possibility of establishing efficient mechanisms so that Mexican citizens residing abroad can exercise their right to vote’. According to fieldwork interviews, the vote abroad was initially part of the package proposed by Munoz Ledo, who was the first one to raise the issue of migrant political participation since 1976 and not necessarily the view of the party.

The final discussion on state reform ended with the Bucarelli Accords (in reference to the name of the street where the Ministry of the Interior was located) which contained 74 points divided into two sections – constitutional and legal modifications. The vote of Mexicans abroad figured as point 14 of the constitutional reform. We should note that the PAN did not participate in the final phase of the Bucarelli accords and although its proposal included many of those precepts contained in the agreements, it did not refer to the vote of Mexicans abroad. During the discussions, however, the position of the Ministry of the Interior, led by Emilio Chauyffet Chemor of the PRI, was in favour of the *status quo*, that is, not allowing Mexican emigrants to vote due to ‘reasons related to logistics and sovereignty’ (unstructured interview, 2006). That is to say that the franchise should only take place within the national territory (Andrade 1997).

The constitutional reforms approved on August 22 of 1996 included a change to Article 36, which allowed citizens to vote outside their electoral districts. Indirectly, this opened the possibility for the vote abroad. However, migrants’ political participation (in the form of voting rights) was only permitted as long as migrants

returned to Mexico to exercise this right. New secondary laws had to be created in order to implement an absentee ballot system. The demand for the implementation of an absentee voting system survived as transitory article 8 of the reforms to the Federal Electoral Code (COFIPE) approved on 14 November 1996 that mentioned:

‘With the purpose of studying the modalities to allow Mexican citizens residing abroad to be able to exercise the right to vote in presidential elections, the General Council of the Federal Electoral Institute will design a commission of specialists to carry out the studies needed, proceeding to propose, if relevant, to the competing instances of the corresponding legal reforms once National Citizens’ Registry is created and in operation and the credentials of citizenship identity had been issued’ (published 22 November 1996).

The full exercise of dual citizenship rights, thus, became the main issue on migrants’ organisations’ and migrant activists’ political agendas. In particular, the ‘*Coalición por los Derechos Políticos de los Mexicanos en el Extranjero*’ (Coalition for the political rights of the Mexicans abroad) was created with the sole purpose of advancing this claim and ensuring that migrants had a voice in Mexican politics. The acknowledgment of the migrants’ right to vote by the head of the PRD during the Buccareli negotiations put migrant political participation at the heart of the democratic transition in Mexico.

3.3. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate that current state policies and legal reforms on migrants’ political inclusion and participation are historically unprecedented. For most of the 20th century the Mexican state maintained a low profile regarding migrants’ issues and even the most visible state initiatives were only those that promoted migrants’ return and settlement. In contrast, in the

contemporary period current politically constructed state policies at the federal and state levels have not only been created to mediate the flows of transnational migration, as well as cultural production and human rights protection, but also increasingly political practice across borders. Such policies and legal reforms have been key elements through which Mexican transnational citizenship practices and state-migrants relationships are being constituted. These policies, as we have seen, have been mainly influenced by Mexico's insertion in the global economy and, in particular, the approval of a free trade agreement with its Northern neighbours.

With the 1996 constitutional reforms, the idea of common ancestry – even extending to Mexican-Americans – rather than same residence has become central to the definition of the Mexican nation as one that transcends geopolitical boundaries. The shifting in the concept of Mexicanness from being one territorially-based to one centred on membership has been mainly borne out of competitive politics. Most importantly, dual nationality negotiations differed from early dual citizenship (or migrant political participation) debates in terms of who advocates them and why. Whereas the former was supported by the then-official-party PRI, as a way to promote the naturalisation of Mexicans abroad as US citizens and thus expand a migrant lobby in the US, the latter emerged from PRD and migrant civil society groups and became part of the Bucarelli's electoral reforms, which were at the centre of Mexico's democratic transition.

In the next chapter, I embark on the task of explaining how political rights at the federal level have been extended to Mexicans abroad. I show how political structures for migrants have opened up as a consequence of changes in the domestic

institutional settings; in particular, a strong support from non-PRI political parties and the prominent advocacy role of a migrant lobby group – the '*Coalicion para los Derechos Políticos de los Mexicanos en el Extranjero*'.

Chapter 4

4. The transnational dimension of the vote abroad bill negotiations in Mexico

On July 2, 2006, for the very first time, Mexican expatriates were able to exercise the right to vote from abroad, in what has been described as the most competitive and bitter federal elections in the country's post-PRI era. Although Mexican expatriates could only vote to elect a new president, domestic residents also voted to renew the entire 500-seat Lower Chamber and half of the 128-seat Senate. The novel exercise of Mexican citizenship beyond the legal territorial limits of the nation-state was preceded by a long and heated political debate in which not only the Mexican government and migrant groups were involved, but also civil society, the migrant business elite and domestic political parties. The vote abroad debate is a good example of how different political actors increasingly interact in a transitional democratic political arena and participate in the legal rewriting of the definition of the Mexican nation.

After having reviewed in the previous chapter how the Mexican state perspectives and policies towards migrants have changed dramatically in the last few years and argued that since 1988 the Mexican state has actively involved in policies and activities to attempt to incorporate its migrant citizens in the cultural, social, economic and political life of the state, without implying a need for a permanent return to their homeland (efforts that were crystallised in the 1996 electoral and dual citizenship constitutional reforms). In this chapter I analyse the causes that led the vote abroad bill be approved in 2005 at the federal level, which is one of the most

tangible expressions of how the notion of Mexicanness has shifted from being defined by territorial boundaries to one equivalent to membership. I try to answer the following questions: why was the vote abroad bill implemented? What actors and factors influenced and shaped this bill? Also, what kind of mechanisms did the different actors use?

Identifying the actors involved in the passage of the bill during the almost eight-year negotiation period – since the first legal initiative was handed in at Congress in 1998, until the final bill was approved in 2005 – I argue that non-PRI parties and successful migrant groups' involvement were the key determinants that led to the approval and final shape of the vote abroad legislation in 2005. I show how the passage of the vote abroad bill is the reflection of how political opportunity structures for migrants have opened up as a consequence of democratisation and economic integration; whilst, on the other hand, Mexican migrant groups aware of their remittances' economic leverage have become increasingly confident that they can affect political outcomes at home. In the past, migrant groups' lack of interest was understandable, as it was believed many emigrants had crossed the border to escape '*el mal gobierno*' (bad government). A distinct type of migrant groups, I argue, is now being created with clear political goals and able to draw significant media attention having, in this way, a powerful impact on public opinion in both countries, highlighting the economic benefit they represent in the country of origin (sending remittances home), as well as the abuses to which they might be subject in a foreign land.

To date, the adoption of migrant political rights bills in countries of origin and the lobbying of expatriates for political rights have received uneven attention from

scholars of democracy and regime change. Most scholarship has focused on the economic links of migrant populations to communities of origin and how they affect class structures at home and abroad. Less well studied, with a few exceptions, is the impact of emigration on the politics of the country of origin (Ostergaard-Nielsen 30 June - 1 July 2001; Martinez Saldana 2003; Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003; Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003). The following study provides an understanding on what the dynamics are behind the passage of bills that foster migrants' political participation from abroad and what are the main actors that influence them. This study challenges the notions of 'migrant-led' or 'bottom-up' initiatives versus 'state-led' or 'top-down' approaches, used by many transnational scholars by giving the political system a more central role in the creation of a transnational public sphere (Goldring 1988; Smith R. 2001). Research on the vote abroad legislation in the Mexican case points, instead, to new bargain spaces where migrant groups, as new political actors in the domestic arena, meet revived political parties as a consequence of a political transition.

The innovative character of this chapter rests on providing an analysis of new types of migrant organisations which are not created to provide charitable contributions to their local communities (Delgado Wise and Rodriguez Ramirez 2001; Moctezuma Longoria 2001; Orozco and Lapointe 2004; Williams January 2004), but to actively lobby to further migrants' political rights in their country of origin and to improve legislation in their host country, as well as furthering their motivations to create a transnational political sphere. Although migrant organisations have triggered the negotiation process on the vote abroad issue, research presented here shows that political parties' and political blocs' differences have nonetheless been decisive in

the approval of the vote abroad bill. I argue that political parties have not necessarily acted in a rational manner. Most of the time, they provide support for the vote abroad bill only when it matches their motivations and they predict to increase their votes with Mexicans abroad. Strategic interests, nonetheless, are blurred when parties go through phases of contestation, particularly over internal party candidacies. Although there are various points of divergence between the different political actors' motivations to extend the franchise abroad, the main point of convergence is the belief that migrants' voting rights are justified as part of Mexico's democratisation, as well as the significance of their remittances, which could also be understood as a form of 'buying membership'.

The arguments presented in this article are generated from print media, government data and interviews between 2005 and 2006 with key members of the Congress and Senate involved in the passage of the vote abroad bill, as well as members of the most active migrant lobby group, that is the '*Coalicion por los Derechos Politicos de los Mexicanos en el Extranjero* (CDPME)', leading figures from the main domestic institutions that were called to participate in the analysis of this bill at different events: the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) and National Institute of Migration (INM), along with members of academia, migrant business elite and prominent migrant-rights advocates and opponents.

4.1. The new transnational policy-making dynamics in Mexico

‘The negotiation of the vote abroad bill has been long and tough, a clear indication of the difficulties we are experiencing as a new democracy... it is only now that this is happening, with the PRI this would have never taken place’ (Jones July 2006) mentions the former PAN Senator Jeffrey Jones when questioned about the timing of the approval of the absentee vote bill. In turn, the director of the Centre of Migration Studies of the National Migration Institute (INI), Ernesto Rodriguez Chavez, affirms that the vote abroad initiative was part of the change presented in Fox’ migration policy, which also involved ‘boosting emigration in order to lower economic pressure, seizing remittances and negotiating a migration programme with the US (August 2006). Candido Morales, current president of the Institute of the Mexicans abroad and migrant leader in the US also mentions ‘... Fox had a crucial role supporting migrants political rights, but (the main actors) have been migrant groups themselves, the government is simply responding to migrants’ demands’ (Morales August 2006). These quotes summarise how the political scenario in Mexico is rapidly changing as democratisation and economic globalisation processes take place which have opened up political opportunity windows for national and bi-national actors such as opposition parties and migrant organisations.

In this section, I explore the factors that have favoured the adoption of policies that encourage Mexican migrants to participate in national development processes over the long term and from afar, policies that decouple residence and membership and extend the notion of the Mexican nation beyond state boundaries. I argue that Mexico’s democratic transition and its insertion in the global economy, mainly in the

form of the adoption of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), have opened up political spaces for the three key players present in the transnational debate on migrants' political rights. That is, opposition parties, US-based Mexican migrant groups and public opinion based in both countries.

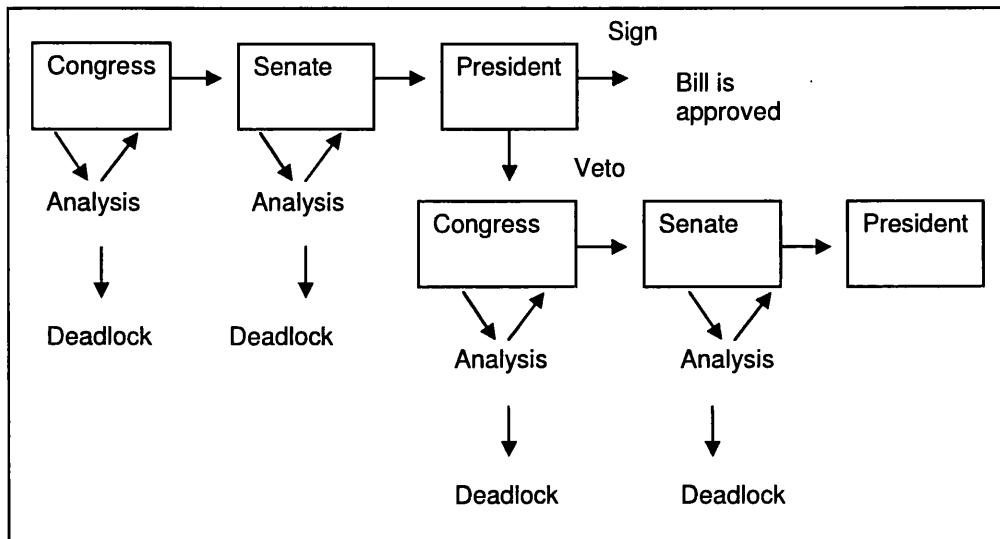
First, Mexico's democratic transition has meant the return of the policy-making process to the legislature, where the crystallisation of an initiative into law has to go through, more often than not, an intense negotiation. Political parties are then placed at the political centre stage and their positions and interests, as well as their number of seats in the legislature, are crucial for the adoption of new policies. To be true, the president still retains a significant influence on the policy-making process, but not as near as in the past. The Mexican authoritarian regime had two distinctive features, the hegemony of a single political party, the PRI and the concentration of power in the presidency. Throughout the years, the PRI president monopolised the other constitutional organs in the policy-making process as it also held a majority in both legislative branches of government.

Mexico's transition from authoritarianism to democracy involved the dismantling of the hegemonic party system with two significant developments. First, in the 1997 mid-term election, the PRI lost the absolute majority in the Congress for the first time since it was created in 1929. Second, in 2000 the PAN's candidate Vicente Fox won the presidential elections, although his party failed to win the absolute majority in either chamber. Since then, Mexico has become a presidential democracy operating under divided government.

However, what is the policy-making circuit operating in '*el Mexico democrático*' (democratic Mexico)? The Mexican constitution establishes different policy-making procedures depending on the type of legislation. If the new policy is a constitutional reform, the bill has to gain the approval of two-thirds of both legislative chambers and be ratified by 16 of the 31 state legislatures. This procedure tries to provide constitutional law with a greater degree of stability than ordinary legislations. On the other hand, if the initiative does not require a reform to the Constitution, the procedure is less complicated. It involves only three actors: the Congress, the Senate and the president. The ordinary policy-making procedure requires only a majority in the Congress, a majority in the Senate and the president's agreement in order for an initiative to become law. As displayed in the diagram below (Figure 4.1), the Mexican constitution imposes the necessity of bicameral cooperation and does not authorise the president to legislate by decree. Initiatives are often sent for analysis, workshops and discussions with specialists and authorities in the field before they are voted in the floor. During this burdensome process, commonly known in Mexico as '*la congeladora*' ('the freezer'), initiatives can encounter deadlock if an agreement is not reached. During democratic contestation and with policy making taking place at the legislative level, this technique has become increasingly common²⁷. However, these initiatives can still be recovered.

²⁷ For instance, during the LIX legislature in the Congress, about 1,300 initiatives had been sent for analysis out of 1,600.

Figure 4.1 Policy-making in Mexico (at the federal level)



Own elaboration

Thus, the initiative to extend voting rights to Mexicans abroad was an ordinary legislation as a previous 1996 constitutional reform to article 36 allowed Mexicans to vote outside their original electoral districts where they had been originally registered, as I previously explained in chapter 3 (22 August 1996). Thus, the legal initiatives presented by the different political actors – executive, political parties and civil society groups – since 1998 were mainly instructions of how to put this right into practice, in the form of amendments to the ‘Federal Code of Institutions and Electoral Procedures’ (COFIPE). In addition, several events and conferences were organised, reports were commissioned and specialist working groups were set up during those years²⁸. Table 4.1 shows all 18 ‘vote abroad’ bills sent to the Lower

²⁸ For instance, the IFE Special Commission set up in 1998; ‘Seminario Internacional sobre el voto en el extranjero organised by the IFE in 1998; ‘Conferencia Trilateral Canada-Estados Unidos –Mexico sobre el voto en el extranjero’ organised by the IFE in 1998; ‘Estudio Comparado sobre el voto en el extranjero’ organised by the IFE, the TEPJF and UN in 2002; IFE working group set up in 2004; ‘Aspectos cualitativos de los ciudadanos mexicanos en el extranjero durante la jornada federal del año 2006 by ‘Colegio de la Frontera Norte’

Chamber between 1998 and 2005. With the exception of one initiative presented in 1999 by opposition parties' factions – PAN, PRD, PT and PVEM, all the rest experienced deadlock. This initiative was supported by a majority in Congress (right after the PRI lost the absolute majority in this chamber) and was sent to the revision chamber. In the Senate, however, the PRI blocked it preventing migrants to vote in the 2000 presidential elections. What then explains why the 'vote abroad' bill was approved five years later even with the backing of the PRI? Understanding in general terms what factors trigger an ordinary legislation to be approved under divided government would help us to discover why the 'vote abroad' bill was eventually adopted and implemented for the first time in the 2006 presidential elections.

Table 4.1 Vote abroad initiatives presented between 1998 and 2005

Status	Year	Political Faction	Legislator(s)
Not approved	1998	PRD	Dip. Lazaro Cardenas Batel
Not approved	1998	PAN	Dip. Jose de Jesus Gonzalez Reyes
Not approved	1999	PAN	Dip. Alberto Castilla Peniche
Not approved	1999	PAN	Dip. Alberto Castilla Peniche and Javier Alvara Cossio
Approved in Congress and blocked in the Senate	1999	PAN, PRD, PT and PVEM	Deputies from various parliamentary groups
Not approved	2000	PAN	Dip. Felipe de Jesus Preciado Coronado
Not approved	2001	PRD	Dip. Sergio Acosta Salazar
Not approved	2001	PRD	Dip. Gregorio Urias German
Not approved	2002	PRI, PAN, PRD and PVEM	Sen. Genaro Borrego Estrada (PRI), Sen. Jeffrey Max Jones (PAN), Sen. Serafin Rios Alvarez (PRD), and Sen. Emilia Patricia Gomez Bravo (PVEM)
Not approved	2002	PRD	Dip. Miguel Bortolli Castillo, Dip. Ramon Leon Morales, Sen. Jesus Ortega Martinez and

			Sen. Rutilio Escandon
Not approved	2002	PAN	Sen. Luis Alberto Rico Samaniego
Not approved	2003	PRI	Dip. Irma Pineyro Arias
Not approved	2003	PAN	Dip. Eduardo Rivera Perez
Not approved	2003	PRD	Sen. Raymundo Cardenas
Not approved	2004	Federal Executive (PAN)	President Fox
Not approved	2004	PRD	Dip. Juan Jose Garcia Ochoa
Approved in Congress	2004	PRI	Dip. Laura Elena Martinez Rivera
Not approved	2005	PAN	Sen. Cesar Jauregui Robles

Source: Own elaboration, information based on legal initiatives presented in the Congress and Senate between 1998 and 2005

Nacif's model of policy-making under divided government in Mexico which relies consistently on Krehbiel's model of pivotal politics is relevant here (Nacif 2005; Nacif March 2003). He argues that policy change in Mexico occurs when the political party controlling the executive branch is the same as the party in the median position regarding a policy issue, with the *status quo* and a liberal position at each of the extremes. That is, the number of legislators of the president's party would be in the median position when it splits up the opposition in two halves and neither half has sufficient votes to form a majority. On the other hand, when the most-preferred policy of the president's party is not median the picture turns more complicated as the president can exercise his/her veto power. According to Nacif's theory, in this case the outcomes vary depending on the position of the *status quo* policy with respect to ideal points of the president's party and the median party.

Nacif's model, however, relies on the assumption of party coherence (among others), a political behaviour that does not correspond completely to the Mexican political

reality. The belief that parties behave as unities and that there is a coherence within the parliamentary fractions of each party, between the factions at each legislative chamber, as well as between the presidency and party delegations, is based on the fact that Mexican politicians rely on the party label to advance their careers as running for re-election in consecutive terms is prohibited in the Mexican Constitution. However, as we will see in the discussion of the 'vote abroad' bill, in this transitional period personal interests often conflict with party interests and political loyalty is rare. During the approval of the 'vote abroad' bill in 2005, the PAN, a moderate supporter of migrants' political participation, held the presidency and the median position regarding the stance on migrants' political rights, with the PRI and the PRD at the conservative and liberal extremes both in the Congress and the Senate. However, as we will see, parties' behaviour in the legislature was, more often than not, incongruent with their ideal points.

Moreover, this model of policy-making dynamics under divided government also excludes two players that have become more significant in democratic Mexico, that is, interest groups and the role of public opinion. The presence of interest groups and non-governmental organisations is also a feature of societies that have achieved a certain degree of openness and democratisation as the actual people and potential voters play a key role in the democratization movement (Whitehead 2003). In the transnational debate on migrants' political rights, interest groups and public opinion acquire an international character because they are represented by US-based Mexican migrant groups and public opinion encompasses Mexicans in Mexico and in the US.

It has been noted that the presence of international groups in Mexican politics is explained by regional economic integration. Lorena Cook argues that as Mexico embraces economic liberalisation, the formal recognition of this process in the form of the discussions surrounding the NAFTA facilitated transnational political action by non-state actors (Cook 14 May 2007; see also Fox 2004). As she mentions, ‘the NAFTA debate increased the contact points between international actors and the domestic political process in both the United States and Mexico and it expanded the possible arenas available to non-governmental actors for strategic action on a range of issues, not all of them pertaining strictly to NAFTA’. In fact, as we have seen, the Mexican government approached Mexican-Americans and Mexican migrant leaders in the US with the hopes that they could act as a ‘pro-Mexico’ lobby in Washington during the NAFTA negotiations. It should be noted, however, that it was not the first time that the Mexican government searched for a form of partnership with the Mexican community abroad, as Mexican migrant organisations had a long history of involvement in community development matching funds (‘3x1’) in partnership with local and state governments. However, the involvement of Mexican-American community leaders as a ‘pro-Mexico’ lobby stands out as the first time that a Mexican-origin migrant group aimed at impacting policy-making regarding Mexico in American territory.

US-based or bi-national based migrant groups have been key players in the transnational debate on migrants’ political rights and they have been able to lead the vote abroad campaign both in Mexico and the US. One of the most active groups has been the *‘Coalicion por los Derechos de los Mexicanos en el Exterior’* (‘the Coalition for the Rights of Mexicans Abroad’). The role of the *‘Coalicion’* during the

approval of the vote abroad bill in Mexico suggests that migrant groups' political activity in their countries of origin is taking a more active tone. In the case of the 'Coalicion', this organisation was created with the sole purpose of advancing migrants' political rights in Mexico. It was formed by the most prominent and active migrant leaders in the United States, successful entrepreneurs, as well as migrant rights' activists and academics on the other side of the border. Members residing in Mexico were vital for successfully implementing the strategies and views from the rest of the group. As Raul Ross mentioned 'the Coalition did not belong to any migrant hometown association or political party as it claimed to represent most migrants' interests in being able to exercise their voice about Mexican political issues' (Ross September 2006).

However, it would be misleading to suggest that all Mexican expatriates' groups were in favour of and actively advocated political participation at home. The vote abroad issue divided public opinion, particularly among Mexican-American circles. Mexican-American or Latino groups, such as the League of United Latin-American Citizens (LULAC) and the National Council of *La Raza* (NCLR) originally manifested against dual nationals (whether Americans by birth or naturalised US citizens) voting in presidential elections in their country of origin in a survey carried out by the Mexican-American Solidarity Foundation ('*Fundacion Solidaridad Mexico-Americana*') in 1996 (Castaneda 2006, p. 143). Mexican-American organisations, nonetheless, have actively campaigned for the Latino vote in the US, in turn, supporting the Mexican absentee vote contravened their political interests. Specifically, according to the IFE Specialists Commission's final report issued in 1998, the reason why they opposed the absentee vote was twofold. Firstly, it raised

dual loyalty issues and advanced the debate on the lack of adaptation in the country of reception. Secondly, it could have a negative impact on the context of reception in the US. However, during final negotiations LULAC publicly supported the approval of the vote abroad bill (LULAC press release 2005).

It is necessary then to explore the motivations of these mainly Mexican migrant groups, in contrast to Mexican-American or Latino groups, in obtaining political participation in their home country, as well as to what extent they are able to influence policy-making and achieve their demands at home. The latter would also include the task of analysing how the state and different political parties and organisations in the country of origin may try to use such migrant rights lobby groups to further their own political agendas and vice versa.

In addition, these two key political actors in the ‘vote abroad’ negotiations – political parties and migrant groups – have had to act in a transnational political field where public opinion encompasses Mexicans in Mexico and in the US. As a result of regional economic integration and the globalisation of communication technologies, public opinion in Mexico has become more aware of the fate of co-nationals abroad and vice versa. In particular, in recent years, Mexican media and Spanish-language media-networks in the US have focused on migrants rights’ abuses in the US, the difficulties Mexicans face abroad, the economic importance of migrants’ remittances and the pending US migration reform. Interestingly, a strong bi-national non-profit media has been developing in recent years that is produced or run simultaneously in communities in Mexico and the US (Fox November 4-5, 2005). For instance, the

migrant-run Spanish language public radio network, '*Radio Bilingue*' is broadcast on 20 stations in Mexico and nearly 50 in the US²⁹.

Thus, this discussion has argued that political parties, US-based migrant groups and bi-national public opinion have become important players in contemporary Mexico as a result of the democratisation processes that Mexico has experienced, as well as of the wider social effects of neo-liberal economic policies and economic integration embodied in the NAFTA. In particular, the policy-making process regarding migrants political rights has unfolded in a transnational field, where the debate in Mexico mirrors in the Mexican community in the US.

4.1.1. Main political actors' positions on migrants' political rights

The issue of migrants' political participation from abroad has become a bone of contention in the course of the uneven democratic transition, embraced by some and resisted by others. Questions arise such as: What are the positions of the main political actors and their motivations? Why do the different Mexican political parties want to build a transnational political system? Who represents the migrant lobby group and why do they campaign for political participation at home? In this section, I suggest some explanations why the different political parties and migrant groups adopt particular stances on extending the franchise to Mexicans abroad. I note areas of convergence and divergence among the different political actors and I place their stances on a spatial dimension.

²⁹ See www.radiobilingue.org

At the time of legislative discussion, it was often predicted that around 4 million Mexicans could have with them an official voting credential and could potentially be able to cast a vote for the 2006 presidential elections. In turn, conceding the vote abroad represented a high-cost policy, both financially and politically. Thus, the political parties' perception of migrant rights was mainly, I may argue, based on cost-benefit calculations. That explains why the PAN and the PRD have consistently supported extending the franchise and why the PRI has, for the most part, opposed it by fear of being voted against. Ideology nonetheless has also played a part and explains why the PRD, which has often proclaimed deepening democracy and incorporating previously excluded actors, has always favoured a more advanced migrants' political rights bill. On the other hand, migrant groups lobbying for migrants political rights at home only started to emerge and grow in the last two decades, which coincides with the big increase in numbers of Mexican migrants in the US and the increasingly negative context of reception in that country. These migrant groups, I might argue, have been able to parlay the success of their collective remittances projects and the significance of their individual remittances for the country's economy into greater political influence.

*The Coalicion's lobbying for political participation at home: 'soy de aquí y soy de allá'*³⁰

The right to vote movement among the Mexican expatriate community notably emerged in the late 1980's when migrant groups such as the 'Asamblea Mexicana por el Sufragio Ejecutivo' and the 'Mexicanos por el Derecho al Voto en el

³⁰ 'I am from here and from there'

Exterior', (primarily based in California, Texas and Illinois), started lobbying among Mexican diplomats and visiting Mexican politicians. (Durand, 2004; Santamaría Gómez, 2003: 74). Numbers of migrant lobby organisations multiplied in the following decade with groups like the '*Coalicion Internacional de Mexicanos en el Exterior (CIME)*', '*Organizaciones de Mexicanos en el Exterior*' (*OME*), '*Asociacion Mundial de Mexicanos en el Exterior (AMME)*', '*Fundacion Mexico*', and the '*Coalicion de Mexicanos en el Exterior Nuestro Voto en el 2000*' (Martínez Saldaña and Ross Pineda 2002). The latter became one of the most active in the later stages of the debate and in 2001 was renamed the '*Coalicion por los Derechos de los Mexicanos en el Exterior*'. Efforts to achieve the expatriate vote, however, went back to 1926 when Ignacio Lozano, the founder of the Spanish-language newspaper published in the US – '*La Opinion*' – advocated in his editorials the importance of maintaining this political privilege abroad (Truax 19 de junio de 2006).

In recent years, mobilisations to demand the vote abroad involved various strategies, from signing petitions handed in at consulates or directly sent to the Mexican congress, to organising social forums and conferences on the subject across the US and in Mexico. Moreover, the Internet and Spanish-language media were used as strategic tools to mobilise groups in a bi-national fashion. Virtual elections were organised in various US cities during presidential election time in Mexico before the right to vote abroad was approved. On 6th July 1988 more than 10,000 Mexican migrants voted in virtual elections carried out in California, Texas and Illinois. They were then repeated in 1994 and in the year 2000. In the latter, more than 16,000 people participated (Martínez Saldaña and Ross Pineda 2002). But who are the 'vote abroad' activists? Why do they want to participate politically in the country they left

behind? Raul Ross replies: 'we are envious here. With democratization emerges the reappraisal of the vote in Mexico. There is this natural desire to be part of something' (April, 2008).

A noticeable dimension of political migrant organisations is their tendency to put organising in the hands of better-off, more-established expatriates. As associations with bi-national activities are formalised and directed more toward raising funds and lobbying for political support in both countries, leadership generally falls to migrants who have been in the US longer and are better established financially and professionally. They represent what has been described as 'new elites', which are formed by certain groups of migrants that have benefited by having migrated and have the time and resources 'to live abroad and act at home' (Goldring 1988; Guarnizo 1998). I would argue that as political spaces open for their inclusion, we are seeing a realignment of political power, albeit to a limited extent, where migrants occupy more prominent political roles.

The '*Coalicion por los Derechos de los Mexicanos en el Exterior*', which was the most active migrant lobby group during the 'vote abroad' negotiations in Mexico included not only some of the most prominent migrant leaders in the US, for instance Raul Ross, Jesus Martinez and Luis Pelayo and successful migrant entrepreneurs across various US cities such as Carlos Olamendi, who is now Mexico-US adviser to the California governor, but also academics and migrants' rights activists residing in Mexico; for instance, Leticia Carderon Chelius and Miguel Moctezuma Longoria. Thus, the 'Coalition' is a bi-national association, whose founders and most active members in the US are able to engage with their migrant communities whilst

members in Mexico raise awareness of their demands and put pressure on the Mexican congress.

It follows, then, that the bi-national composition of migrant lobby groups by experienced migrant leaders and migrants' rights activists, as well as their connections with the Spanish-language media in the US and the Mexican media have made these groups able to influence transnational public opinion as well as Mexican policymakers. Firstly, migrant rights activists are not alien to the Mexican political culture. Migrant leaders have had exposure to government negotiations whilst discussing 'two for one' or 'three for one' partnership programmes and also through their participation in the Consultative Counsel of Mexicans Abroad. Secondly, migrants have the comparative advantage of being able to be a magnet for media attention in the US as much as in Mexico. As it is mentioned by interest groups scholars, the success of interest groups politics is contingent upon a group's ability to expand or control an issue (Terkildsen 1998). I would argue that the '*Coalicion*', as well as other advocacy migrant groups and hometown associations, were successful at defining the vote abroad issue over time and adapting it to fit the changing political and social climate.

Many of the members of the '*Coalicion*' led or had close connections to the Spanish-language media in the US. Raul Ross, for instance, was director of '*MX Sin Fronteras*' a Spanish-language monthly magazine published in the US that addresses issues that concern the Mexican and Chicano community in the US. Dozens of articles have been written by the '*Coalicion*' members since 2001. The *Coalicion*'s strong connections to the Spanish-language media in the US were also a smart

weapon to use when negotiations with the various political parties or individual policy-makers trembled. As Primitivo Rodriguez put it ‘when we realised that the vote abroad bill was about to be left out we threatened to tell the media who was really responsible for that. They would always say: please wait’ (Primitivo Rodriguez June 2006).

However, if migrant rights advocates are mainly Mexican-Americans already integrated in the US, why campaign for political participation at home? ‘bi-nationality is wonderful’ begins to answer Primitivo Rodriguez, member of the ‘Coalicion’, ‘it is not a matter of political loyalties... ‘I am from here and I am from there’. In the past, due to political and social discrimination, migrants used to say ‘I am not from here, neither from there’...But now what happens in both countries affects my life and in both countries I have enough reasons to be part of their democratic lives’. Most research done by Moctezuma Longoria also emphasises this bi-nationality dimension of Mexican migrants and explains that ‘due to transport and communication technologies, Mexican migrants are now able to be ‘here’ and ‘there’ at the same time; they travel back and forth, telephone their relatives constantly and also send remittances home regularly, they already exercise a social and economic bi-nationality, which should be compensated by a bi-national political dimension’ (Moctezuma Longoria September 2006). Migrant rights advocates emphasise the importance of bi-nationalism, a term coined to explain migrants’ simultaneous social, cultural, economic and political participation in both countries. Being able to participate in Mexico’s political developments from abroad is then seen as a complement to their social, cultural and economic exchanges. It is debatable; however, to what extent all Mexican migrants can participate in both countries. It

may be that the term bi-national could only apply to a small percentage that has the legal, economic and time resources to be able to engage simultaneously in two polities.

Migrant rights activists also portray themselves as agents of change. Consequently, they would often refer to the democratic transition in Mexico and argue that 'Mexican democracy would not be complete without (them)' (Olamedi July 2006). In interviews, voting abroad activists spoke quite uniformly of their activities as a challenge to a well-established '*clase política*' (political class) and argued that public officials have excluded them from politics for fear that they would be overwhelmed by migrant leverage and numbers. They spoke angrily about endemic corruption in Mexico, and about corporatist practices, whereby groups were used by politicians. Others mentioned that they would be indeed interested in participating politically in Mexico and open more channels of communication between their home country and Mexican migrant communities in the US.

Paradoxically, even though some of the 'Coalition's members have participated in Mexican politics – some have actually run for elections, mostly with PRD candidacies – the organisation is portrayed as a non-partisan political actor. As Primitivo Rodriguez said, 'we do not have a president, a manifesto, secretary, main address or even a phone number, but most importantly we do not have '*padrinos políticos*' (political godfathers)' (Primitivo Rodriguez June 2006). As mentioned in several field interviews, very often political parties and individuals offered the *Coalicion's* members to finance their campaign, but the latter always turn them down. Instead, the '*Coalicion's* activities were financed by members' donations and

they also accepted funds if invited to conferences and events. As Raul Ross stated, by maintaining a political neutrality, the '*Coalicion*' has worked as a 'political bridge' (Ross September 2006). 'At the same time', Ross mentioned on a different occasion, 'we wanted all, but we had to focus on the absentee vote for presidential elections. The '*Coalicion*' had to have a very concrete plan that could be carried forward. If we had a varied agenda, politicians would lead us up the garden path. We agreed on the lowest common denominator' (Chicago, April 2008).

Thus, the '*Coalicion*' like other 'vote abroad' lobby organisations has been careful to maintain a democratic structure and to create a large and unified base of active members. In fact, the '*Coalicion*'s 'vote abroad' proposal was the outcome of various forums in the US in which more than 500 Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the US, as well as 60 hometown associations' presidents and academics participated (fieldwork interviews). The proposal was finalised in April 2003 and was presented, three months latter, to the Mexican Congress, political parties, the CONAGO, the IFE and both the media in the US and Mexico. It contained the following main points:

- The vote abroad 'does not harm the electoral system nor national sovereignty, instead it represents the Mexican state's confidence and credibility' (CDPME's proposal, 2003)
- It requested migrants' political rights by stages. First, vote abroad for president in 2006. Second, vote for congress members in 2009. Third, by 2012 vote to elect legislators in both chambers
- It supported the use of voting credentials as a proof of identification

- It was also in favour of granting voting credentials in American territory
- It also supported the exercise of political campaigns abroad, although restricted the occurrence of donations by Mexicans residing abroad
- In terms of the modality of the vote, the proposal included mail, telephone, Internet, and electronic vote. It did not approve the use of the ballot box as it was considered more difficult to implement, costly and could facilitate fraud ((CDPME) 2003).

The main characteristic of the '*Coalicion*'s proposal was the request for gradual political rights. In fact, the vote abroad for presidential elections was only the first of their demands, which should be complemented by, for instance, voting for legislators and being able to run for elections at a later stage.

Interestingly, the pattern of transnational politics described in this section poses the question of whether the intervention of migrants in their homeland politics changes its political order. The entrance of migrant associations like the '*Coalicion*' into Mexican politics appears as a sign of the escalating power that migrant organisations have over government and legislative affairs in their country of origin, based on the increasingly visible individual and collective migrants' remittances and the resonance of their message across transnational public opinion. However, their intention to secure voting rights in their home country might only satisfy a small percentage of migrants that can afford a bi-national life and participate in both countries' developments at the same time. They are to be seen, nonetheless, as the true promoters of integration in the North American region. Also, as they are able to exert more pressure on the Mexican legislative, they can then improve their position

vis a vis the American Congress. It should be noted, however, that some might also do it for more personal reasons, as they may be interested in launching a political career back home or attain leadership positions within Chicano circles.

The centre-left PRD party as main supporter of migrants' political rights

The centre-left PRD has been from the start one of the main advocates of migrants' political rights. As has already been noted, '*perredistas*' (PRD militants) claim to have existed in the US since the party was founded back in 1989 and from then on they have embarked on the task of gaining support amongst Mexicans abroad. At the beginning of the new millennium, the party did not only open up new state committees in the US, but has also institutionalised migrants' participation within the party by reforming party manifestos and electoral programmes. In particular, it has included migrants in their '*plurinominal*' lists for congressional positions at both national and local levels and has widely advocated for migrants' rights bills at the local level. As this study argues, the PRD has responded to migrants groups' demands and has secured local migrants' political rights bills in migrant-sending states where it has had control of the executive branch of government and has held a simple majority of seats in the local congress, such as the case of Zacatecas, and Michoacán or an absolute majority like the case of Mexico City.

However, why has the PRD endlessly promoted migrants' political participation, particularly the vote abroad bill at the national level? When asked this question, in the first instance, all PRD legislators resorted to the democracy and human rights argument. The former PRD senator Raymundo Cardenas mentioned that 'our '*paisanos*' were forced to emigrate due to the lack of opportunities in this country. It

was not their decision to leave (...) so, it is our obligation to include them in the new Mexico we want to build, an inclusive Mexico, a Mexico for all, for migrants, for women, for indigenous, for the youth' (Raymundo Cardenas June 2006). Those discourses were often accompanied by complaints about the failure of neo-liberal policies to incorporate productive sectors of society. As the ex-legislator and former secretary of the Commission on Population, Borders and Migratory issues, Rosa Maria Aviles Najera, mentioned: 'it is about time for the PRI to recognise that they could not offer those people the basic opportunities to prosper [...] but with Fox (PAN) things have not changed, about 3 million compatriots have left the country [...] this is a consequence of wrong neo-liberal policies that favour some, but affect others, especially the poor. So, it is for us to protect our citizens abroad to offer them what they are denied in the US [...] '(Najera June 2006).

On the other hand, most responses also highlighted the significance of migrants' contributions to Mexico's development by sending remittances to their relatives back home, while a few referred to the dangers and human rights abuses that migrants might experience when crossing the border. The former PRD congress-man Emilio Zebadua (now aligned with the 'Nueva Alianza' party) argued that 'it is our obligation to expand the franchise to Mexicans abroad. Those Mexicans have escaped poverty, but they have not forgotten about their families. They keep sending remittances home and that is how their own families survive. We failed them and we owe them this right' (Emilio Zebadua June 2006). The former congressman and coordinator of the PRD faction in the Congress, Pablo Gomez Alvarez mentioned that 'you cannot play with people that send 16 thousand million pesos a year. Mexico depends on remittances. It shows that they care and they are committed to participate

in Mexico's democracy and development from afar' (Pablo Gomez Alvarez Summer 2006).

Thus, the democracy and human rights discourse mentioned by most interviewees highlights the fact that the PRD's support for migrants' political rights satisfied the ideological underpinnings of the party. Even when the 'vote abroad' bill was attacked in congress due to its financial costs that would exceed more than 300 million pesos, PRD legislators mentioned that the bill was nonetheless necessary (Becerril 25 February 2005). However, party legislators also perceived granting migrants' right to vote in the presidential elections as a reward for the economic contributions in the form of remittances that migrants make, which can be interpreted as a form of 'taxation without representation'.

In terms of cost-benefit calculations, the PRD predicted to be the party that would benefit the most from extending the franchise because of its long and persistent support for migrants' political rights. Whilst the party looked for new adherents across the border, they realised the political potential that migrants represent in terms of votes. Although the first hometown groups in Los Angeles, San Jose and Chicago did not directly intervene in political activities, the leaders traditionally supported the former ruling PRI party. However, the virtual elections that took place in 1988 and 1994 revealed that migrants were also sympathetic to the PRD and PAN. On both occasions the votes that went to the leftist PRD outnumbered the PRI's, followed by the PAN in third place. Only in 1994 in Dallas, did the PAN succeed in getting the highest number of votes (Santamaría Gómez 1999-2000).

Therefore, the PRD's early support for migrants' rights can be understood as a reflection of a broader paradigm shift that is taking place in much of the Latin America left that oppose authoritarian regimes and calls for a deepening of democracy through the incorporation of previously excluded social actors by promoting, for instance, indigenous', migrants' or homosexuals' rights. Migrants, however, are distinguished from any other excluded social group in terms of the contributions they make in the form of remittances.

Consequently, the centre-left PRD has also been the most ambitious to extend citizenship in practice. Their original legal initiatives emphasised migrants' right to vote not only for president, but also for legislators; the right to vote abroad by ballot, mail, telephone and electronically; the right to obtain a voting credential in the place of residence without having to return to Mexico because as it was noted 'many of them are undocumented'; and the right to have proportional representation in the Congress and Senate. In particular, it was the only political party (and faction in the federal congress) that proposed a migrant candidate for the 2006 elections (Gomez 12 April 2004). The PRD legislators also advocated strict regulation of the electoral campaigns abroad (Sandoval De Escurdia and Paz Richard 2004; Dardón Velázquez July 2005). It was also mentioned, however, that the party was willing to negotiate with the other political factions to guarantee the absentee vote, as long as there was a commitment to secure the absentee vote for presidential elections and allow the issuance of new voting credentials abroad.

President FOX and the PAN party's vision of a North American community

Former PAN President Vicente Fox caused heated controversy by calling economic migrants 'heroes' for providing the country's second largest source of foreign income. PAN's support for migrants political rights, especially the vote abroad, can be traced back to the Fox presidential campaign, when, as I have already mentioned, he encouraged migrants in California to call their relatives in Mexico and request them to vote for him; in return he promised to guarantee migrants' human rights protection abroad and to support the migrant vote (Anderson May 9, 2000). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Fox administration has marked a shift in government's attitudes towards Mexican emigrates that commenced with the PRI's Salinas administration. Under his administration, the party began to build a representative structure in the US and similarly to the PRD, it encouraged migrant members to participate within the party ranks.

As Fox said 'the vote of the Mexicans abroad means as a big step in the construction of a truly democratic society in Mexico, in which we would finish with unjust political discrimination' (BBC. 16 June 2004). The former PAN Senator Jeffrey Max Jones who chaired the Borders Affairs Commission at the time of the 'vote abroad' negotiations also argued that 'the support for the vote abroad responds to two phenomena. On the one hand, Mexico is achieving a democratic transition and Fox is the main engine of that, and on the other, these are difficult times [...] we are part of economic globalisation, Mexico has had to join in for its own benefit [...] during NAFTA negotiations, the PRI government had to rely on the Mexican-American lobby, we rely on Mexican expatriates' remittances [...] it is also part of the

commitments we have acquired signing the various international human rights treaties [...] Fox has been aware of all that' (Jones July 2006).

In particular, most PAN respondents put special emphasis on the need to manage migration, instead of preventing it whilst promoting patriotic feelings among expatriates. Consequently, guaranteeing political rights would 'provide migrants the means to be part of Mexico wherever they live' (Jones July 2006). The former PAN deputy and member of the Commission on Population, Borders and Migratory issues, Jose Isabel Trejo Reyes, said in an interview 'we don't have to distress ourselves saying that we have to stop the migration phenomenon. I believe in the administration of the migration resources. I think that we have been integrated into the American economy as a matter of fact for 100 years and therefore we should search for the best way to channel those migration resources, a part or a percentage, such as the 4x1 projects [...] but that one who believes that the migratory flow can be stopped is being deluded [...]' (Jose Isabel Trejo Reyes July 2006). Former deputy and also member of the Commission, Pablo Alejo Lopez Nuñez argued that 'Mexican citizens will continue crossing the border until Mexico can achieve a similar level of development as our neighbouring country, but that will not happen for some years. There are 10 million Mexicans already there that will not come back, but many of their friends and relatives stayed behind and they continue to help them economically month by month. [As you have seen] there is a big majority that did not want to vote in Mexican elections, but we still had to grant them their right, that is the achievement, you cannot force them to vote' (Pablo Alejo Lopez Nuñez July 2006).

In a similar vein, former deputy and member of the Commission of External Relations, Rodrigo Ivan Cortes Jimenez, said that 'it is evident that in the US there is a demand for labour. In Mexico, it is evident that there is a labour suply. What we need to do is to resolve this. Around 44 million baby boomers will retire in the US and that will imply maintaining an economy with 'fresh blood and energy', Mexico is losing its demographic bonus [...] the vote abroad is an instrument that strengthens the vulnerable situation of our countrymen that live and work there, so we can then demand the rights that they (Americans) deny them' (Rodrigo Ivan Cortes Jimenez July 2006). Several PAN respondents placed the migration phenomenon as part of economic globalisation signalling both the push factors in Mexico, as well as the pull aspect of the American economy. In particular, during legislative negotiations when the PRD and PRI factions attacked the PAN and Fox administration for not providing a strong economic structure and job creation to deter migration, PAN legislators, most often than not, blamed all the political class in the country, specifically legislators, for not reaching agreements and affecting the country's competitiveness.

In contrast to the PRD's position on migrants' political participation that might be seen as more ideology-based, the PAN perceived the vote abroad as a symbolic gesture that would foster patriotic sentiments among Mexican expatriates who would remain loyal to their home country and keep sending remittances home. Also, they saw it as a sign of commitment to protect migrants' rights in the US considering that migration is not likely to decrease as economic integration and globalisation progress.

The PAN, on the other hand, also acted on the belief that it could count on migrant electoral support. Although during the Fox administration, Mexico-to-US migration flows did not decrease as it is estimated that at least 2 million people emigrated during his term in office (Meza 24 Agosto 2006), the former deputy Rodrigo Ivan Cortes Jimenez rightly affirmed that '[Fox'] government had historic achievements in destroying the oblivion in which we had placed Mexican migrants' (Rodrigo Ivan Cortes Jimenez July 2006). Indeed, as I have already described in the previous chapter, Fox multiplied existing programmes and policies towards migrants, as well as institutionalising channels of participation such as the Council of Mexicans Abroad which acts as a forum in which elected migrant leaders and Mexican politicians can discuss bi-national problems; as well as creating institutions such as the Institute of Mexicans Abroad, whose purpose is to liaise with Mexican communities abroad. In terms of electoral gains, although migrant preferences towards the PAN were uncertain, the party was aware that Fox was favoured by migrants during the 2000 elections and continued to have acceptance within the Mexican migrant community in the US during his time in office.

PAN's legislative proposals were, nonetheless, cautious and restrictive and limited the number of migrants that could vote in the 2006 presidential elections. Most PAN's legislators and president Fox' proposals only supported a reform that granted the vote abroad to those migrants that already had a voting credential and rejected any other type of political participation such as migrants being able to stand for elections or count on parliamentary representation. In addition, presidential candidates could not campaign abroad (Noticias 16 June 2004). Once the modality of the vote was being negotiated, the PAN advocated the mail vote. Although more

limited than PRD proposals, the PAN posture was consistent with the Fox campaign promises and migration policies.

The PRI's divided support to extend democracy abroad

The PRI's opposition to the expatriate vote can be read, at least in part, as fear of a widespread anti-PRI sentiment among migrant communities that still see the PRI as a source of seven decades of corruption and a stagnated economy that forced them to emigrate to the US in the first place. As it has been signalled, the turning point was the 1988 election which brought Carlos Salinas de Gortari to the presidency under accusations of electoral fraud which prompted mobilisation in the US (Levitt 4 July 2003). According to the Mexican consul in Los Angeles, California at that time: 'one of the greatest marches against the outcome of the (1988) election took place in Los Angeles. This led to an awakening in Mexican political circles. The Mexican government realised that there are many anti-PRI Mexicans living in California who return periodically to their communities and have influence in Mexico. This recognition took place in the context of a radical reformulation of Mexico's foreign policy. What we want to do now is build bridges with the Mexican community' (Dresser 1993) p.94]. Since the early 1990's, the PRI tried to extend strategies of political cooptation, albeit unsuccessfully, to migrant communities. In comparison to other parties, the PRI has lagged behind in building a party structure abroad, in particular, PRI committees abroad are still not officially recognised (Armando Reyes Mendez September 2006). Thus, the presence of the PRI in American territory is mainly symbolic and seems to diminish as the party loses Mexican votes abroad (see Chapter 5).

This explains why the PRI did not submit any legal initiative to the Congress while it still had hold of the executive branch of government. However, after the party failed to win the presidency in the year 2000, the debate on migrants' political rights divided the party among those who wanted the party to support the 'vote abroad', as a way to remedy past neglect of Mexican migrants and win their support and, on the other hand, a more conservative wing that felt the party could not do anything to prevent rejection and was better off by maintaining the *status quo*. Understandably, party members abroad supported the former. Armando Reyes Mendes, Vice-president of Migrant Vanguard in the Midwest and PRI member, mentioned that the PRI would only value '*priistas*' (PRI militants) abroad if the vote abroad was approved 'it is a cruel reality but if we Mexicans abroad are treated as second-class citizens [...] with more reason '*priistas*' abroad that even though we campaign for the political platform of the party, we do not exist in the party's basic documents, not even by mistake' (Armando Reyes Mendez September 2006). On the other hand, the former secretary of the Commission on Population, Borders and Migratory issues and PRI deputy Emilio Badillo Ramirez stressed: 'but what migrants want to vote for? What they want is to have rights in the US. What do they want to vote for? What do we want them to vote for? They are not interested [...] the vote abroad was a true failure...I told them... it was the wish of the few...migrants are simply not interested in voting' (Emilio Badillo Ramirez Augoust 2006).

My research also reveals that the 'vote abroad' issue exacerbated a fracture within the PRI that arose during the primary elections to designate the party presidential candidate for the 2006 election, between those that supported Roberto Madrazo and those who aligned with the candidacy of Senator Enrique Jackson (fieldwork

interviews with legislators, 2006). One prominent PRI politician interviewed mentioned that this created mainly a division between the two chambers, as while the Congress mainly supported the former, most '*priistas*' in the Senate supported senator Enrique Jackson. As a consequence, I would argue, there was no coherence between the two party factions in both chambers. For instance, after having blocked a 'vote abroad' bill to be implemented for the 2000 presidential elections, the PRI legislator Laura Martinez went beyond most previous proposals by four years later submitting a legal initiative that supported the installation of ballot boxes in voting centres abroad, as well as in consulates and allowed the issuance of new voting credentials abroad. However, the version supported by the PRI faction in the Senate stood at the other extreme, PRI senators promoted the postal vote modality and a more restrictive absentee system.

PAN and PRD legislators, as well as migrant leaders, said that the bill presented by the PRI faction in the Lower Chamber was received with suspicion. Many legislators thought that it was a way to ensure its deadlock without having to be seen as accountable for it. Migrant leaders, in turn, argued that 'the modality that the PRI proposed in the Congress did not favour (them), there are many undocumented Mexicans in the US that would not dare to vote in Mexican consulates without fearing '*la migra*' (border police) (Ross September 2006). As Primitivo Rodriguez, active member of the '*Coalicion*' put it: 'we were in the middle of a war between two different wings of the party, Senator Silvia Hernandez repeatedly told us that we had to be careful of the '*priistas*' in the Chamber; they did not want the vote (abroad)' (Primitivo Rodriguez June 2006).

All in all, the PRI did not have a unified position on extending the franchise to Mexican expatriates; while the most liberal wing of the party proved in favour and saw it as a strategy to improve the party's image among Mexican communities abroad, more conservative party members, on the other hand, would mainly fear not only losing votes, but also opening the door of domestic politics to potential adversaries abroad.

To sum up, as we have seen, Mexico's transition to democracy and political party competition has opened up spaces within which transnational political opportunity structures are constructed. In this way, political parties, as well as migrant lobby organisations, promote the construction of a transnational arena. However, migrants' political participation in Mexican politics is moulded by different and sometimes conflicting interests. Migrants' political rights might mainly fulfil the ideological underpinnings of the PRD or facilitate PAN's advocacy of regional integration or it might prompt divisions within the once long-time ruling PRI, between those who want to make up for excluding 'the migrant' from the national memory and those who still fear anti-PRI widespread sentiment and debate national sovereignty over internal affairs. A point of convergence among all political forces, nonetheless, has been the significance of migrants' remittances. According to all political factions, it justifies migrants' political participation in home affairs and could be interpreted as a form of 'buying membership'. Migrant groups, in turn, seek regional integration through the notion of bi-nationality that would eventually allow them to participate not only culturally, socially and economically in both countries, but also politically. Although bi-nationals might be small in number, they represent a new transnational

elite with the power to influence transnational public opinion and thus pressure both governments.

Table 4.2 summarises the political parties', migrant lobby groups' and government institutions' main postures on the issues related to Mexican migrants' political participation from abroad. The information shown is based on an analysis of the 19 legal initiatives presented to the Congress between 1998 and 2005, including a proposal from the '*Coalicion*' and fieldwork interviews with the main proponents and supporters of the various bills. It also includes the position of the Federal Electoral Institute according to specialist reports and the comments made by IFE's senior officials prior to the approval of the vote abroad bill ((Zarate, 6 April 2004; Ferrer, 24 February 2004). In a private meeting between the PAN party and the IFE, most of the IFE's councillors advised not to implement the absentee vote for the 2006 elections, nor to issue new voting ID's abroad. The main reasons given were operational constraints as they believed that the Institute did not have the time and the technological means as well as a sufficient budget (Zarate, 6 April 2004).

Table 4.2 Main political actors' stand on the vote abroad issue

Political parties	Main position	voting rights	Modality	(‘ <i>credencialización</i> ’) Issuance of new voting credentials	Migrant candidates	Parliamentary representation
PRI	Divided Liberal wing in favour, conservative supported the status quo	Yes (only liberal wing of the party)	Mail vote	No	No	No
PAN - President Fox	In favour (but limited support)	Yes	Mail vote	No	No	No
PRD	In favour	Yes	Mail vote, electronic vote, ballot box	Yes	Yes	Yes
CDPME	In favour (but gradual)	Yes	Mail vote, electronic vote, telephone vote.	Yes	At a later stage, yes	At a later stage, yes
Federal Electoral Institute (IFE)	Limited support. According to specialist reports	Yes, but postponed for 2012	no	no	no	

Source: Own elaboration with information from 35 interviews with legislators and members of the CDPME and legal initiatives

4.2. The approval of the vote abroad bill

Thus far, we have highlighted the current policy-making dynamics in Mexico and the interests and motivations of each of the political actors involved in allowing Mexican expatriates political participation in domestic affairs by granting them the right to vote for presidential elections. In this section, we analyse how political parties and the ‘*Coalición*’ were able to trade off interests during legislative negotiations, highlighting what were the main determinants of political coalitions. In particular, the main question is: What determined the legal approval of the national vote abroad bill? Also, what accounts for the change in rhetoric and position of the PRI once the ‘vote abroad’ bill was being negotiated? I argue that PRD’s and PAN’s alliance with

the ‘*Coalicion*’ and their ability to trade their ideal points in order to defeat the *status quo* on the floor, as well as a political fracture within the PRI party due to differences arising during the internal elections for presidential candidate were the main factors leading to the passage of the bill. The latter discussion, then, shows that there was not only a division within the PRI, but also that organised labour in Mexico, mainly teachers’ and peasants’ unions, once the strongest pillar of support of the PRI, were also increasingly aware of the potential gains of allying with Mexicans abroad. Previous studies have shown how the adoption of liberal economic policies during the last PRI administrations had already been resented by labour groups (Schatz 2000).

‘*Y todos ganamos!*’ (and we all won!) recounts Primitivo Rodriguez, member of the ‘*Coalicion por los Derechos Politicos de los Mexicanos en el Extranjero*’ when he remembers the historical day in which the vote abroad bill was approved, the very last day amendments to the Federal Code of Institutions and Electoral Procedures (COFIPE) could be made. ‘We knew that the final bill was very restrictive and would be difficult to implement, but it meant the first step...’ (Primitivo Rodriguez June 2006). Indeed, the final bill approved on 30 June 2005 only allows Mexican expatriates to vote to elect the president in Mexico and to do so they need to already have an official voting credential. They also had to sign up for a new migrant voters register by certified mail attaching a copy of their official voting ID and a copy of a proof of address before the 15 January 2006 (in order to vote before 2 July 2006). Moreover, voting credentials could not be issued abroad and migrants could only apply for one if they returned to Mexico to do so. Political campaigns abroad were also restricted as well as any financial aid from Mexican nationals living abroad.

As we saw, since 1997 the Mexican Congress has slowly begun to evolve and conduct business as a true legislature when no single party has held the absolute majority in Congress and the opposition has assumed a greater role. Table 4.3 below shows the political composition of the Lower Chamber and the Senate between 2003 and 2006, the main period in which the vote abroad bill was debated, where it can be observed that no single party held the absolute majority in both houses. As we know, for an initiative to become law in the Mexican context, it has to be approved by the Lower House and then by the Senate. If the latter makes any amendments, it has to be approved again by the Lower House.

Table 4.3 Allocation of seats in federal congress and the Senate (2003-2006)

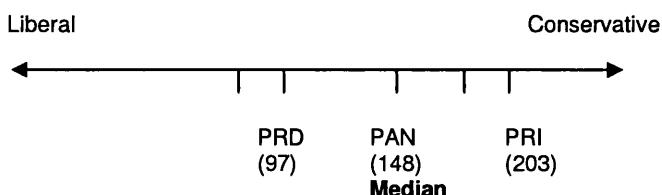
Allocation of Seats in the 59th Legislature (2003-2006)				
Party	Congress		Senate	
PRI	203	41%	57	45%
PAN	148	30%	47	37%
PRD	97	19%	15	12%
PVEM	17	3%	5	4%
Independent	24	5%	4	3%
Convergencia	5	1%		0%
PT	6	1%		0%
Total	500	100%	128	100%

According to Nacif's model of policy-making under divided government in Mexico, the vote abroad bill was likely to be approved in both chambers. Taking into account the different general political parties' positions regarding the vote abroad issue that we have already discussed in the previous section and the number of seats that each party had, the PAN was both the political party controlling the executive and the party in the median position, with the status quo represented by the PRI faction and

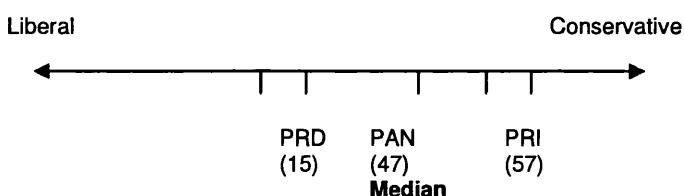
the liberal position embodied by the PRD at each of the extremes (see spatial representation below). However, it has already been pointed out that a division within the PRI caused the bill to be mainly opposed by PRI congressmen and only to have limited support from the PRI faction in the Senate.

Figure 4.3. Spatial representation of the vote abroad issue in both chambers

A. In the Congress



B. In the Senate



Own elaboration

It could then be well argued that President Fox' initiative sent to the Lower Chamber in June 2004, although not approved, provided the catalyst for legislative negotiations for a final legislation. On 23 February 2005, the Lower Chamber approved a proposal presented by the PRI deputy Laura Martinez by 301 to 5 and 22 abstentions, which opened the door to migrants to participate in the presidential elections. Paradoxically, the PRI was not only in favour of migrants' political rights, but proved more radical than the PAN faction. Why had the PRI that always seemed to oppose the vote abroad initiative now presented such a comprehensive bill? As Primitivo Rodriguez from the migrant lobbying group the '*Coalicion*' commented 'all the objections that the PRI had, suddenly disappeared... and they (the PRI) came

up with this “cruise”. The ‘*Coalicion*’, PRD and PAN knew that we could not sail this “cruise” because it would sink, but we wanted to go ahead. It may be that in the Senate a “boat” remains, we thought’ (Primitivo Rodriguez June 2006). Understandably, the PAN was the only party that showed any disagreement, and it only supported the passage of the bill, but also specified its particular objections. The PRD aligned with the PRI and fully supported the bill. However, as has already been signalled, this advanced PRI initiative presented at the Lower Chamber was seen more as a tactic to prevent the bill from passing once it was reviewed in the Senate and opposed by the PRI faction there.

The bill was then received by the Senate on 24 February 2005 and sent to the Commissions of State; External Relations; North America; and Legal Studies for its further analysis. At the same time, various institutions – IFE, TEPJF and SRE – were invited to work in collaboration with the arbitrating commissions and provide a more technical input, according to their scope of work. These institutions, however, converged in the opinion that this particular bill presented big challenges in terms of legal content, budget and organisation, as well as the time required to organise an election abroad.

The Senate, however, was reluctant to approve such an advanced initiative. As expected, the PRI senators wanted a new bill to be rewritten. PAN Senators also showed their concerns. However, with the deadline for legislative changes approaching, it was evident that if a new bill was proposed it was not going to be approved in time. As mentioned in several interviews by former PRI senators, the PRI faction in the Lower Chamber did not want to appear as the main opponent of

the vote abroad, so instead, by presenting and approving such an advanced bill they expected the PRI faction in the Senate to bring it to a halt. The former PRI senators, however, did not want to do that. As one of the key participants, PRI Senator Silvia Hernandez states 'that bill presented many problems that we had to address, otherwise, our electoral trust would have been jeopardised. However, we thought that if we modified the bill, it would still have good chances to be approved. The PRI senators were not going to prevent migrants from practicing their right to vote' (Hernandez July 2006).

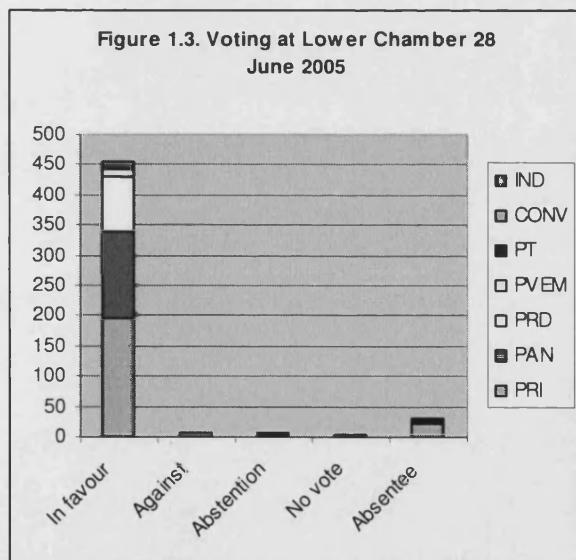
Thus, the 'vote abroad' bill sent from the Lower Chamber was modified and instead of the 'vote in person', the new absentee voting system was to rely on the postal vote. In addition, migrants could not obtain a new voting credential abroad and political parties were barred from campaigning abroad. The PAN backed this new PRI version, but the PRD faction was not content with the changes. As Carlos Olamendi recounts 'the PRD was the faction that had more problems with the proposal but the 'Coalition' achieved to convince them as we had previously convinced the PAN in the Lower Chamber' (Olamedi July 2006). The PRD, in the end, accepted the proposal in general, but expressed their particular objections. Although, what was the position of the 'Coalition' regarding such changes? 'We had our goal that we exaggerated by saying 'approve a bill authorising one single migrant to vote and we will accept it' narrates Carlos Olamendi 'the point was that we wanted the door to our political electoral participation opened. We did not want to lose that, because otherwise we would have had to wait 6 more years. That was just not an option' (Olamedi July 2006). The Senate bill was eventually approved on 27 April 2005 with only 2 votes against, and 34 absentees.

The Lower Chamber received again the Senate bill for final approval on 26 May 2005 and consequently, an extraordinary legislative period was granted only to discuss the vote abroad issue. However, the dramatic differences between the original bill and the one sent back by the Senate prompted negative reactions. As the PRI faction coordinator in the Lower Chamber, Emilio Chuayffet Chemor, mentioned ‘what the Senate sent us back was not the same bill modified, but a new bill. We sent a tiger and they send us back a cat and if we change it, they say that we will act unconstitutionally’ (Chuayffet Chemor June 2006). Two commissions were granted arbitrating power: the Commission of State and the Commission of population and migration issues. Whereas in the former, the Senate bill was rejected as most PRI policy makers pronounced against and voted for a modified bill, in the Commission of population and migration issues, the Senate bill was adopted by unanimity. As previously pointed out, in the latter PAN and PRD formed the majority and PRI legislators only followed the trend.

Given the arbitrating commissions’ disagreement, the final voting was scheduled for 28 June 2005, a decisive moment in which a partnership between PAN and PRD could not beat the union between the PRI and smaller parties, as not all legislators were present (there were 33 absentees in the actual final voting). As Coalition members pointed out, they knew there was a fragmentation within the PRI and decided to take advantage of it (Primitivo Rodriguez, interview Mexico City 2006, Raul Ross, interview Chicago 2008). They decided, then, to target one of the PRI’s strongest pillars of support, organised labour (Middlebrook 1995), in particular the teachers’ union (la ‘*Union de Maestros*’) and in addition, the peasants’ union

(‘Central Nacional Campesina’). Scholars have noted how the climate of democratization had strengthened workers’ rights to political representation outside authoritarian control (see Schatz 2000). As Primitivo recounts ‘we decided to target the CNC and the Teachers’ Union. We knew that Esther Gordillo was not a Madrazo supporter and we told her that she could end up being one of the greatest supporters of the vote. We also talked to Heladio Ramirez and Diodoro Carrasco and they also gave us their support, the same with Chuayffet. Then, we decided to spread the word’ (Primitivo Rodriguez June 2006). In the end, the bill as it was modified by the Senate was approved at the Lower Chamber with 455 votes, 6 against and 33 absentees (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2 Federal Congress’ voting on the ‘Absentee Vote’ bill (28 June 2005)



Own elaboration, source: Gaceta parlamentaria, 28 June 2005

The approval of the ‘vote abroad’ bill then does not correspond to Nacif’s theory of policy making under divided government, which maintains that political parties align and trade off their ideal points in order to defeat the *status quo*. In particular, the

PAN resented the initial advanced version passed in the Lower Chamber, whereas on the other hand, the PRD had to conform to the restrictive version approved at Senate, as well as the final version re-approved in the Lower Chapter. However, PRI legislators in both chambers did not behave coherently due to internal party divisions and thus they did not defend the party's ideal point. In fact, the final version of the bill was rescued by PRI congressmen representatives of labour unions. What this illustrates is that at this stage of democratization political parties do not necessarily act rationally according to their strategic interests and internal competition, especially when the selection of (presidential) candidates led to fragmentation of political party unity with repercussions in policy and law making in the legislatures.

4.3. Conclusion

This chapter presents the argument that there have been two main institutional actors that led to the approval of the vote abroad bill in Mexico: political parties in the country of origin and migrant organisations – in particular the '*Coalicion*' – in the country of reception. The principal factor in the emergence of this pattern of transnational politics is the development of competitive party politics and the advancement of economic integration between both countries. However, there are different interests in building a transnational political arena. Whereas the PRD has steadily supported migrants' political participation to fulfil the party's ideological underpinnings, the ruling PAN, on the other hand, sees migrant political incorporation as part of Fox' grand vision of a North American community and a logical step to foster economic integration. The divided position of the once-long time ruling party PRI over migrants' electoral participation illustrates how the party

is still readjusting to its reality as an opposition party and seeking reconciliation with the past. All main parties converge, however, on the belief that migrants' remittances are a main justification for migrants' political rights, which could also be interpreted as a form of 'buying membership'.

This case study contributes to the research on the influence of migrant groups in the politics of the country of origin and the political economy of migrants' remittances. As Mexico undertakes a democratic transition, policy-making dynamics under a divided government are extended across borders and affected by a transnational elite of bi-national activists. Remittances and votes originated beyond the limits of the state have placed this group at the centre stage of Mexican domestic politics.

In the next chapter, we will be able to see to what extent the absentee voting system has been able to create a political relationship between the home country government and the Mexican community abroad and whether the expectations of the main political parties have been met.

Chapter 5

5. The Mexican absentee vote and its effects on transnational political engagement

In 2006, Mexican expatriates were for the first time eligible to take part in Mexico's historic presidential elections via absentee ballot. About one of every eight adults born in Mexico now lives in the US, and they are by far the largest foreign population living in this country. As such, the new Mexican absentee voting system was the largest experiment ever undertaken of expatriates voting in one Western democracy whilst living in another. However, migrant political participation was minimal – about 0.05% of Mexicans in the US actually cast absentee votes for the Mexican presidential elections in July 2006. Based on this, some argue that the Mexican absentee voting system failed in creating a political relationship between the home country government and the Mexican community abroad.

Mexico's attempts to enfranchise expatriates are not unique in Latin America. As we have seen, Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Brazil and the Dominican Republic are some of the countries in the region that currently allow citizens abroad to vote, though the Mexican experience was more controversial in terms of potential numbers and because most Mexican emigrants are concentrated in one single neighbouring country. Voting turnout among expatriates has been generally low across Latin America too. Ecuador, like Mexico, allowed citizens to vote for the first time in its presidential elections in 2006, although it implemented a ballot system. Overall, it

proved more successful than Mexico's experience. 143,352 Ecuadorians abroad registered to vote in the elections – the majority from Spain (about 89,000) – although it still represented 6% of all Ecuadorian migrant population. However, the case of the Dominican Republic shows that the number of migrant voters can increase over time. In the 2004 presidential elections 44,339 Dominicans registered to vote and 35,342 eventually cast a vote. For the May 2008 presidential elections, more than 155,000 Dominicans registered to vote, that represented an increase of about 314% (Junta Central Electoral- Republica Dominicana 2008). This is relevant as most presidential elections in the Dominican Republic have been decided with a difference of less than 100,000 votes (Mendez 2008). Developed countries with large diaspora populations, however, have better voting turnout response. In the 2006 Italian elections, around 1,133,577 Italians abroad sent a postal vote (out of about 3 million that were registered) and in Spain more than 330,000 Spaniards living overseas voted in the 2006 elections, out of a total 1 million expatriates around the world (Torres 22 November 2006; BBC News 2006).

The main question in this chapter is not why most Mexican migrants failed to avail themselves of this opportunity for political action, but rather why some groups participated whereas others did not? The existing research leaves little doubt about why the Mexican absentee voting system failed to attract migrant voters – unfriendly mechanisms to register and vote in the election, lack of an efficient and timely awareness campaign and to some degree lack of interest among Mexican expatriates; however, it says little about who actually participated in the elections from abroad. This analysis would allow us to find out if the intentions of legislators and advocates of this bill were met, and on the other hand, what political actors

benefited as a result. This chapter attempts to build a demographic and socio-economic profile of the Mexican migrant voter, finding that it is mainly well educated and affluent migrants with longer period of residence in the US that tend to vote. A finding that is consistent with other studies that try to uncover who are those migrants that engage in transnational political practices, although not necessarily electorally-related (Guarnizo 1997; Fitzgerald 2000; Itzigsohn 2000; Guarnizo 2001; Guarnizo, Portes et al. May 2003). The socio-economic characteristics of the Mexican expatriate voter help explain why there was a marked preference for PAN's Felipe Calderon's over other political options, as higher income and education levels are predictors of PAN support³¹ (Lawson 2003; Klesner 2007).

This chapter is divided in three sections. In the following section, I discuss the mechanisms of the Mexican absentee voting system signalling how it failed to induce large numbers of migrant voters to participate in the 2006 election. The main argument here is that low voting turnout was not only the result of the restrictive character of the vote abroad bill, but also the outcome of its inefficient implementation as a result of lack of political support (mainly from government institutions and political parties). Secondly, I explore the demographic and socio-economic profile of the migrant voter in the 2006 presidential elections. The research presented in this section employs an unpublished survey of a national sample of expatriates registered in the expatriate voters' registry in 2006. I show how migrant voters were mainly educated and affluent migrants with a longer period of

³¹ However, we should note that the opposite is not true for the centre-left PRD candidate Lopez Obrador's supporters. Lopez Obrador received votes across all income and social groups and educational levels except from the richest Mexicans. See Klesner, J. L. (2007) "The 2006 Mexican elections: Manifestation of a divided Society?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* Volume, pp.27-32 DOI:

residency in the US. Lastly, taking into consideration the profile of the migrant voter, I assess voting preferences among Mexicans abroad and compare them with the electoral results in Mexican territory. I conclude by arguing that despite the minuscule number of absentee votes, a clear preference for the official PAN party (based on higher income and education levels) could be an advantage for the replication of similar vote abroad bills at the local level.

5.1. The vote abroad mechanism for presidential elections

The national vote abroad law, as it was mentioned in the previous chapter, involves a highly restrictive system for absentee voting, which allows Mexicans residing abroad to vote only for presidential elections by post. As we have seen in chapter three, a constitutional amendment was not necessary as two sets of constitutional reforms approved in 1996 had already made the migrant vote a possibility. The immediate legislative antecedent was a reform to the constitutional article 36 (fraction III) allowing Mexicans to be able to vote outside their electoral districts and on the other hand, a reform to articles 30, 32, 37 allowing dual nationality rights (Original document published 1917, last reform made in February 2007). The vote abroad bill is then a set of rules that put migrants' electoral rights into practice, by adding an additional book to the federal electoral code entitled 'the vote of the Mexicans residing abroad' (Diario Oficial de la Federacion 30 June 2005).

In this section, I show why so few Mexicans abroad participated in the 2006 presidential elections in Mexico. First, I describe how the restrictive character of the absentee voting system has mostly been blamed as the main cause of low electoral

turnout among Mexican expatriates. To this I also add the lack of political willingness to implement this bill, evidenced in the delayed budgetary decisions, which had a clear impact on the unsuccessful awareness campaign of the vote abroad among the Mexican communities in the US and the rest of the world. Second, I compare these findings with the survey-based existing research that points out the main reasons that deterred migrants to vote in the past election.

Thus, in regard to the restrictions inherent in the vote abroad bill, the requirement of having a voting credential issued by the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), the Mexican independent body that organises and oversees the elections, is one of the most significant constraints as otherwise Mexican expatriates have to return to Mexico to apply for one. The original bill proposed by the Chamber of Deputies, however, had allowed migrants to be able to obtain a voting credential abroad, but it was finally modified by the Senate on the basis of an IFE report that mentioned that the issuance of voting credentials abroad was temporarily and logically impossible (Instituto Federal Electoral 14 March 2005). The voting credential requirement restricted the number of potential voters abroad from the estimated 10 million Mexicans (by birth) residing abroad, to an estimated 4.2 million Mexicans abroad with a voting credential according to the IFE, whilst the figure was 3 million according to the Pew Hispanic Center (Suro 14 March 2005; Instituto Federal Electoral June 2004; Instituto Federal Electoral June 2004). It should be noted that Mexicans that emigrate in an undocumented manner would, more often than not, avoid bringing any official documentation and also those that had emigrated before the IFE was founded in 1990 would not possess the right official voting credential.

Secondly, the registration process found in the current vote abroad law is highly bureaucratic, time-consuming and expensive. Expatriates have to fill in the application form and enclose a signed photocopy of the voting credential and a proof of address such as a lease or a utility bill that established their residence abroad. The latter was particularly troublesome since many migrants would not have a utility bill in their name as they often share housing. This requirement was relaxed later on in the process allowing expatriates to send a utility bill showing their address, even if it was not in their name (Ballados 2006; Beltran May 2007). Some leaders of migrant organisations, however, complained about filling in a form that required a name and an address as this was particularly troublesome for the many Mexicans whose status in the US was undocumented (11 November 2005). Moreover, they had to send the application package by registered mail, for which they had to pay (the cost is approximately 8 dollars from the US). Consequently, as many migrant leaders pointed out, this process did not only limit the number to those that had the money to pay and the time to do it, but also to those who could speak enough English to send the application by registered post (Reforma 8 January 2006).

In addition, the registration period included in the vote abroad bill is extremely limited. Expatriates have to apply to be registered in the 'registry of Mexicans residing abroad' between 1 October and 15 January of the year of the election. In the 2006 presidential election, if the absentee voter's registration in the expatriates' registry was successful, the IFE was obliged to send them a ballot with pre-paid postage between 21 April and 20 May. After emitting their vote, they had to send it back to Mexico City and had to reach the IFE by 1 July. An IFE survey carried out after the elections revealed, however, that many migrants that had successfully

registered for the vote abroad elections never received the ballot (20% of a sample of 580 expatriates registered) and thus could not emit their vote.

However, I also argue that the 'first-ever' absentee registration process was particularly troublesome due to inefficient policy implementation. Budget for promotional advertising in the US was not approved by the Congress until the end of 2006, a few weeks before the application deadline. Up to that point, the IFE had primarily relied on embassies, consulates and migrant clubs to distribute application forms for the absentee ballot. Out of 5 million applications, approximately 3 and a half million were distributed, whether by 'alternative means' (88%) or by consulates and the Internet (13%) (Instituto Federal Electoral July 2005). Alternative means mainly refers to the system created by the IFE in which migrant organisations could register and help with the distribution campaign on voluntary basis. 197,200 applications were distributed by 138 Mexican migrant organisations based in 11 countries, although they were mostly concentrated in the American states of California (41), Texas (16), Illinois (11), New York (11) and Arizona (7) (Instituto Federal Electoral Last actualization realised 11 January 2006).

The IFE only launched the promotional campaign in the US cities with highest concentration of Mexican immigrants on 15 December 2006, one month before the application period would end (Opinion 8 November 2005; 11 November 2005; La Opinion 15 November 2005). Given that many Mexican migrants return to their places of origin during the Christmas holiday period, the awareness campaign was destined to have little results. To counteract these potential effects, the IFE set up 27 booths at border crossing stations and airports (mainly in Tamaulipas, Coahuila,

Chihuahua, Sonora and Baja California) to Mexicans who were going home for the Christmas period. There, 10, 843 applications for absentee voting with pre-paid postage were completed and sent to Mexico City, that represented 22.99% of all applications received (COVE 2005).

On the other hand, however, the vote abroad bill is not only restrictive for potential migrant voters, but also for presidential candidates and political parties. It prohibits political parties and candidates from campaigning abroad and from receiving private funds from Mexicans residing abroad. One of the only options for migrant voters to know more about their presidential candidates and political parties is to visit the IFE website. The ballot package for the 2006 elections also included a booklet with the political platforms of the different presidential candidates and a CD-ROM containing further information. It follows, then, that generating migrant interest in the 2006 election was restricted to the US-based media and promotional material from the IFE.

Thus, to answer the question why so few Mexican expatriates registered and voted in the elections? The causes could be twofold: as we have seen the Mexican absentee voting system is highly restrictive and on the other, the IFE's public information campaign for the 1996 elections was highly inefficient as budget (decided by Congress) was only available a few weeks before the deadline for registration. The IFE was particularly blamed for allegedly inhibiting the migrant vote. For instance, migrant groups' representatives, civil society groups and centre-left PRD militants protested outside IFE offices in Mexico city complaining about the IFE's limited electoral promotion (Solis 2005). Two surveys carried out separately after the

elections by the IFE and the Pew Hispanic Center seem to confirm this. According to the survey carried out by the IFE in November 2006, a majority mentioned that the main reason why many expatriates could not vote in the past presidential elections was because they did not have an official voting credential, that is an ID with photograph granted by the IFE which is widely used in Mexico for official procedures, followed by the difficulty for applying for absentee voting and the lack of information on the process for seeking a ballot. 30% also mentioned that sending their application by registered mail was too expensive. In addition, the majority mentioned that a postal vote was not the best option to vote from abroad. The postal vote came third in the choice of preferred voting methods – Internet vote (34%), ballot box in consulates (34%), postal vote (26%) and telephone vote (1%).

Similarly, the Pew Hispanic Center ‘Survey of Mexicans Living in the US on Absentee Voting in Mexican Elections’ carried out once the deadline for registration had passed in January and February 2006 and based on telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 987 Mexican-born adults living in the US also shows that lack of a voting credential and lack of information were the main reasons for not registering for absentee voting (Suro February 22, 2006). Also, about half said that they did not receive enough information about the procedure and requirements to register and 46% mentioned that the procedures were too difficult and complicated. This survey, however, also tried to find out whether Mexicans in the US were interested in voting for Mexican presidential elections at all. In response to the statement “I am making my life in the United States and the elections in Mexico are not important to me”, 28 % of Mexicans in the US agreed that was a reason why migrants did not register for the absentee voting, but 68 % disagreed,

which implies that the number of Mexican emigrant voters could be higher if a modification to the bill took place.

Trying to find out to what extent Mexican expatriates would have voted in the 2006 presidential elections if the requirements and registration procedure were easier, Wayne Cornelius and his associates carried out the Mexican Expatriate Study aimed at obtaining a representative picture of the current Mexican-born population residing in the US by interviewing 1,104 respondents by telephone and in person and compared the results with electoral attitudes of Mexicans residing in Mexico (Cornelius August 31- September 3, 2006). Cornelius and his associates presented the findings of the “untapped potential” for migrants’ electoral involvement in the 2006 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in Philadelphia. Thus, the main question was why Mexican expatriates did not vote, whether it was because they were not interested or was it because of the restrictive system for absentee voting? They found out that the same percentage of Mexican-born immigrants residing in the US followed the Mexican presidential campaigns as Mexicans residing in their home country. Also, around 20% Mexican expatriates discussed politics with friends and family at least a few times a week, although in Mexico this figure amounted to 35%. However, although they discovered that there was a greater potential of migrant voters than the minuscule number of expatriates that actually voted, they also recognised that close to half would have still not participated regardless what the rules were for absentee voting. It should be noted, however, that electoral abstention is also close to half in any developed country.

To sum up, it could be said that migrant electoral participation is unlikely to increase in the future, unless there is a reform to the current absentee voting system or if it is implemented in a more efficient manner, which requires political willingness of the main political parties. This is not only because of the system's limitations, but also because the expatriates' registry is only provisional, that is, a new expatriates' registry has to be created for each presidential election. After the election, migrant voters are registered again in the original electoral district in which they obtained their voting credential (Ballados 2006). In fact, votes emitted abroad are counted with those votes from the same electoral district where the expatriate voter obtained his or her voting credential. Thus, those expatriates that managed to comply with the requirements and succeeded to be registered in the expatriates' registry in 2006 will have to go through the same application process all over again in order to vote for future elections. On the other hand, migrant leaders have mentioned that if there had been a more timely public information strategy and campaign, the number of voters abroad would have been higher since many of them were not even aware of the absentee voting system and for some it was too late when they found out (fieldwork interviews, 2006 and 2008). This first experience says that Mexican institutions failed at planning and executing the logistics necessary to efficiently create a new absentee voting system.

5.2. Who voted from abroad? – Describing the new members of Mexican democracy

“... The 40,000 that succeeded at registering and the 33,000 that managed to vote are not only the new members of Mexican democracy, but their best members... the effort to vote abroad was a thousand times the effort to vote in Mexico” says

Primitivo Rodriguez, migrant leader and member of the '*Coalicion por el Voto de los Mexicanos en el Extranjero*'. "How many Mexicans will vote in Mexico if they had to go somewhere to pick up an application, fill it in even if you cannot distinguish anything, have to pay and then you have to speak Russian or English to be registered? Not even the presidential candidates would have voted" (Primitivo Rodriguez June 2006). Undoubtedly, much of the explanation for the low electoral turnout abroad lies in the highly restrictive system for absentee voting and its implementation. Out of a total adult population of 10 million Mexicans living in the US, only 56,749 ballots applications were received by the IFE in Mexico City and as many as a fifth of those applications were rejected because they were submitted improperly (information supplied by the IFE, 2006). Among the main reasons for rejection, ballot applications were not sent by registered post and many did not enclose the additional documents (photocopy of voting ID and/or proof of address). In the end, the expatriates' registry was made up of 40,879 Mexican citizens residing in 80 different countries from the five continents, although the vast majority lived in the US.

A total of 33,111 expatriates actually voted in the election, which is 81% of those Mexican expatriates registered for absentee voting, according to official IFE figures. That represents about 1% of all the adult Mexicans in the US and less than 0.5 % of the total voters in Mexico³². Thus after predictions of 400,000 migrant voters by the IFE (10% turnout of those who are eligible to vote and have a voter credential)³³ and

³² Based on figures from the 2000 Census

³³ The 4 million Mexicans with an official voting credential abroad was calcuted based on the people that did not reply to the invitation by the IFE to work in the polling stations. In the 2003 mid-term elections, the IFE sent the invitation to a random sample of 10% of those registered to vote. 363,078 did not receive the invitations because

125,000 to 360,000 voters according to Marcelli and Cornelius (based on a 2001 survey with Mexicans living in Los Angeles County who had voted in the 2000 Mexican presidential election), much fewer expatriates actually voted (Marcelli and Cornelius 2005). Considering that the IFE was granted 26.4 million dollars in 2005 and 106.2 million dollars in 2006 to carry out the exercise of absentee voting and around 5 million absentee voting applications were printed out for this purpose, the turnout results were met with much public disappointment on both sides of the border³⁴. Considering that the IFE utilised 38.42 million dollars of the total budget, every migrant vote cost the exorbitant amount of 1,160 dollars. It can be said that it would have been cheaper to fly Mexican émigrés back to Mexico to cast their vote in person.

After assessing why so few Mexican expatriates voted for the presidential elections, in this section I explore who actually voted from abroad. Building a demographic and socio-economic profile of a migrant voter does not only allow us to identify those political actors that have benefited with the migrant vote, but also whether the outcomes have matched the intentions of the legislators that approved the bill, as well as whether this national vote abroad bill could be replicated at the local level. In addition, despite the fact that an increasing number of countries are granting voting rights to their expatriates and in many of those (mainly developed) countries the migrant vote has, at times, been key to define electoral results (for instance, Italy in 2006, Spain in 2006 and the US in the year 2000), there is non-existent data about the

they lived abroad. However, it must be noted that despite estimates by the IFE of 4 million Mexicans with an official voting credential living abroad, only about 1.5 million of citizens registered in the electoral roll had changed their address to another country by 2003 (information provided by the IFE according to 2003 figures).

³⁴ In 2005, the IFE only utilised 11.920 million dollars and in 2006 their budget was reduced to 26.5 million dollars (using \$1=10 Mexican peso exchange).

demographics of emigrant voters. That is mainly because most countries do not differentiate those votes cast by citizens at home and abroad (Mexico is one of the exceptions). Even in the case of the US, very few initiatives have been carried out to count absentee votes at the county level but the results have not been made available to the public (Dark 2003). The demographics and socio-economic characteristics of expatriate voters are a key variable to analyse their political behaviour in home country's elections since in most cases (where figures are available) votes cast from abroad differ greatly from votes cast at home (Fidrmuc and Doyle 2004).

Thus, this study is the first to explore the characteristics of a country's electorate abroad. I attempt to find out what groups of Mexican expatriates voted in the 2006 Mexican presidential election relying on the findings from an official IFE survey with migrants that registered in the expatriates' registry carried out in November 2006. The results of the survey have not been analysed or published before and special permission was granted for this study. This survey was sent to all the Mexicans abroad that filled in a registration form for the absentee vote and provided an email address, which was a total of 19,571 people³⁵. The first invitation to answer the survey was sent on the 22nd of November followed by two later reminders (on the 24th and 28th of November). By the deadline on the 30th of November, 580 replies were received from 29 different countries, although the vast majority came from the US (64% or 435 respondents). The survey contained 75 questions mainly addressed to their own experiences with and opinions about the first election abroad – mainly focused on registration and voting procedures and the registration campaign. However, a number of questions were also included to find out demographic and

³⁵ That was 19,571 out of 40,879 people that registered in total or 48% (IFE figures, 2006).

socio-economic characteristics of Mexican migrant voters (see Annex 5 for a complete questionnaire translated in English).

In spite of the novelty of the data, we should be aware of the weakness of this exercise. The main shortcoming of this survey is that it might not represent a fair sample of Mexican migrant voters as it is limited to the 38% of Mexican emigrants that applied for registration and also supplied an email address. The 580 absentee voters (2.96%) that answered, then, represent a biased sample of those Mexican expatriates that had an email address at the time of registration and had access to the Internet³⁶. This reliance on email and on-line resources probably biased the sample towards more settled, affluent populations and away from low-skilled migrant workers.

Bearing in mind that many Mexican expatriates did not vote due to the restrictive system for absentee voting, as well as logistic problems and also taking into account that a number of Mexican migrants might simply not be interested in participating in their home country's politics, questions then arise about what is the migrant population that actually voted in the first experience of absentee voting for presidential elections and whether the outcomes of the electoral reform on the vote abroad actually matched the intentions of the legislators and migrant groups that lobbied for this bill. In the previous chapter, we identified three main reasons for extending the franchise to Mexicans abroad apart from the human rights and democracy argument, those are: to secure migrant remittances sent back home; offer

³⁶ Out of the total number of expatriates that were registered for absentee voting for the 2006 presidential elections, 62.30% did not provide an email address whereas 37.7% did provide one. 80.36% also reported to count with a telephone line, in contrast to 14.69% that did not have one. IFE figures, 2007.

political participation to Mexican citizens that would not have this right in the US; try to build and maintain a Mexican-American lobby group in the US; and/or eventually win more votes. Also, identifying the demographic and socio-economic profile of the migrant voter allows us to understand the impact this reform has and which political actors it has eventually come to benefit.

Five groups of Mexican migrants are analysed in this section according to the available literature on transnational political participation, assimilation theory and conventional theories of political participation: 1) general demographics (age and gender groups); 2) context of migration (places of origin and destination); 3) engagement in other forms of cross-border activities (economic, political and social); 4); period of residence and citizenship status abroad and; 5) human capital (education and occupational skills). In this section, I posit that well-educated affluent migrants that are not necessarily remittance-senders and most likely to have a longer period of residence (but less than 10 years) in the US might have been those that actually voted in the elections. These results contrast with the original intentions of Mexican legislators to attract more remittances-senders or to offer political participation to temporary and illegal immigrants. It might, however, coincide with the argument that absentee voting could benefit a Mexican-American lobby as permanent migrants (although with a residence period abroad of less than 10 years) seem to participate more. This finding allows to understand why the votes cast by migrant voters significantly differed from the electoral results in Mexico, which is analysed in the next section.

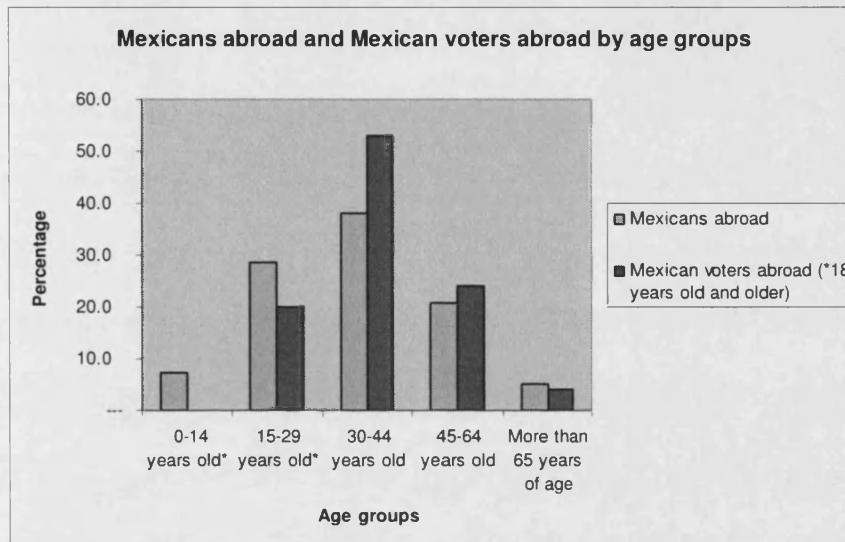
General demographics – Age and gender

In particular, the transnationalist approach to international migration highlights the role of gender in transnational activities, especially those directed to influencing the home country politically. Jones-Correa, in particular, shows how first generation Latin American males in the US are more likely to be involved in their home country's political affairs than women, whereas women participate more in political and community developments of the country in which they live (1998). That is mainly explained by the occupational downward mobility that most Latin American males suffer when they immigrate to the US in contrast to their female counterparts, whose insertion into the job market can make them experience financial independence for the first time (Fernandez-Kelly and Garcia 1990).

Thus, I begin by identifying age and gender groups of migrant voters in the last Mexican presidential election. According to IFE figures, those registered for absentee voting were mainly young (22% were between 30 and 34 years old and 18% were between 35 and 39 years old) and 57% were males. Age has a non-linear effect, it increases in young-middle age and declines with old age. On the one hand, these characteristics seem to reflect general demographics of the Mexican population abroad (see figures 5.1 and 5.2 below). That is, the biggest age group that cast an absentee vote (between 30 and 44 years of age) coincided with the highest proportion of Mexicans residing abroad that are in that same age bracket. The same can be said about gender, more than half of male voters might be a reflection of the higher proportion of Mexican males abroad (56% of total Mexican migrant population) compared to women. On the other hand, however, higher male participation in home

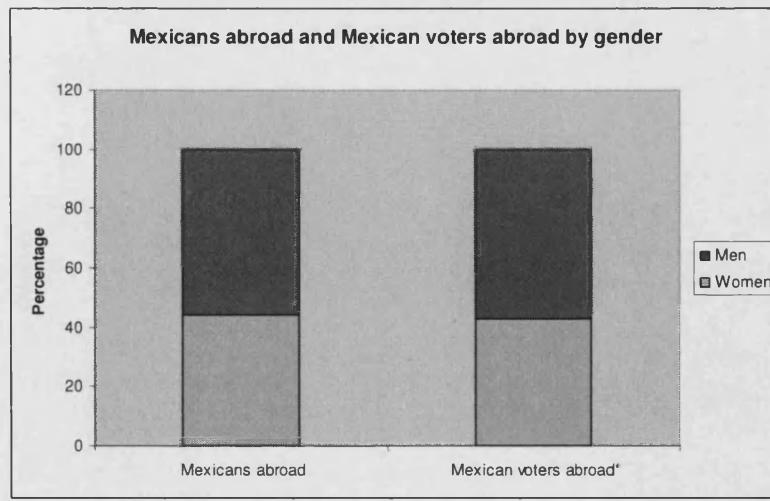
country's elections might also confirm Jones-Correa's argument indicating that Latin American migrant men engage more in transnational political activities than women.

Figure 5.1 Mexicans abroad and Mexican voters abroad by age groups



Own elaboration. Source: Mexicans abroad by age group, CONAPO (2007) and Mexicans abroad that voted in the 2006 presidential election abroad, IFE (2006) figures (* Minimum voting age in Mexico is 18 years old)

Figure 5.2 Mexicans abroad and Mexican voters abroad by gender



Own elaboration. Source: Mexicans abroad by gender, CONAPO (2007), Mexicans abroad that voted in the 2006 presidential election by gender, IFE (2006) figures (*Mexican voters are 18 years old and older)

Context of migration - places of origin and reception

Recent theories of voting behaviour in Mexico reveal changing patterns of electoral participation in Mexico since the 1990's, when gradually citizens living in urban centres, rather than rural areas, started to vote more (Klesner and Lawson 2001; Temkin, Salazar et al. 2004). This was mainly attributed to many changes that have accompanied Mexico's democratic transition, such as urban residents increasingly putting their trust in electoral institutions, less political clientelism in rural areas and thus, fewer incentives for rural residents to vote. Klesner and Lawson have shown that higher turnout rates take place in electoral districts that are mainly urban, whose residents have higher levels of education and with a lower proportion of people working in the agricultural sector (2001).

Regarding the context of reception, conventional theories of political participation tell us that education increases political participation generally (Lipset 1960; Olsen 1980). Following this line of argument, it is expected that most well-educated or highly-skilled emigrants vote. In turn, highly skilled migrants are less geographically concentrated than their low-skilled co-nationals and, more often than not, do not settle in places where a high proportion of their co-nationals live (Bartel 1989). In contrast, most low-skilled immigrants in the US choose locations with a high concentration of their fellow countrymen.

In particular, the Mexican absentee vote in 2006 also revealed interesting voting turnout behaviour regarding places of origin and of reception. This information was provided for academic purposes by the IFE in 2007. The majority of Mexican migrant voters that participated in the 2006 presidential elections were originally

from traditional or highly-migrant sending states such as Mexico City or Distrito Federal (15.4%), Jalisco (12.3%), the state of Mexico (10.2%), Michoacán (8.2%) and Guanajuato (6.8%). However, compared to their migrant population, (according to estimates from the 2000 Mexico's official census) there was more electoral participation among migrants coming from Distrito Federal, Nuevo Leon, the state of Mexico, Quintana Roo and Tabasco. This tells us that migrants' electoral participation from traditional migrant sending states, in proportional terms, was not high. Instead, the migrant population that came from the capital city (DF) and other urban states, such as the state of Mexico and Nuevo Leon, participated more confirming voting turnout behaviour theories in contemporary Mexico.

Looking at the other side of the border, the place of residence of migrant voters, the vast majority of migrant voters unsurprisingly resided in the US (28,346 or 85.61% of total absentee votes), followed by Canada (2.49%). According to figures provided directly from the IFE, the highest numbers of absentee votes came from the US states of California (40 %), Texas (15 %) and Illinois (10 %), where the majority of Mexican immigrants live abroad. However, compared to the estimated number of Mexican migrant residents in each state according to 2006 estimates from the '*Colegio de la Frontera Norte*' (Colef for its acronym in Spanish)³⁷, there was more electoral participation amongst immigrants residing in American states with the smallest share of Mexican-born population, such as DC where about 4 percent of the estimated Mexico-born population voted and Massachusetts and New Hampshire where migrant voters amounted to about 2 % and 1.5 % respectively of the estimated Mexican-born immigrants residing in each state. In the American states with the

³⁷ Colef estimates, 2006, box 3.3a

highest concentration of Mexican immigrants, California, Texas and Illinois, there were participation rates of only 0.3, 0.2 and 0.4 % respectively. The reason for this result might be twofold. Firstly, as we have seen, Mexicans living in American states with the lowest concentration of co-nationals tend to be more highly skilled – mainly migrants in professional occupations and students. In addition, education, as we have seen, is also a determinant of electoral participation in Mexico (Klesner and Lawson 2001). Secondly, Mexicans living in these states also tend to be more settled and with longer periods of residency. For instance, in the case of DC, where the highest proportion (4%) of the Mexican migrant population voted, the majority of Mexicans living there arrived before 1990 (73%) compared to the national average of 44% of Mexican-born arriving to the US prior to that year (according to Colef figures). However, this last reason is not conclusive; a more in depth analysis taking into account survey results is provided below.

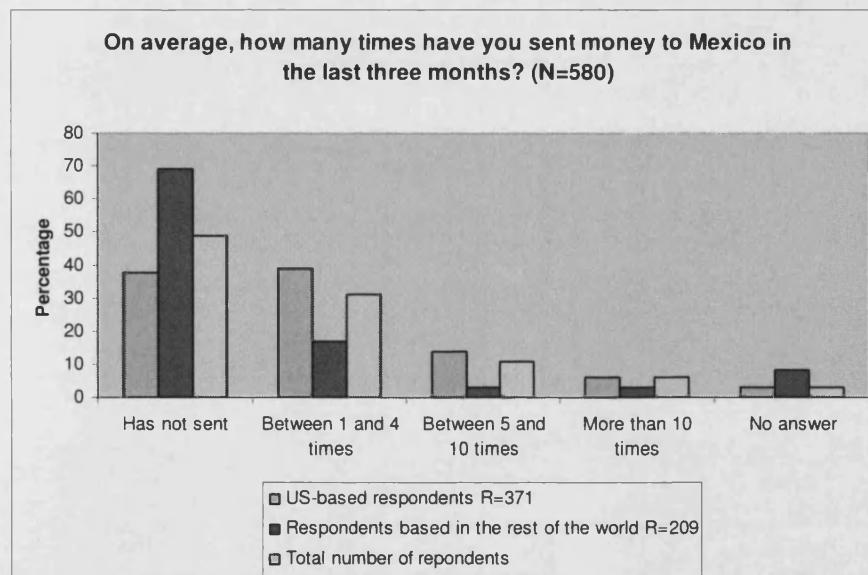
Engagement in other forms of economic, political and social transnational participation

Although there is a general conception in transnationalism theories that migrants that engage in electoral and non-electoral forms of transnational political participation also engage in other forms of economic and social cross-border activities (Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003; Engbersen 2007; Guarnizo, Portes et al. May 2003), there is no conclusive evidence that cross-border activities are a determinant for electoral participation in the home country's elections. Indirectly, in their study of transnational entrepreneurs, Portes et. al. show that Dominican immigrants that start an enterprise in the reception country are more likely to vote in home country's elections, whereas Salvadoran immigrants engage more in transnational

entrepreneurial activities and participate more in 'hometown civic activism' (Portes, Guarnizo et al. 2002, p.287 f. 2).

In order to examine to what extent Mexican migrant voters also take part in other transnational (cross-border) activities a number of questions in the survey prove useful. Transnational activities are then distinguished between those mainly economic, political and social. Firstly, to assess migrant voters' involvement in cross-border economic activities affecting the country of origin, respondents had to answer a question on how often they send remittances to family and friends back home (see Figure 5.3 and Table 5.1 below).

Figure 5.3 How often Mexican absentee voters send remittances to Mexico



Own elaboration. COVE survey (2006)

Table 5.1 How often Mexican absentee voters send remittances home

On average, how many times you have sent money to Mexico in the last three months? (N=580)						
	Total		Respondents in US (R=371)		Rest of the world (R=209)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Has not sent	284	49	139	37	145	69
Between 1 and 4 times	180	31	145	39	35	17
Between 5 and 10 times	64	11	52	14	6	3
More than 10 times	35	6	23	6	6	3
No answer	17	3	12	3	17	8
	580	100	371	100	209	100

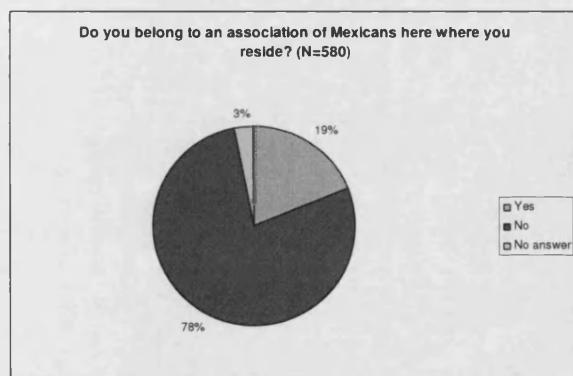
Own elaboration, COVE survey (2006)

The survey's results show to what extent migrants that voted in the elections are also those that send remittances back home, that is, whether transnational economic involvement would equal transnational political participation in the country of origin. The results shown in figure 5.3 and table 5.1 are mixed. The total sample reveals that about half of Mexican absentee voters do not send remittances home. About 31% send remittances between one and four times every three months and only 17% do it very often, that is, more than five times every three months. However, results from US-based Mexican voters and those residing in any other country seem to diverge. Whereas 37% of Mexicans voters in the US do not send remittances home, 69% of those living in the rest of the world do not maintain an economic bond with their country of origin through the practice of remittances. Of those living in the US, 145 or 39% send money home between 1 and 4 times every three months, 14% do so between 5 and 10 and 6% make transfers back home more than 10 times in a period of three months. The results might be explained by self-selection, those emigrating to other countries further than the US might have higher financial means and their reason for migrating might not have been an economic one. This, then, shows that

transnational economic support is not clearly linked to cross-border political participation.

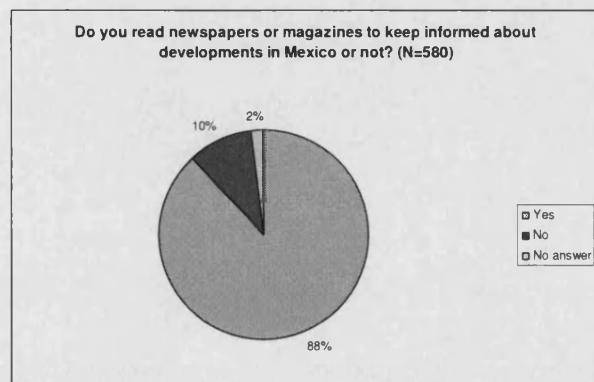
The survey also aimed at revealing to what extent Mexican voters engaged in other informal forms of political engagement, such as participating in migrant organisations or whether they followed their home country's news. Respondents were then asked: 1) if they followed developments in Mexico through newspapers and magazines; 2) if they were members of any Mexican migrant organisation in the place where they reside (see results in figures 5.4 and 5.5).

Figure 5.4 Migrant voters and membership in migrant associations



Own elaboration. COVE survey (2006)

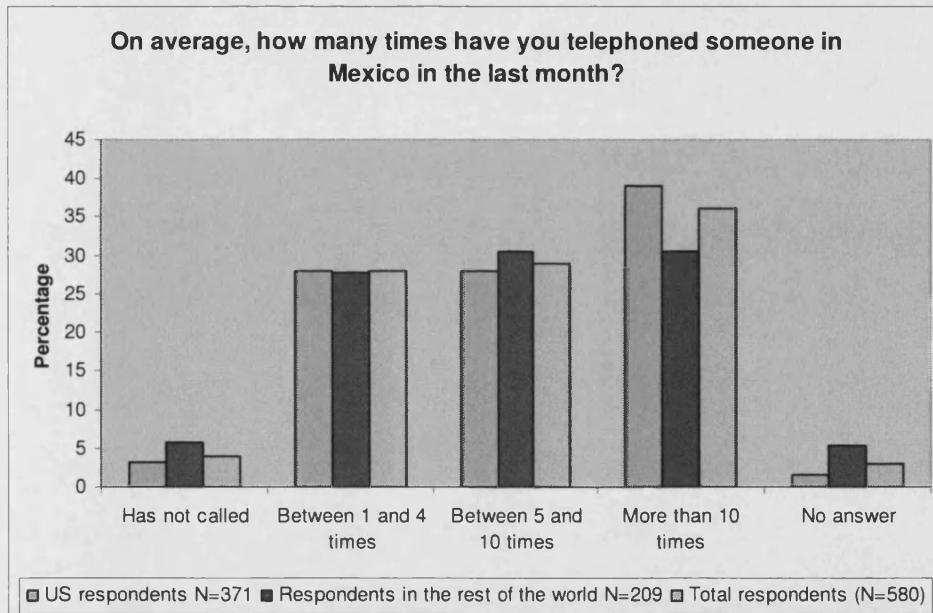
Figure 5.5 Migrant voters and awareness of developments in Mexico through the media



Own elaboration. COVE survey (2006)

The responses to these two survey questions show contrasting results. Whereas the majority of Mexican absentee voters (88%) follow developments in their home country by reading newspapers and magazines, very few are active members of Mexican migrant organisations (19%). Lastly, social transnational activities are mainly rated by a question on how often migrant voters call family and friends in Mexico.

Figure 5.6 How often Mexican migrant voters call home



Own elaboration. Source: Cove survey, 2006

The survey shows that absentee voters are indeed in touch with their relatives and friends in Mexico – more than 90 % have telephoned someone in Mexico in the last month and about 26% telephone home more than 10 times a month. Furthermore, results tend to differ little between Mexican voters in the US and in the rest of the world. It shows that those Mexican émigrés more aware about developments in their

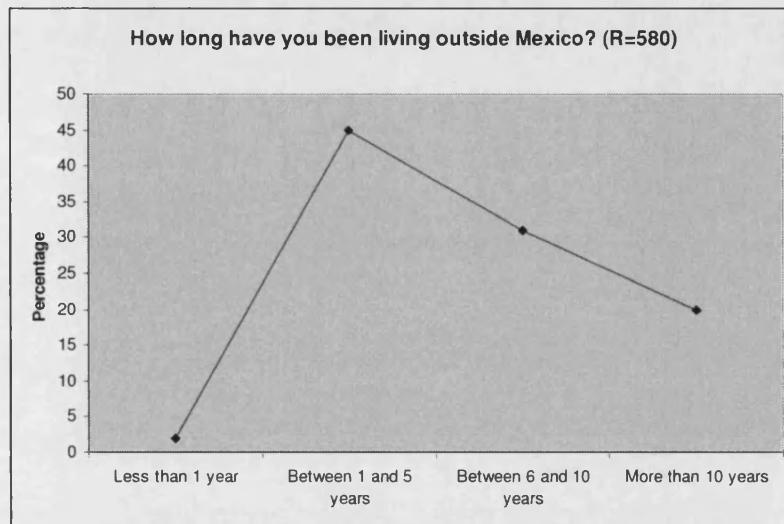
country of origin, whether by calling friends and relatives back home or following the news, are more inclined to have a say about political matters there.

Period of residency abroad

Assimilation theory has often referred to period of residence as a determinant for assimilation in the country of reception. According to this line of argument, time increases migrants' ability to adopt to a new cultural identity and forge an allegiance to the country of reception while abandoning previous ones (Kessler 1998; Pickus 1998; Schuck 1998). Therefore, according to this theory it can be implied that the longer time an emigrant spends in the country of reception the less likely they will cast a vote in their home country's elections. On the other hand, as it has already been mentioned in the introductory chapter, the transnationalist perspective questions specifically the assumption that a person residing in one country cannot be engaged in cross-border activities affecting their country of origin regardless of period of residence abroad. In fact, Guarnizo et. al. demonstrate that émigrés that are involved in transnational activities are longer residents in the country of reception (Guarnizo, Portes et al. 2003).

The survey sample shows how long those Mexicans that cast an absentee vote in 2006 have lived in a foreign country and how many of them have acquired, or are in the process of adopting, the nationality of their host country.

Figure 5.7 Time of residence abroad of migrant voters

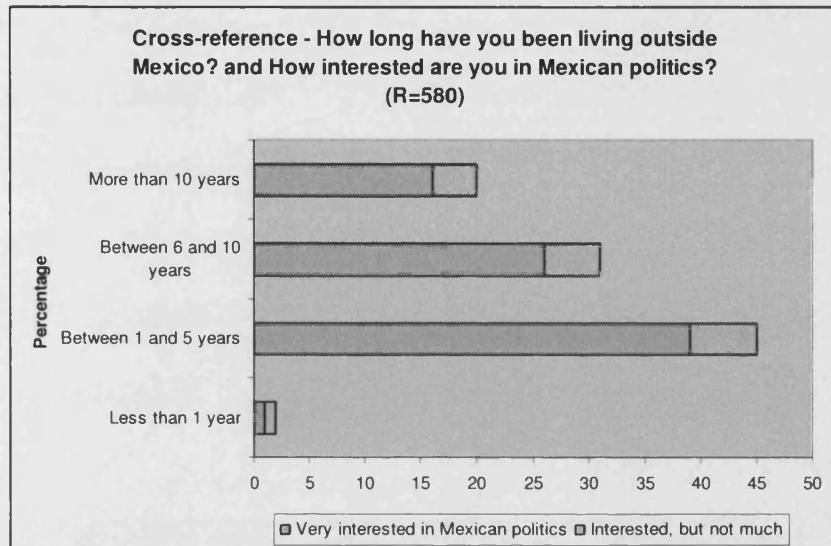


Own elaboration. Source: Cove survey, 2006. *2% did not provide an answer.

As we can observe in the graph (Figure 5.7), about half of migrant voters have been residing abroad between 1 to 5 years, about 30% between 6 and 10 years and 20% more than 10 years. A small percentage (2%) mentioned to have been living abroad for less than a year. Again, this is a non-linear relationship, electoral participation in home country's elections increases between the first and five years abroad and gradually decreases after that. What it shows, however, is that temporary migrants (less than 1 year abroad) do not generally tend to participate in the elections of their country of origin, instead the survey results show that migrants that cast an absentee vote are more likely to be permanent residents abroad. Although we cannot confirm from the survey results that permanent migrants with legal status are more likely to have voted in the elections, it could be said that the longer a migrant has been residing in the US, the more likely it is (although not always) that their status is regularised. In addition, the survey also included a question about migrants' degree of interest in Mexican politics. It reveals that migrant voters' interest in home country's politics over time follows the same pattern as transnational electoral

participation (see Figure 5.8 and Table 5.2. below). A non-linear effect, in which interest in home country's politics is high in the first five years, but gradually decreases over time.

Figure 5.8 Cross-reference: Period of residence abroad; interest in home country's politics



Own elaboration. Source: Cove survey, 2006

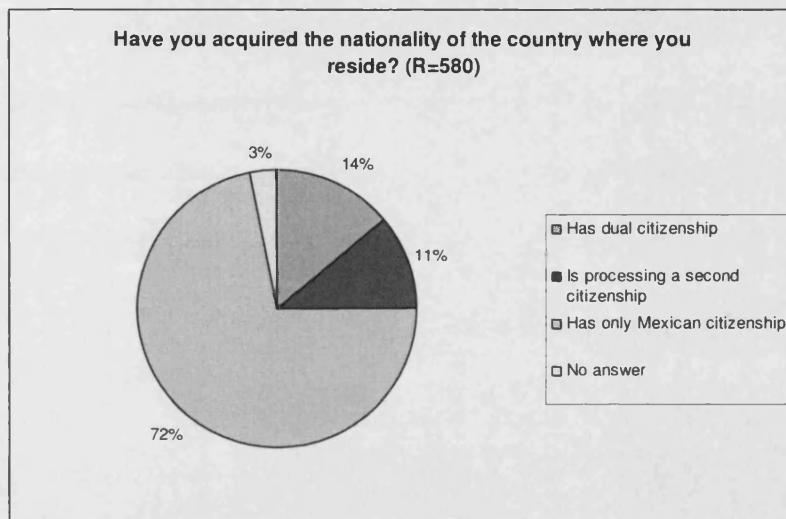
Table 5.2 Cross-reference: Period of residence abroad; interest in home country's politics

How long have you been living outside Mexico? (R=580)						
			Very interested (R=476)		Interested, but not much (R=93)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Less than 1 year	12	2	6	1	6	1
Between 1 and 5 years	261	45	226	39	35	6
Between 6 and 10 years	180	31	151	26	29	5
More than 10 years	116	20	93	16	23	4
No answer	12	2	0	0	0	0
Total	580	100	476	82	93	16

Own elaboration. Source: Cove survey, 2006

In addition, according to the survey about 72% of absentee voters are only Mexican citizens, whereas 14% are dual citizens and 11% are processing their second citizenship (see Figure 5.9 below).

Figure 5.9 Acquisition of dual citizenship among migrant voters



Own elaboration. Source: Cove survey, 2006

These results show that a quarter of absentee voters, then, would eventually be able to participate politically in two countries. In addition, only a minority (1%) reported to have been born in the US, whilst the vast majority of absentee voters are Mexican-born. Although, the survey shows that there is not strong association between having a second citizenship and applying for Mexican elections, a quarter of migrant voters potentially having a second citizenship is significant nonetheless.

Human capital

Human capital, measured in years of education and high occupational skills, is often referred as a determinant for both assimilation in the host country and engagement in politics in the home country. Assimilation theory says that human capital facilitates adjustment to the new context of reception as makes it easier to transfer allegiances and political interests away from the home country (Pickus 1998). On the contrary, transnationalism scholars, in particular Guarnizo et. al., show that Latin American immigrants in the US that engage in cross-border political activities are, more often than not, better educated (2003).

According to the survey among those Mexicans that voted from abroad we find that their level of education and type of occupation stand out as particularly significant (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4 below). A majority of absentee voters are highly educated: 75% had graduate or postgraduate experience whereas; on the other hand, 13% have completed preparatory school and 11% have secondary or primary education. Equally, absentee voters that responded to the survey seem to perform more skilled jobs. The majority work in the private sector (32%) or are entrepreneurs (16%), whereas only 5% mention they are labourers, 1% are self-employed (taxi driver, stallholder, street vendor, etc.) and 1% report to work on the land.

Table 5.3 Education of expatriates registered for absentee voting in 2006

Until what year did you study? (R=580)				
	Total		US-based voters (R=371)	
Postgraduate degree holder	226	39%	115	31%
University degree holder	209	36%	137	37%

Preparatory education	75	13%	63	17%
Secondary education	29	5%	19	5%
Technical secondary education	23	4%	30	8%
Primary education	12	2%	7	2%
No answer	6	1%	0	0%
Total	580	100%	371	100%

Own elaboration. Source: Cove survey, 2006

Table 5.4 Occupation of expatriates registered for absentee voting in 2006

Where do you work or what do you do? (R=580)		
Private sector employee	186	32%
Entrepreneur	93	16%
Public sector or government	41	7%
Housewife	41	7%
Self-employed (dentist, doctor, lawyer)	35	6%
Owns a small business	29	5%
Worker	29	5%
Teacher	29	5%
Student	23	4%
Self-employed (taxi driver, stallholder, street vendor...)	6	1%
Unemployed	6	1%
Farmer	6	1%
Pensioner	6	1%
Other	52	9%
Total	580	100%

Own elaboration. Source: Cove survey, 2006

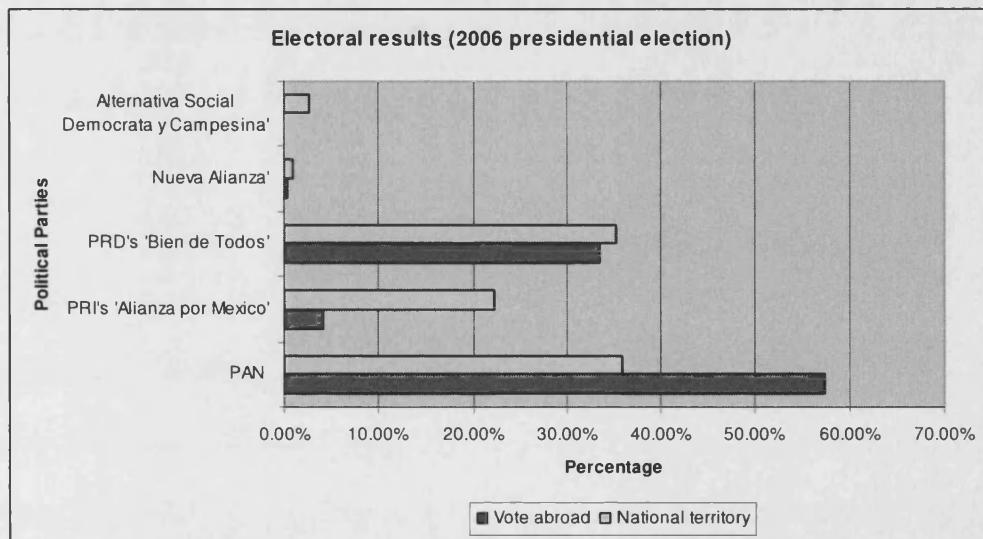
These findings suggest that it is not the least educated or more recent arrivals or temporary migrants who are most prone to have voted in the 2006 Mexican presidential election. While running contrary to conventional expectations by the legislators that approved the vote abroad bill, some reflection suffices to make sense of the results. Educated and more affluent migrants can be more capable of following

political developments in their country of origin and can also be the ones that have the time and economic resources to deal with the restrictive procedure to register and cast an absentee vote. Also, greater stability associated with permanent (and legal settlement) might favour migrants' political participation in their home country's elections. In the same way, the acquisition of US citizenship does not necessarily reduce interest in maintaining ties with their home country politics. In particular, these findings are consistent with transnationalism literature and conventional theories of political participation, but run contrary to assimilation theory.

5.3. Voting preferences among migrant voters

Despite not being influential on the final electoral outcome, the official expatriate voting count showed that the PAN's Felipe Calderon outpolled his contenders by substantial margins; he received about 58% (19,016) of all votes emitted abroad. Whereas the centre-left PRD was preferred by about 34% (11,090) and the PRI was less popular obtaining about 4% (1,360) of expatriates' votes. This differs markedly from votes emitted in Mexico, where electoral results were much contested between the PAN and PRD – 36.67% of votes went for the PAN, 36.09 % for the PRD and about 23% for the PRI (see Figure 5.10 below).

Figure 5.10 Results of the 2006 presidential election (in-country and absentee votes)



Own elaboration. Source: COVE, 2006

At first, the PRD was widely expected to gain most support among migrants. This was one reason why other parties were unsympathetic to the migrant voting rights campaign, as we have seen in the previous chapter. What factors then explain this? Why are electoral preferences different between Mexicans abroad and in Mexico? Why did Mexicans living abroad disproportionately favour the PAN over other political alternatives? In this section, I present the argument that the socio-demographic profile of Mexican voters abroad that we discussed in the previous section – more educated and affluent permanent migrants – explains why electoral preferences among Mexicans abroad were significantly different from Mexicans in Mexico because education and high income levels are predictors of support for the PAN (Klesner 2007; Lawson 2007). We would then expect that given the current electoral system and political context in Mexico, the PAN would be the political party that would benefit the most from absentee voting, for which it might also support similar vote abroad initiatives at the local level.

As we have seen in previous chapters, Mexican political parties have a long history of courting Mexican migrants, from campaigning among expatriates in order to gain their political favour and financial support, to opening committees in Mexican migrant settlements in the US and support migrant candidatures in Mexico. The recent development of competitive politics has indeed increased this pattern of transnational politics. As we have seen, nonetheless, the main political parties have differed on their stance on migrants' political rights, whereas the centre-left PRD has been the key advocate of migrants' political participation and has embarked on a crusade to win support among Mexican communities in the US, the PRI seemed to have opposed migrants' political engagement for fear of a widespread anti-PRI sentiment abroad. The PAN has stood in between; '*Panistas*' (PAN supporters) have not completely endorsed PRD's advanced stance on migrants' political rights, but instead their middle-ground posture successfully shaped the final absentee voting bill for presidential elections.

Equally, parties' efforts to expand their presence abroad have differed from party to party; the PRD has taken the lead followed by the PAN. Consequently, the PRD and PAN have been more successful at attracting more support abroad, whereas the PRI is still seen by many migrants as the embodiment of corruption and anti-democratic practices of the past. Only recently political parties' activities abroad have started to receive more attention from academia, challenging the conception that political parties mainly operate within the domestic terrain. Political parties' representation abroad is more advanced in industrialised countries that have also granted electoral rights to their expatriate communities, such as the cases of the US and Britain (Tether

1994; Dark 2003). In the case of the US, 'Democrats Abroad' and 'Republicans Abroad' were created in the late 1980's when the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Voting Rights Act was amended by Congress allowing all American citizens abroad to vote for federal elections (Dark 2003). In contrast, Mexican political parties' organisation and representation abroad has varied from party to party, but it has rapidly increased with the rise of competitive politics in recent years and the adoption of migrant political rights at the national and sub-national levels. Thus, the table (5.5) below shows what activities have been carried out abroad by the three main Mexican political parties, mainly relying on fieldwork interviews, parties' manifestos and electoral programmes.

Table 5.5 Main political parties' transnational activities

Political party	Presence abroad	Support for migrant candidacies	Migrant participation in internal party decisions
PRD	Institutionalised presence since 2002: State Committees set up in five US states: California, Texas, Illinois, Washington State and New York	Migrants should be included in 'plurinominal' lists and should be granted candidacies	Presidents of the State Committees abroad participate in the Party National Counsel. Party members residing abroad choose their own candidacies
PAN	Institutionalised presence since 2004: State Committees are being officially set up in various US cities. There is an 'Office for Organisation Abroad'	Not officially. But it happens in practice	There is an international Consultative Counsel. Party members abroad can also vote internally for presidential candidate
PRI	Only symbolic: A supporters' committee exists in California	Not officially. But it happens in practice	No

Source: Own elaboration, information based on interviews and political parties' official manifestos and electoral programmes (last updated in 2007)

Given the significant number of Mexican citizens abroad and the fact that they could potentially impact on electoral results in the national territory, a number of scholars tried to forecast how Mexican migrants would vote for president in 2006 (Lawson 2003; Marcelli and Cornelius 2005; Cornelius, Leal et al. 2006). However, research on migrant voting behaviour in Mexican elections is almost unique. In contrast to research on voting patterns among immigrant and ethnic communities in countries of reception, there is very limited research on migrant voting behaviour in home country's elections (Fidrmuc and Doyle 2004; Battiston and Mascitelli 2008). The only relevant study looks at the cases of Polish and Czech citizens abroad and their electoral participation in recent national elections in their home countries (Fidrmuc and Doyle 2004).

In general terms, most research on electoral participation is divided between those who argue that voters' demographics and socio-economic status are key determinants of voting behaviour and those who attribute more importance to the external environment as a factor that conditions voters' political beliefs, values and eventually electoral behaviour (political socialization) (Fidrmuc and Doyle 2004). In regards to the former, by carrying out a survey on political values among Mexicans in the US and their counterparts in Mexico, Lawson argued that the demographic profile of Mexicans abroad varied greatly from the characteristics of Mexicans living in Mexico. According to him, Mexicans abroad are on average mainly young, better-off and have more years of education (Lawson 2003). Thus, Lawson predicted that education levels among migrants would be a key determinant of their electoral behaviour together with media messages and consequently the Mexican migrant vote would eventually benefit the PAN (Lawson 2003). Although the present absentee

voting system for presidential elections prevents political parties and candidates from campaigning abroad, Spanish-language TV network available in the US widely covered the 2006 Mexican presidential race. It is also worth noting, then, that coverage of PAN's Felipe Calderon in the US was generally positive in contrast to other candidates.

From the perspective of political socialization, some studies have either referred to the context of reception or the political context in the place of origin as significant variables that shape migrants' choice of vote. On the one hand, some have tried to show that political values and democratic attitudes alter as soon as Mexican emigrants step across the northern border (Ai Camp 2003; Klesner 2003). Thus, many predicted that the PRI would suffer the most as migrants would punish the party for not having provided enough opportunities in Mexico, which might have forced them to emigrate to the US in search of a better future. However, it becomes more complicated to explain why migrants would prefer the PAN to the PRD at the time of elections. Fidrmuc and Doyle's study on migrant political behaviour in home country's elections shows that the external environment influences how emigrants vote. In particular, by looking at voting behaviour of Polish and Czech emigrants in all countries from where they cast an absentee vote, they conclude that those living in full democracies with an open economy are more likely to vote for a right-wing political party in their home country's elections. However, the main shortcoming of this study is that it does not look at migrant voters' demographic and socio-economic characteristics. On the other hand, in the case of the 2006 Mexican presidential election that was carried out abroad some forecasted that migrants' electoral preferences would be determined by Mexico's political environment. In particular,

decisions would be shaped by communication with relatives and friends back home or by Spanish-language TV news coverage. Based on this, some predicted a ‘mirror vote’ (Beltran Miranda 2004).

Looking at the results from the past election (see Figure 5.10 above), we find that Roberto Madrazo of the PRI was less popular in the US than in Mexico, a finding consistent with earlier survey research on expatriate partisanship. Those votes appeared to have been diverted to the PAN that won more than half of the expatriate electorate, whereas the PRD alliance *‘Bien de Todos’* (‘Good for All’) seemed to have maintained a similar percentage of votes abroad as in the Mexican territory. Small and more recently created political parties such as the moderate-left *‘Alternativa Social Democrata y Campesina’* (‘Social Democratic and Peasants’ Alternative’) and the centre-right *‘Nueva Alianza’* (‘New Alliance’) generated similar support abroad as in Mexico. If we analyse the results by state, however, we find that in 11 states in which the PRD had won the majority of votes in Mexican territory, most residents abroad favoured the PAN, including highly migrant-sending states with a record of PRD leaning such as DF (Mexico City), the state of Mexico, Michoacán and Zacatecas. In fact, according to the absentee voting count, the PRD was victorious in only 4 states, that is, Chiapas, Guerrero, Hidalgo and Oaxaca. It is then clear that most Mexicans living abroad are more pro-PAN than their counterparts back home and thus closer to an ideological side, whereas Mexicans in Mexico tend to be spread all over a left-right scale and represent stronger extremes.

Considering the demographic and socio-economic profile of the migrant voter that we built in the previous section, these results do not seem surprising. More affluent

and educated migrants most likely to live permanently abroad (perhaps with regularised status) would generally tend to favour the PAN. Although this description would not encompass all Mexicans abroad, it would describe the small minority that might have had the time, resources as well as interest in the Mexican elections to deal with the cumbersome registration and voting procedure. This conclusion, however, would not rule out the possibility that the US media covering the Mexican presidential race could have had a significant influence on voting behaviour among expatriates, as it was the only means of awareness about candidates' positions once campaigning abroad was forbidden. On the other hand, it cannot be inferred from this conclusion that political preferences and attitudes could change according to time of residence abroad and being in contact with a diverse political culture, as Fidrmuc and Doyle point out (2004).

As this first experience of the vote abroad might serve as indicative of PAN preference among Mexican migrants, it might trigger the approval of similar bills at the local level or even prompt a reform to this bill expanding migrants' political rights for future national elections. A positive note is that the postal vote in this last presidential election was proved safe and was not questioned, as was the ballot vote in Mexican territory. Interestingly enough, when Mexican legislators were asked to evaluate the exercise of absentee voting for the 2006 presidential elections, most PRI congressmen mentioned that it was a failure in contrast to the positive response given by PAN and PRD legislators³⁸. However, the minuscule number of absentee votes registered in the 2006 presidential elections does not represent a threat to the PRI and

³⁸ Interviews realised with a sample of approximate 35 legislators involved in the approval of the 2005 vote abroad bill

might not deter this party from offering support for the approval of similar bills at the local level from now on.

5.4. Conclusion

The first Mexican vote abroad experience was deemed a failure in many quarters because of the minuscule number of votes cast abroad, which can be mainly attributed, on the one hand, to the restrictive character of the absentee voting mechanism and, on the other hand, to ineffective implementation of the bill due to lack of political willingness, as demonstrated in delayed budgetary decisions, logistical problems and an ineffectual awareness campaign. The evidence presented in this chapter, however, suggests that the new members of Mexican democracy are mainly educated and affluent permanent migrants that are most likely to have legal status to work in the US. At the same time, Mexican migrant voters do not necessarily engage in cross-border economic activities such as sending remittances home, but they do engage in other transnational political and social practices such as often calling friends and family back home and following the news to keep aware about developments in their home country. However, they do not seem to be part of migrant clubs in the places where they reside. It is logical that more educated and affluent migrants could be more capable of following developments in their country of origin and could also be the ones that had the time and economic resources to deal with the restrictive procedure to register and cast an absentee vote. As we will see now in the case of Zacatecas that offers its expatriates a more direct form of political participation by allowing migrant candidacies; it is equally affluent and long-term residents in the US that take up the opportunity to run for elections back in their

hometowns, sometimes leaving their American families behind. These results, in turn, might explain the lopsided conservative migrant vote. Voting preferences among Mexican expatriates in the 2006 presidential elections distinctly differ from Mexicans in Mexico as there was a marked preference for the PAN, even among those expatriates coming from “*perredistas*” (PRD supporters) states such as Zacatecas and Michoacán.

The minuscule migrant turnout in the Mexican elections, however, is often contrasted with the huge attendance in the US rallies to demand reform of immigration laws, which unfolded simultaneously as the Mexican absentee voting registration was taking place. About a million migrants, many of them Mexican, joined rallies in 20 US cities in May 2006 to request better treatment for the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants (of which an estimated 4 million are Mexican) and a path to regularisation (BBC 2 May 2006). This shows that the foremost priority for Mexican migrant workers is not to have a voice over political developments in the country they left behind, but to obtain legal residence and political rights in the country where they now reside. It would be misleading, however, to believe that they would rule out maintaining a political relationship with their country of origin altogether. Perhaps what the results in this chapter reveal is that greater stability associated with permanent and legal settlement might favour migrants’ political participation in their home country’s elections. Also, at a time in which the fate of millions of Mexicans with illegal status in the US is at stake, possibly it would not be mistaken to foresee that more Mexicans would in the near future turn their sights on the country they left behind. In the same way, the acquisition of US citizenship does not necessarily

reduce interest in maintaining ties with their home country politics (Jones-Correa 1998; Barreto 2003; Escobar April 2004).

Paradoxically, the positive aspect of the low turnout in the first Mexican vote abroad experience, nonetheless, was that it did not represent a threat to political parties as it did not influence electoral results. The postal vote was proved safe and was not target of controversies and questioning as was the ballot vote in Mexican territory. This then gives power to migrant activists to push even harder to expand these rights for future national elections and replicate similar vote abroad mechanisms for local elections. These developments, thus, seem to be taking Mexican politics into a transnational dimension, albeit to a limited extent.

In the following chapters, I address the second level of analysis of this thesis. That is, how formal forms of emigrant political participation are adopted at the sub-national level in Mexico and what are their implications. What is relevant about this analysis is the asymmetric development of emigrant political inclusion among migrant sending states ('estados') and the distinct emigrant political participation formulas that are advocated by migrant groups and local political actors and finally adopted at local legislatures. Controversy has surrounded sub-national emigrant political participation formulas as they seem to conflict with federal legislation.

Having explored how the vote abroad for presidential elections came into being at the federal level helps us assess to what extent this federal initiative shapes migrants' demands at the local level. Are the same migrant groups involved in the lobbying of the vote abroad bill also advocating similar bills at the local level? Also, what is their

strategy? At the same time, what are the local political actors' intentions in supporting the political inclusion of emigrants at the local level? One of the findings presented in the latter chapters is that the network of migrant activists that actively lobbied for the vote abroad for presidential elections have also, in parallel, put forward migrant political rights' demands at the sub-national level. However, they tend to rely on the support from migrant organisations or hometown associations from that particular state and, at the same time, the opening up of political spaces due to party politics, as well as a centre-left PRD elected government. The next chapter, then, focuses on the case of the adoption of the "Migrant Law" in Zacatecas.

Chapter 6

6. Zacatecas as the first bi-national state - the adoption of the 2003 Migrant Bill

The Mexican migrant state of Zacatecas has often been referred to as the 'first bi-national state' in the national and international news. That is because thousands of Zacatecans are believed to interact transnationally in the economic, social and political life of two polities (their places of origin in Zacatecas and their places of reception in the US). Since 2003, they are legally entitled to do so, since a bill known as '*la ley migrante*' (the 'Migrant Law'), formulated by a migrant lobby group, was approved by the state legislature. Zacatecan emigrants count with one of the most advanced sets of political rights in Latin America that is only comparable to similar laws implemented in Colombia, Ecuador and Panama, as we have seen in chapter one. Two main features stand out in the Zacatecan migrant bill: the notion of bi-national residency which allows migrants from this state to run for elections as municipal presidents, '*sindicos*', '*regidores*' and deputies (the only exception is the governorship). Second, it ensures that migrants are represented in the local congress, where two legislators out of thirty have to qualify as 'migrant deputies', which means that they have lived abroad for a period of time.

It has been noted that Zacatecan migrants appear now as new actors in Zacatecan politics (as candidates and legislators), that is, as part of an experiment that aims at finding the right formula for migrant political participation in the country (Bakker and Smith 2003; Smith and Bakker 2005; Smith and Bakker 2008). However, we

should bear in mind that in the Mexican constitutional system, federal states are allowed to define their own terms of membership and those requirements to occupy public office at the local level (except for the governorship). Thus, the notion of migrant candidates is not new. Migrants have already occupied public positions in states where a residency period is not compulsory such as Michoacan. Nonetheless, Zacatecas is at the time of writing the only federal state where Mexican migrants, apart from being able to occupy public office, have also representation at the legislative level making it an interesting case study to analyse transnational political engagement.

A number of scholars have mentioned that the ‘Migrant Law’ has institutionalised a practice – bi-national residency – that already existed among Zacatecan migrants (Delgado Wise and Rodriguez Ramirez 2001; Moctezuma Longoria 2001; Goldring 2002; Moctezuma Longoria 2004; Moctezuma Longoria 2004; Moctezuma 2004). Approximately half of the state population of Zacatecas, 1.3 million, lives in the US, spread across 20 American states. However, as Moctezuma Longoria signals emigrants have often been seen as ‘absent but always present’ (Moctezuma Longoria 2004) because of the strong ties that they keep with their place of origin, which is illustrated by the amount of remittances they send back home and the large number of Zacatecan hometown associations based in the US that have been actively involved in public works in their communities of origin.

Thus, what are the factors that have led to the institutionalisation of transnational political practices in Zacatecas? Why does the Zacatecan formula of migrant political rights differ from other bills adopted at the sub-national level in Mexico? The

purpose of this chapter is to explore the dynamics that led to the implementation of the ‘Migrant Law’. The main argument here is that the creation of a legal instrument that allows the political involvement of Zacatecan migrants (including first generation Zacatecan descendants) from abroad was created as a response to the cross-border migrant lobby action and the support of non-PRI political parties, in particular the centre-left PRD. In a similar way as the vote abroad bill at the national level, the issue of emigrant political participation has been part of the democratization process and the rise of party politics in the state. Exploring the case of the state of Zacatecas I show that, at the sub-national level, three steps are necessary for the passage of a migrant political rights bill. That is, the size and organization of the migrant community, a significant flow of collective remittances and the experience of a democratic transition, along with the emergence of party politics. These three components have only converged in Zacatecas and Michoacán, but we could expect to see similar developments in other Mexican migrant-sending states.

The bi-national activism of Zacatecan migrants has been in recent years subject of many studies that focus on the meaning of citizenship practices and social inclusion during Mexico's democratic transition (Bakker and Smith 2003; Moctezuma Longoria 2004; Moctezuma 2004; Smith and Bakker 2005; Smith and Bakker 2008). In contrast, however, I explore how Zacatecan political institutions – such as political parties and the local government – have responded to migrants' demands and how their interests are negotiated in the local legislature. The reason for this is to determine to what extent domestic (political) institutions shape migrant political involvement in their home country's affairs. The Zacatecan ‘Migrant Law’ in

particular shows how the centre-left PRD local government and the PRD faction in the legislature directly favoured the initiative proposed by the Zacatecan migrant lobby group, which guaranteed a much more advanced migrants' political rights bill than any other similar legal instrument to date.

This chapter is divided in two main sections. Section one builds on the main determinants of the institutionalisation of migrant political participation in Zacatecas. That is, the size of the Zacatecan migrant community and the changing pattern of migration dynamics in the state. Second, I provide an overview of the growing organisation of Zacatecan migrants in the US and their involvement in public sector projects in their communities of origin, which has helped them gain public recognition at home and increasing economic and political leverage *vis a vis* local political elites. Finally, I show how Zacatecan migrant clubs have played a significant role during the change of government in Zacatecas. In particular, I illustrate how the re-birth of party politics in the state resulted in the formation of the first US-based migrant groups with clear political goals. In the second part of the chapter, I analyse the passage of the 'Migrant Law' in the local congress, where I argue that its successful approval was the result of the cross-border coalition formed between US-based migrant lobby groups and non-PRI parties in the local legislature. As Levitt and de la Dehesa argue national level dynamics for the adoption of new policies that aim at migrants political inclusion depend on 'the political cost-benefit calculations for different kinds of political actors' (Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003, p. 106). That is indeed clear in the Zacatecan case, as migrants associations have mainly received support from the centre-left PRD party once it gained the governorship and the simple majority in congress. The passage of the 'Migrant Law'

in Zacatecas illustrates how cross-border political formation takes place contributing to the emerging literature on transnational political engagement.

6.1. Determinants of formal emigrant political participation in Zacatecas

In this section, I explore how Zacatecan migrant associations' economic leverage has translated into political power within the state's affairs. I argue that migrant associations and their leaders have gained significant political power in the last decade due to the growing number of Zacatecan emigrants and the remittances sent to their relatives and friends back home and, in parallel, the increase in the 'collective remittances' they send to their communities of origin, that is, the amount of money donated by migrant organisations for the completion of public works in local communities³⁹. I agree with the growing literature on the political economy of collective remittances, which shows how the 'collective migrant', as a transnational political class, has been able to construct ties with the state and local governments, which have evolved from coordinated action for the implementation of community projects to being able to have a greater say about how politics is done at home (Delgado Wise and Rodriguez Ramirez 2001; Moctezuma Longoria 2001; Bada 2003; Goldring 2004; Rivera-Salgado, Bada et al. 2005). This has also been possible, however, due to the political transition experimented in Zacatecas, in which political parties and the local government tend to view migrant organisations as a platform to

³⁹ For an insight into collective remittances see Delgado Wise, R. and H. Rodriguez Ramirez (2001). The Emergence of Collective Migrants and their Role in Mexico's Local and Regional Development, Red Internacional de Migracion y Desarrollo, Moctezuma Longoria, M. (2001). Clubes Zacatecanos en los Estados Unidos. Un capital social en proceso, Goldring, L. (2004). "Family and collective remittances to Mexico: A multidimensional typology." *Development and Change* 35(4): 799-840.

gain political support, votes at home and funds for development projects in local communities.

Let us begin by analysing the main factors – an increase in migrant numbers and individual and collective remittances – which have contributed towards the growing political influence of Zacatecan migrant organisations south of the border.

6.1.1. The changing nature of Zacatecan emigration to the US

Zacatecas has sent the highest proportion of its population to the United States than any other Mexican state. There are 1.5 million people in Zacatecas today and another 807,000 in the US (INEGI statistics, 2000 XII Census). Counting American sons and daughters of Zacatecans there are probably close to 1.3 million in the US. Zacatecan migrants are spread over 20 US states, although the majority live in California, Texas and Illinois. The city with the greatest number of Zacatecans is Los Angeles, followed by Chicago and, only in third position, Zacatecas, the state capital.

Initially, the reasons to emigrate followed an economic logic – a poor economy aggravated by the state's geographical position. However, after decades of experiencing the migration phenomenon, younger generations have found it easier to emigrate due to established Zacatecan migrant networks, that is, kin, friends and acquaintances in the US. The economic situation in Zacatecas is stagnant compared to other Mexican states, the annual growth in the state between 1995 and 2000 was only 0.2 percent (INEGI statistics, 2000 XII Census), and the geographical situation of the state does not help either. Zacatecas is situated 600 Km (8hrs) from Mexico

City and 700 Km from the border region and coastal exits are still further away. The economy is mainly rural; agriculture represents 25.14 percent of the state GDP, although the national average is only 6.47 percent (INEGI statistics, 2004 Economic Census). In fact, Zacatecas is the major agricultural producer in the country. However, with NAFTA, production of the most important agricultural products has significantly diminished. In addition, the industrial sector in Zacatecas represents only 5 percent of the state GDP, whereas the national average is 20.28 percent (INEGI statistics, 2004 Economic Census). The '*maquiladoras*' (assembly plants) industry, which was popular in other migrant sending states such as Aguascalientes, Durango and San Luis Potosi did not have so much success in Zacatecas.

Zacatecan migration has been until mid-1990s mostly male and rural. Migratory movements have caused a fundamental reduction in the male population, especially in remote rural communities. The indicator of male population in the state is 92.82 (INEGI statistics, 2000 XII Census), nonetheless in places like Tepetongo, Nuria de Los Angeles and other highly migrant sending communities it is below 85 (INEGI statistics, 2000 XII Census). However, recent research has found that Zacatecan emigration has increasingly shifted from seasonal emigration to permanent settlement, in a similar fashion as the rest of the country (Massey, Durand et al. 2002; Leite, Ramos et al. 2003). At the same time, migration dynamics have increasingly changed from involving mainly males from rural regions to also include population from urban areas (Durand, Massey et al. 2001), a process that has also been accompanied by more female emigration. However, whereas men emigrate mainly for work, women do so mostly for family reasons as in the majority of cases they follow their husband or a parent (Cerrutti and Massey 2001). If a married man is

documented, it increases the odds that he will be joined later by his wife (Cerrutti and Massey 2001). As US authorities progressively militarised the border over the 1990s, men adapted to their higher costs and risks of border crossing by staying longer and increasingly they have arranged for the entry of their wives and children (Durand, Massey et al. 1999; Durand, Massey et al. 2001; Massey, Durand et al. 2002).

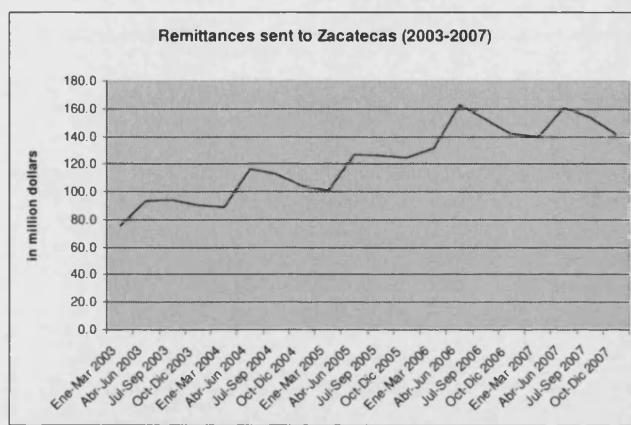
This, in turn, has an effect on the remittances market. Margarita Mooney finds that the kind of social ties that migrants have north of the border influence the nature and form of the investments they make in Mexico (2003). Those migrants that travel alone and live with their kin and friends in the US tend to stay for shorter time and return with all their savings to invest in housing and productive projects. In contrast, migrants that travel with their families, more often than not, stay longer in the US and tend to remit money monthly. The latter joins US-based social clubs with other migrants to make investments in community infrastructure, in order to claim status and continued membership in their communities of origin, a practice that has been particularly relevant in the Zacatecan context (Mooney 2003).

The Zacatecan economy depends on migrants' individual remittances, which is the first source of income with an estimated 610 million dollars per year, that is 9.5 percent of the state's GDP, according to the Bank of Mexico (2007 figures). This amount exceeds the general state budget (2005 figures)⁴⁰. In second place, Zacatecas receives an income from agriculture and in third position from the mining industry.

⁴⁰ The Zacatecan state budget for 2005 was around 11 million dollars. Gobierno del Estado de Zacatecas (2006). Cuenta Pública 2005. Zacatecas, Zacatecas.

The graph below (Figure 6.1.) shows the growth in migrant remittances in the last four years. It should be noted that an increase in individual remittances is also related to better recording standards and increasing use of official transfer channels. The main purpose of migrant remittances is family subsistence and only a small share of remittances is spent on truly productive investments.

Figure 6.1 Individual remittances sent to the state of Zacatecas (2003-2007)



Source: Bank of Mexico, 2008

Migrant remittances are received in Zacatecas by 12.2 percent of the households in the state, from which remittances amount for approximately 70 percent in terms of the total family income (Bank of Mexico, Informe Annual 2004, p. 54). Nevertheless, scholars have warned about the so-called 'remittance-based development model', that is, economic dependence on migrants' remittances (Delgado Wise and Marquez Covarrubias 2007). This is partially because as the pattern of migration becomes permanent, that is, family members reunite in the country of reception (Deans, Lonnqvist et al. 2006), and if the US experiences an economic slowdown, remittances might tend to diminish in the near future.

6.1.2. The collective migrant

The donations that migrant clubs make towards public work projects in Zacatecas have rapidly increased in recent years. In a trend that began in the early 1990's and accelerated since the beginning of this century, more than a hundred development projects are funded by Zacatecan clubs a year. This group of migrants have been denominated as 'collective migrants', as they are represented by migrant clubs integrated by members that belong to the same local community, which can, in turn, unite with other clubs from different localities but with similar objectives. To quote Delgado Wise and Rodriguez Ramirez collective migrants are characterised 'by having a relatively permanent formal organization; using that structure to strengthen ties of cultural identity, belonging, and solidarity with their communities of origin; establishing the possibility of dialogue with different public and private entities, in both Mexico and the US; and having significant financial potential for carrying out projects to benefit communities, by means of collective funds capable of overcoming the limitations and rigidity of individual or family remittances' (Delgado Wise and Rodriguez Ramirez 2001).

Migrant organisations have different layers of institutionalisation (Zabin and Escal-Rabadan 1998; Moctezuma Longoria 2001). In the first level, members group together according to their communities of origin in Mexico. These kinds of hometown associations are active sponsors of social events in their communities in the US and provide economic support to their places of origin during emergencies and economic crises. Thus, there could be as many informal village organisations as there are migrant sending communities in Mexico. The second level appears when a formal leadership committee is established and liaises with other migrant clubs from

the same community of origin. The third level of organisation of migrant clubs is the federation, which is practically a coalition of hometown associations from the same state in Mexico and from the same state or region in the US. It is mainly at this level where the efforts of Mexican consulates, the Institute of Mexicans abroad and local governments have been concentrated.

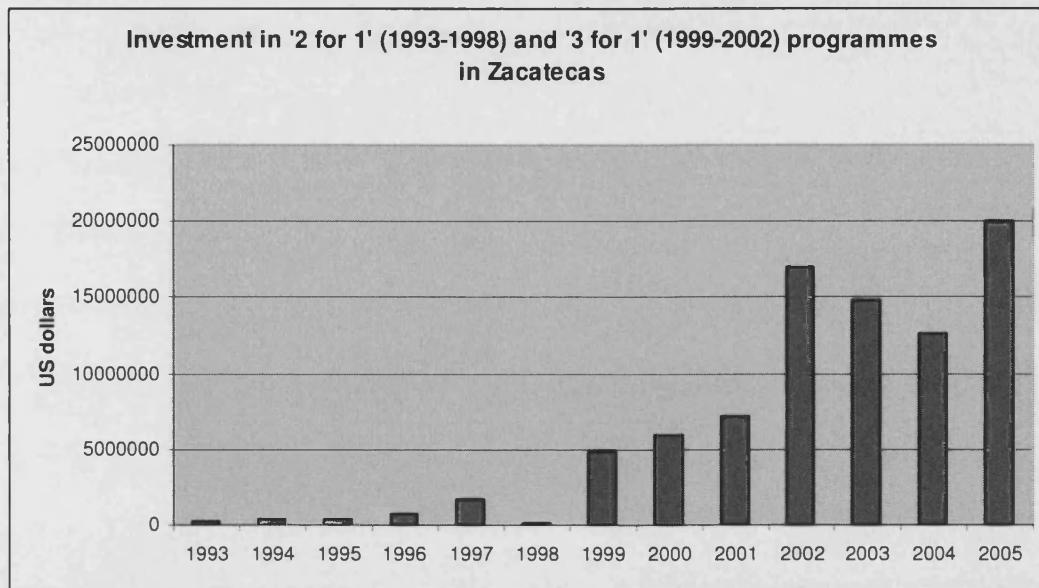
According to the Institute of Mexicans Abroad, at present, Zacatecas has around 40,000 members spread over 200 clubs (fieldwork interviews, IME, 2006). These are grouped together in ten federations: South California, Chicago, Oxnard, Denver, Dallas, Las Vegas, Atlanta, Houston, Waco, Florida and North California. However, although Zacatecas counts with the highest number of migrants participating in migrant associations, they only represent 3 percent of the total population of Zacatecan origin resident in the US. This percentage seems very low, but if we compare it with the levels of participation of migrants from other Mexican states the number is nonetheless significant. In addition, if we look back at the origins of the collective migrant class we find that it is still at an embryonic stage. According to Gonzalez Gutierrez, several Zacatecan hometown clubs operated in South California in the 1950s and 1960s, but it was not until 1972 when Zacatecan clubs united to form the first regional grouping: the '*Federacion de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California*' (Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California) (Gonzalez Gutierrez 1995). In 1985, the organization was called '*Clubes Zacatecanos Unidos*' (United Zacatecan Clubs). The number of clubs in the federation grew from six in 1986, to twenty-two in 1989 and to approximately forty in 1996 (Institute of Mexicans Abroad, fieldwork interviews 2006).

Hometown associations from the very beginning were seen as social clubs, but often carried out fundraising activities. Many of the earlier projects of which a register has been kept, involved renovations to churches or sponsorship for celebrations of saints' days, but they were often followed by infrastructure projects (Orozco and Lapointe 2004). Although in a few cases, municipal governments made contributions in-kind, most of these initiatives were carried out on solo-basis. In the early 1990's, nonetheless, Zacatecan hometown associations commenced to work in partnership with governments at the local and state levels. This trend relied at the start on informal relationships with government officials on a project-by-project basis, but increased once state programmes were formalised. In 1986, the federation and the state government under the PRI Governor Genaro Borrego reached an agreement whereby migrant associations and the state government would jointly fund public works. As Moctezuma notes, in 1993, migrant associations and government officials agreed to implement a '2x1' program, which meant that for each peso sent by the Zacatecan Clubs in the US for community projects, the Mexican government at the federal and state levels allocated another two (Moctezuma Longoria 2001).

As we can see in the table below (Table 6.2), collective remittances have been escalating since such partnership was formalised in 1993 in the form of a '2X1' project with the participation of the federal and state government. In 1998, however, the programme was expanded to involve municipal funding (becoming '3X1'), which also led to an increase in the number of projects carried out. This same year the state experienced a change of government to the centre left PRD party. It is important to note the difference between investments and the number of public works carried out prior and post the change of government in Zacatecas. As we can

see in Table 6.1, the change of government contributed to the significant increase in migrant investment and in the number of projects funded.

Figure 6.2 Collective remittances in Zacatecas between 1993 and 2002



Own elaboration Source: Based on Rodolfo Garcia Zamora, 'El programa 3X1 y los retos de los proyectos' (Chapter 10); Secretaria de Planeacion y Finanzas, State Government of Zacatecas.

Table 6.1 Allocation of '3X1' programme funds in Zacatecas (1993-2005)

Year	Investment	Projects	Municipalities benefited
1993	187742	7	N/A
1994	376918	30	N/A
1995	390535	34	N/A
1996	694603	61	17
1997	1682594	77	27
1998	77228	8	7
1999	4817900	93	27
2000	6000000	108	28
2001	7200000	130	30
2002	17000000	240	35
2003	14777124	324	40
2004	12594753	282	40
2005	19972593	387	43
Total	85771990	1781	

Own elaboration. Source: Rodolfo Garcia Zamora, 'El programa 3X1 y los retos de los proyectos'; Secretaria de Planeacion y Finanzas, State Government of Zacatecas.

The success of the ‘2/3X1’ programmes led other states to implement similar initiatives, which culminated with the official implementation of the ‘*iniciativa ciudadana 3x1*’ (Citizen Initiative programme ‘3X1’) at the federal level in 2002 (for a detailed account on collective remittances in the country see Annex 4). According to the data recorded by the Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL), since 2002 Zacatecas receives approximately 40 percent of the total share of the programme at the federal level (see Table 6.2), which confirms that Zacatecan collective migrants are some of the most active in the country. In recent years, the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of South California has also initiated a ‘4X1’ programme adding the private sector; in which First Data, owner of the leading international transfer company, Western Union, has donated around \$1.25 million to make an estimated \$5 million available for public works in 2006 (Federacion Zacatecana del Sur de California 2005).

Table 6.2 Distribution of ‘3x1’ funds by state in 2002 (thousands of dollars)

State	Amount	Percent
Guanajuato	2,054	4.7
Jalisco	5,199	11.9
Michoacan	4,151	9.5
Oaxaca	1,504	3.5
Puebla	557	1.3
San Luis Potosi	1,717	3.9
Zacatecas	16,316	37.5
Other States	12,056	27.7
TOTAL	43,554	100

Own elaboration. Source: SEDESOL statistics, 2003

However, apart from being initiators of funding programmes such as ‘2X1’ and ‘3X1’ and currently even ‘4X1’, Zacatecan clubs have also supported other initiatives such as the ‘*Paisano* programme’, granting public medical services to

migrants' relatives through the IMSS, lobbying for the acceptance of dual nationality at the national level and recently the approval of the 'Migrant Law' in Zacatecas and the 'vote abroad' initiative at the federal level (fieldwork interviews, 2006)

Here we get the nub of the controversy. The dramatic changes that have led Zacatecas to rely on its expatriates' remittances raise questions not only about whether these actions take away responsibilities that would seem to be exclusively of the state, but also about how migrants' economic leverage translates into political power. As Williams points out '(...) while immigrants economic power is important, it is public investment that transforms the relationship between migrant communities and governments' (Williams January 2004). Certainly, collective migrants, after providing charitable contributions to the state might find their demands for political power and voting rights as being justifiable, as well as being essential to secure basic democracy.

6.1.3. The political role of migrant organisations

The federations have become the political places *per excellence* for those Zacatecan migrants that are interested in a political career in their places of origin, as well as obligatory visiting points for Zacatecan politicians. 'The Federation meets in a drab grey building in the City Terrace section of east Los Angeles that looks more like an abandoned warehouse than a transnational seat of power' eloquently describes Ginger Thompson from the New York Times (Thompson February 23, 2005). Southern California is the capital of the Mexican diaspora with the biggest concentration of Zacatecans and a breeding ground of Mexican politics. '*La*

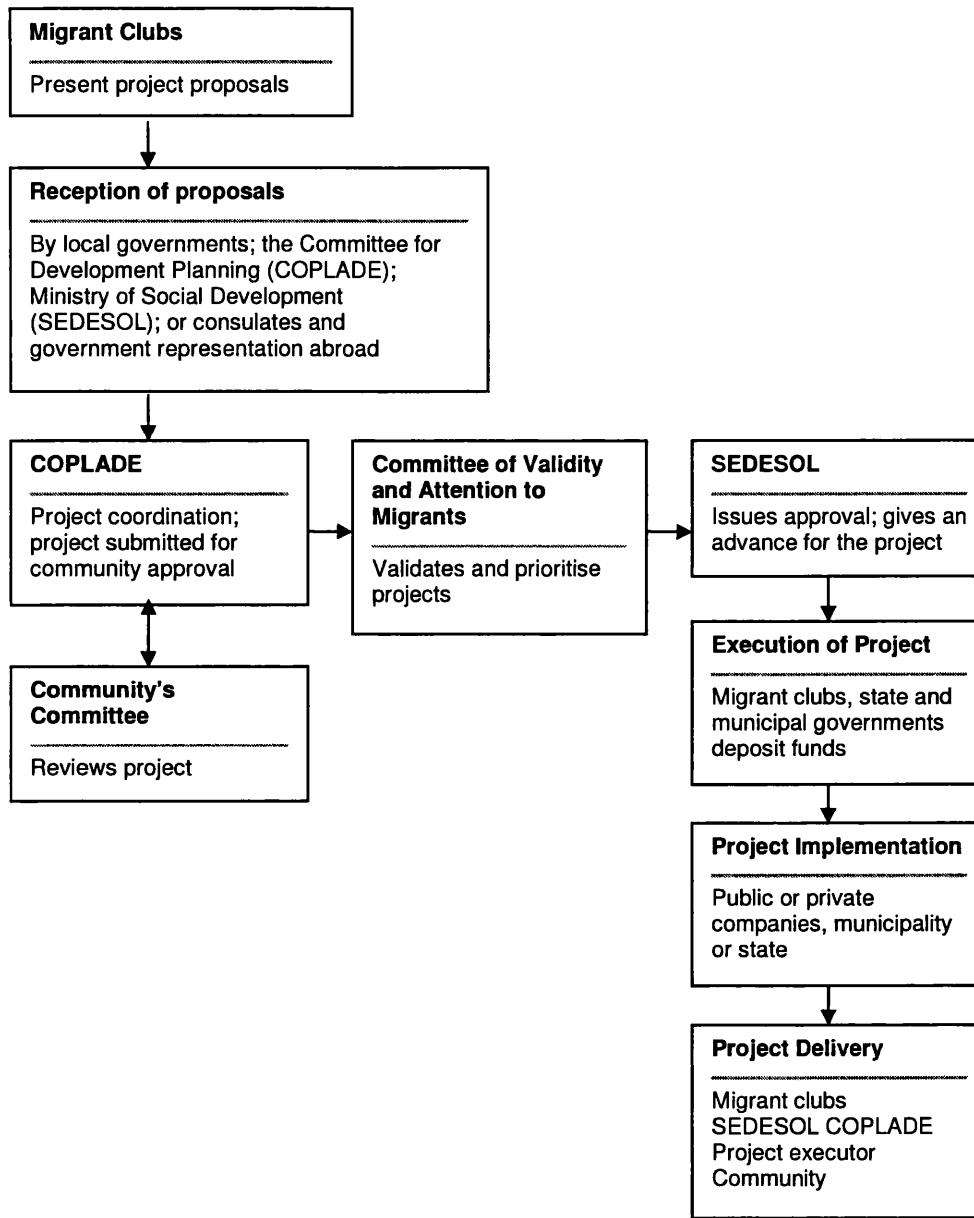
federacion' is, as we have seen, the oldest union of migrant clubs. According to interviewees, it is also the one that sends most of the funds for developing projects in Zacatecas – about 70 percent of the total (fieldwork interviews, 2006). One of the main reasons is that most important leaders of the federation are also successful entrepreneurs in Los Angeles area.

The Federation like most migrant clubs proclaims to be apolitical. Registration as a charity in the US prevents them from being involved in political campaigns. I would argue, however, that it is precisely migrant clubs' ties with the centre-left PRD party and the PRD government of Zacatecas that have helped them to strengthen their political position in their home state and to help some of their members to become successful cross-border politicians and, on the other hand, to become some of the most successful migrants clubs in the US. In particular, Zacatecan migrant organisations have seen the opening of opportunities that have emerged as a result of the political transition and the (re) emergence of party politics in the state.

A few scholars have pointed out the growing political involvement of HTA's in Zacatecas before the Migrant Law came into being (Moctezuma Longoria; Moctezuma Longoria 2001; Goldring 2002; Goldring 2004; Moctezuma Longoria 2004; Moctezuma Longoria 2004; Moctezuma 2004; Orozco and Lapointe 2004). Matching funds programmes such as the '3X1' offers migrant leaders an opportunity to voice their concerns and formulate solutions in ways in which they can be best addressed. As we can see in the figure below, which describes the way in which the '3X1' scheme works, migrant clubs are able to come up with their own proposals which are then assessed by local and federal institutions and subject to community

approval. When projects are completed, there is a public recognition of the role that migrant clubs play. Orozco, thus, mentions that as HTA's are increasingly linked with mayors and other local government officials, they have demanded higher levels of transparency and accountability in the projects that they fund (Orozco and Lapointe 2004). Goldring, on the other hand, argues that the partnership developed by Zacatecan transmigrant organisations and the state and federal governments to build community projects was based on a corporatist and semi-clientelist relationship. This is because of the corporatist nature of the '*Federation of Zacatecan Clubs*' and migrant leaders' support for candidates back home and *vice versa* only on the basis of monetary support (Goldring 2002).

Figure 6.3 Scheme of operations of the '3 for 1' matching funds programme



Own elaboration. Source: Based on information provided by the General Coordination of micro regions, Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL for its acronym in Spanish), 2006

It follows then that migrants' economic leverage has indeed played a key role in building and maintaining a relationship between migrant associations and the Zacatecan government. However, it is not the only factor that has strengthened migrant clubs' political leverage. The second factor, I posit, has been the support of

an opposition party – the centre-left PRD – which became the political party in power after the 1998 elections. Political parties especially after Monreal's victory as Governor of Zacatecas, could perceive the political influence that migrant associations and their members could have on the electorate back home and the role that migrants could play in local politics.

There are two main instances in which Zacatecan migrant clubs took decisive steps to gain entrance into home politics, that is, during the 1998 governorship election in which an opposition (non-PRI) political party candidate was elected governor and during the mid-term local 2001 elections in which a migrant candidate ran for the municipal presidency of Jerez. I now analyse each of these events. First, Monreal's election as governor of Zacatecas is relevant to our discussion for two reasons. On the one hand, the PRI's loss of the '*gobernatura*' (governorship) in Zacatecas also meant a breakage in the Federation, in which a dissident group saw in the change of government the opportunity to gain more autonomy and bargaining power. On the other hand, Monreal's political campaign generated a new Zacatecan organisation in Los Angeles with an explicit political agenda, which later was going to be crucial for the lobbying and passage of the 'Migrant Law'.

6.2. The 1998 change of government and the Zacatecan Civic Front

For decades, Zacatecas was well-known for its loyalty towards the political party in power; the PRI. So, when the PRI crumbled in the state in 1998, two years earlier than at the national level, the public eye closely followed the unfolding events. Although, it is difficult to determine to what extent migrants played a role in this

political transition. Some argue that migrant political action was key to electing the first opposition governor of Zacatecas (Lizarzaburu 2004). According to fieldwork interviews, prominent Zacatecan migrant leaders also helped Vicente Fox win the support of Mexican migrants in his historic bid to become Mexico's first democratically elected opposition president.

'When the political change took place in Zacatecas it was reflected in the Federation' claims Rafael Barajas, a furniture-store owner in Santa Ana and a former federation president (Cited in Quinones 2002). Mexican migrants, one could argue, were generally apolitical – many could not vote in the US or become American citizens and also many chose to live apart from Mexican politics. A big proportion of Zacatecans blamed the PRI for having to leave their places of origin and the country and had also deep suspicious of Mexican politicians and the party. To a certain extent, that began to change in 1998, when a politician with strong migrant contacts left the PRI and joined the centre-left PRD, taking his team with him. Ricardo Monreal was a well known politician not only in Zacatecas, but also among Zacatecan communities in the US as he had served as federal deputy and senator for his state, jobs that commonly require getting to know the main Zacatecan migrant organisations abroad and prominent migrant leaders⁴¹. In particular, he was able to gain the support of Zacatecan migrant leaders through one of his main allies in the US, Manuel de la Cruz, who was a former president of the Federation of Southern California (Cano 2001). Migrant leaders say that Monreal was elected governor of Zacatecas in 1998 because he campaigned hard among the clubs in Los Angeles and

⁴¹ Prior to the governorship of Zacatecas, Ricardo Monreal Avila was federal deputy for Zacatecas in the LIV legislature (1988-1991) and in the LVII legislature (1997-1998), deputy senator in the LV legislature and senator for Zacatecas in the LVI legislature (1991-1997).

Chicago (Jolly 2005). It also meant that he could raise funds for his campaign among Zacatecan hometown associations and migrant groups, which was still not banned by current legislation (Maciel 2002). In addition, migrants could not vote, but according to fieldwork interviews, their economic importance to their villages gave them influence over how people voted back home.

It could be said that the transnationalisation of the Zacatecan 1998 gubernatorial race was the result of a series of conjectural events (for another insight see Smith and Bakker 2008). Rigoberto Castaneda, president of the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California when the Zacatecan elections took place, expressed public support for Monreal assuming he would be the PRI candidate for the gubernatorial race. Although, when the state-level PRI committee did not choose Monreal as candidate, Castaneda quickly retracted his public support raising doubts and protests among members of the Federation who argued that its executive council was being manipulated by the PRI and the state government. The Federation split between those who still supported the PRI and the way in which it handled the matching funds programmes and those who wanted a political change in Zacatecas. A dissident group that opposed PRI '2X1' and '3X1' government requirements, advocated the need to have more transparent mechanisms such as having the money raised by migrant clubs deposited in accounts controlled by their representatives in Zacatecas and having a greater say in how to allocate the funds, as it had been done at an earlier stage. This dissident group saw in Monreal the opportunity for a change of government in Zacatecas and for gaining more autonomy in the negotiations over new HTA's-funded projects with the government in the future (Quinones 2002).

The '*Frente Civico Zacatecano*' (Zacatecan Civic Front – FCZ for its acronym in Spanish) was created to support Monreal's campaign by two strong migrant leaders who formed part of the dissident group – Manuel de la Cruz and Guadalupe Gomez (de la Cruz, Zacatecas, 2006). The former was a Federation's founder and past president, the latter was an immigrant from the town of Jalapa and an accountant in Santa Ana, also past president of the Federation. Although the FCZ was created in a similar fashion as Monreal's mass support organisation in Zacatecas called the '*Alianza Ciudadana por la Dignidad y la Democracia*' (Civic Alliance for Dignity and Democracy), as it grew, it became a registered political action committee capable of supporting politicians and political initiatives in California, as well as Zacatecas (fieldwork interviews). Manuel de la Cruz mentioned in an interview that ' (during the 1998 elections) there was political friction between members of the Federation [...] (the Federation) was almost like a subsidiary of the PRI. The Civic Front of political action was the first of its kind that someone remembers in the US...some people still do not forgive me for that' (de la Cruz 2006). On the other hand, Felipe Cabral and other Zacatecan migrant leaders affiliated with the PRI later responded with the creation of the California-based political organisation '*Zacatecanos PRImero*' (Zacatecanos First) that publicly supported this party (Roman Cabral, 2006). According to Roman Cabral, this was the first PRI organisation officially established in the US (interview, 2006).

Monreal's campaign clearly targeted Zacatecan migrants in the US, where he travelled several times giving radio interviews on Spanish language stations and meeting with the Federation and the FCZ, Zacatecan business leaders and a few Latino politicians. In his campaign, Monreal offered to advocate for a clear set of

political rights for migrants. At the federal level, he mentioned that he would support the vote abroad in presidential elections. In Zacatecas, he stated that he would change the state constitution to have migrant representatives in the local congress. Although Monreal's active involvement to make those promises happen is debatable, Monreal's victory, nonetheless, represented for migrant clubs more independence to operate from the state and local authorities. In particular, most of the dissident group's claims were achieved. With the new requirements of the '2X1' and '3X1' programmes, clubs could deposit their funds in Zacatecas in accounts controlled by their representatives rather than the state treasury and, on the other hand, clubs no longer had to conform to the decentralization guidelines. Monreal also named one the FCZ founders, Manuel de la Cruz, as his liaison with Zacatecans in the US. Based in Norwalk, de la Cruz travelled all over the US organising Zacatecan migrant clubs (de la Cruz 2006).

In addition, the Federation and the recently created FCZ were clearly given specific roles; whereas the Federation continued concentrating on community projects and raising funds, the FCZ acquired a completely political tone. After campaigning for Monreal, the FCZ took up the task of facilitating encounters between Governor Gray Davis of California and Monreal, as well as campaigning for several Latino leaders or Latinos' rights advocates in the US such as Luis Correa (Congressman for California); Jesse Loera (Mayor of Norwalk); Gray Davis and Cruz Bustamante (Governor and vice-Governor of California); Grace Napolitano (Congressman for Washington D.C.) and Al Gore (Presidential Candidate) (Frente Civico Zacatecano, fieldwork interviews 2006).

In the aftermath of Monreal's election the political instability in Zacatecas was also reflected in the other half of the population in the US. As we have seen, two different political organisations were created by Zacatecan migrant leaders in California during the elections: the FCZ (PRD group) and *Zacatecanos PRImero* (PRI group). Subsequently, a separation between the two founders of the FCZ took place after Gomez and his allies claimed that de la Cruz, on Monreal's behalf, was trying to control the Federation in a similar fashion as PRI politicians used to do so (Cano 2001; Quinones 2002). This also led to 13 Zacatecan clubs to leave the Federation of Southern California and form the Orange County Federation (Quinones 2002).

The change of government, nonetheless, brought to migrant leaders and clubs the opportunity to support whoever they wanted and influence party politics dynamics in their state of origin. Monreal might not have been able to fulfil migrant leaders' expectations, but, nevertheless, he granted the autonomy needed by significant migrant clubs like the Federation and the FCZ to become independent political entities in the Zacatecan political landscape and in the US. How the migrant political influence was actually going to materialise became the job of a migrant businessman who became the first migrant candidate.

6.3. The lobbying for migrant political rights in Zacatecas

6.3.1. The case of Andres Bermudez 'the tomato king'

Andres Bermudez became known in the international and national mainstream media as the 'tomato king' as he had become a successful tomato grower and labour

contractor in Winter, California (Becerra 2001; Cano 2001; Vacio 2001; Valadez 2001; Aguirre 2002; El Universal 2004; Los Angeles Times 2004; Miami news 2004; Rodriguez 2004). Originally from the town of Jerez, Zacatecas, Bermudez emigrated in search of better opportunities more than two decades ago. However, in 2001, he decided to run for mayor in his hometown, winning the election. His victory sparked a new debate about whether migrants were entitled to run for public office and their increasing electoral appeal as candidates. His victory, however, was invalidated by the federal electoral court. The once official political party, PRI, filed a complaint to the federal electoral court arguing that Bermudez was a US national and not a Mexican. The court overturned the Bermudez victory and determined that he was indeed ineligible to hold the post of municipal president, not because he was not a Mexican national, but rather because he did not comply with the residency requirements of living in the state of Zacatecas one full year prior to running for elections. Once the Zacatecan constitution was modified in 2003, allowing 'bi-national residency' for a period of six months, Andres Bermudez was able to run for mayor again in 2004 winning the local election. Without serving the entire period as mayor (2004-2007), he ran for election once more, but as federal deputy. Bermudez currently represents the district of Zacatecas in the federal legislature for the period 2006-2009.

Bakker and Smith have written extensively on the case of Andres Bermudez and the transnational character of his political campaigns with a clear emphasis on his portrayal as investor instead of political representative (Bakker and Smith 2003; Smith and Bakker 2005; Smith and Bakker 2008). The case of Bermudez, however, also demonstrates how the notion of a migrant candidate, during his first candidacy

in 2001, has been the result of the dynamics of transnational coalition politics, where opposition groups and the centre-left PRD party in Zacatecas and the Federation, migrant associations and migrant political groups north of the border played a determinant role. In addition, the subsequent Bermudez' candidatures show how other political parties have also tried to take advantage of the popularity of migrants as local candidates. In this section, I explore first the factors that led Bermudez to win the 2001 local election — the formation of a coalition with the centre-left PRD party and the FCZ— then, I discuss what represented Bermudez' candidacy for the institutionalisation of migrant political rights in Zacatecas.

Bermudez' candidacy demonstrates how migrants in contemporary Mexico are able to draw political support from both US-based supporters such as migrant clubs and Mexico-based political actors such as political parties and civil society groups. In the US, Bermudez relied on the support of the FCZ, migrant leaders and presidents of Zacatecan Federations. As Smith, P. shows, the only debate between the candidates for mayor of Jerez took place in Montebello, California, where Bermudez was the only candidate to present formally his political platform (Smith 2005). In Zacatecas, Bermudez allied himself with the centre-left PRD party and received support from Zacatecas-based members of the FCZ. In particular, Bermudez' candidature was supported by the PRD governor Monreal who, according to fieldwork interviews, invited him to represent his party in the elections. However, according to Castaneda, Monreal might have invited Bermudez only as a gesture towards Zacatecan migrants (Castaneda Gomez del Campo 2003; Castaneda 2004, p.73). As we have seen, during his campaign as governor Monreal mentioned he was committed to the adoption of migrant political rights. Bermudez also gained the support of the PRD

mayor of Zacatecas city and a sector of the PRD in Jerez. Initially, at least, Zacatecas-based members of the FCZ, such as the scholar and migrant rights activist Miguel Moctezuma Longoria and his colleagues from the Autonomous University of Zacatecas also showed support for the Bermudez' campaign.

As a result of these alliances, a well-funded campaign and the growing popularity of successful migrants as political candidates at home, Bermudez won in July 2001, but not without creating disputes between and within local political parties. The PRI, as I have already mentioned, questioned Bermudez' legitimacy as a Mexican national, as well as a candidate, and officially presented a legal complaint. The PRI's main objection was that Andres Bermudez had acquired the US citizenship and, thus, could not occupy the municipal presidency of Jerez. Bermudez, on the other hand, tried to prove that although he had acquired the American citizenship, he had requested to recover his Mexican nationality in accordance with the 1996 Non Loss of Nationality Law. He showed his Mexican birth certificate, his voting credential – that requires residency verification in order to be issued — and a letter from the Mexican consulate in California in which Bermudez had requested to recover his Mexican nationality.

Nonetheless, despite the fact that most discussion centred on contrasting interpretations of the 1996 Law, what was a stake was the role of migrants as active actors in the local political landscape and the fear that they could draw significant support, both politically and financially, from US-based migrant associations allowing them to easily win local elections. As we have seen in previous chapters, the PRI was aware of the negative political support among Mexican migrants, as

demonstrated in the few symbolic polls that had taken place in the US. Its position, thus, was to reject the transnationalisation of Zacatecan politics and attempt to restrain the migrant phenomenon in local elections. The PRD, on the other hand, which benefited, as we have seen, by its linkages with migrant leaders and by its presence abroad, saw in migrant candidates the opportunity to win more elections in the near future, particularly in migration-stricken municipalities like Jerez.

The reaction of the PAN was initially ambiguous. However, after Bermudez' victory was cancelled and the 'Migrant Law' was approved in 2003, Bermudez stood for elections again in 2004. For the 2004 elections, Bermudez and his local and regional allies left the PRD party altogether and decided to align with the PAN. This alliance allowed Bermudez to obtain a position in the ballot box after he had lost a primary election to another PRD migrant candidate who was supported by Montreal. On the other hand, it was beneficial for the PAN, as supporting a candidate with verified electoral support could improve its record of limited electoral success in Zacatecas.

In 2006, Bermudez was also able to run for federal deputy as PAN candidate.

Bermudez' 2001 candidacy for mayor of Jerez had a clear impact on party politics and cross-border coalition formation. As I have mentioned, Bermudez' participation in the first electoral race could not have occurred without the support of Governor Montreal and the centre-left PRD party and might not have succeeded without the support of the migrant leaders and associations in the US. Having all the actors in place, a momentum emerged for the institutionalisation of Zacatecan transnational political life. After the reversal of Bermudez' victory in 2001, the FCZ took up the job of lobbying for migrant political rights in Mexico and formulating the 'Migrant

bill’ which would legalise bi-national residency and migrant candidacies for popular elections, as well as ensuring migrant representation in the state congress.

6.3.2. The approval of the ‘Migrant Law’

Having argued that the trigger that led towards the institutionalisation of migrant political rights in Zacatecas was the union of a non-PRI party and the FCZ, a political arm of the most powerful association of Zacatecans in the US, the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California. I now describe how these actors reacted in the final step towards the acceptance of migrant political participation with the passage of the ‘Migrant Law’. Here, I argue that the support of all political factions in congress was ultimately the result of the lobbying efforts and reformulation of the FCZ as a non-partisan migrant group. However, the support of the centre-left PRD party — as a political faction in the Zacatecan congress and in control of the local government — determined the approval and final shape of the bill.

The ‘migrant bill’ was a grass-roots initiative. It was formulated by the FCZ and drafted by Moctezuma and his colleagues at the University of Zacatecas. This process, nonetheless, took a period of two years, during which a few bi-national forums were organised in Zacatecas, as well as in California. During interviews, members of the FCZ often mentioned how they required legal advice in order to translate all demands into the legal language. One of the main goals of the FCZ was to be recognised as a migrant political rights movement with the legitimacy of representing this social sector (fieldwork interviews, 2006).

The bill, initially called ‘Bermudez Law’, was presented on December 10th 2002 in Los Angeles. The FCZ’s original proposal, whose language was to be mostly kept until its final approval as a Law, cited as the motives the long history of emigration, individual remittances, the organisation of Zacatecans abroad and their community and social works in their communities of origin. The latter was interpreted as a form of political participation: ‘some of the first actions in which the organisations of Mexican clubs have won national recognition have been through the achievement of social works in their communities of origin. In practice, this is a form of political participation, from which it is necessary to reformulate the dominant concepts of community, belonging, membership and social, political and cultural participation’ (Frente Civico Zacatecano 2003). The ‘migrant bill’ was also officially delivered to the Zacatecan congress (LVII legislature) on January 9th 2003 by the president of the FCZ, Francisco Javier Gonzalez and the president of the Federation of the Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California, Guadalupe Gomez, where the latter mentioned ‘we do not forget this land, we are also political individuals who are interested in democratization’ (Cited in Luevano, Norma 2003).

It can be said that the successful reception of the ‘Migrant bill’ was partly due to the new image of the FCZ as an organisation without any political party lines, renouncing to its PRD roots and to any former nexus to the then Governor Monreal, which made it able to convolve plural negotiation and to reach out to all political parties, party representatives in congress, the state government and even church representatives. Nonetheless, it was mentioned that although most actors (a few deputies, political party representatives and Governor Monreal amongst others) expressed their support in several meetings held in the US, in Zacatecas, negotiations

were harder and it was only possible to negotiate separately (Moctezuma Longoria September 2006).

In Zacatecas, the FCZ needed to secure enough support in the local congress. The thirty legislative seats in the LVII legislature were evenly distributed between the PRD and the PRI and its allies – not a single party held the absolute majority. The PRD had 13 seats; the PRI 10; the PAN 4; and ‘Convergencia’ 1. Furthermore, the legislative environment was unstable as political parties distinct to the PRD were going through a phase of confrontation with the executive and tried to build an opponent block.

Once the FCZ-version of the ‘Migrant Bill’ reached the Congress, it was turned to the Commission on Constitutional Issues on January the 22nd, 2003. Three different versions were later presented by political parties – the PT, the PAN and the PRD – as well as an initiative formulated by the Commission on Electoral Issues (2003; 2003; 2003). As it can be observed in Table 6.3 below, it was the PRD proposal by deputy Carlos Pinto Nunez, also advisor of the FCZ and promoter of the ‘Migrant bill’ that endorsed trustworthily the FCZ’ proposal. This indicates that the PRD was still committed to implementing migrant political participation. In particular, the PRD initiative not only included migrant representation in the local congress and the figure of the migrant candidate, but also extended citizenship and the rights it entails to first generation Zacatecan descendants born abroad.

Table 6.3 Initiatives presented on migrant political participation in Zacatecas

Date	Political Faction	Legislator(s)	Reforms
27 February 2003	PT	Deputy Filomeno Rojas and 12 more	Art. 52 To include migrant deputies
25 March 2003	PAN	Deputy Carlos Enrique Hernandez Escobedo	Art. 53 and 118 To allow migrants to occupy public office
22 July 2003	PRD	Deputy Carlos Pinto Nunez	Art. 12, 13, 17, 18, 51, 52, 53, 54, 118 To include migrant deputies To allow migrants to occupy public office Extending citizenship and the right to occupy public office (except for the governorship) to first generation Zacatecan descendants born abroad
19 August 2003	Commission on Electoral Issues	Various deputies (non-PRD majority)	Art 14,52, 53, 118 To include migrant deputies To allow migrants to occupy public office

Own elaboration. Source: Legal initiatives 1323/2003; 1392/2003; 1249/2003; 1894/2003

The discussion on the final bill, which retrieved most points from the four legal initiatives submitted and presented by the Commission on Constitutional Issues, was also going to be held in an extraordinary period, which added time constraints (2003). The FCZ, however, put pressure on Governor Monreal to create a propitious environment for the passage of the bill and two days before its approval it called for permanent assembly, with the purpose of evaluating from Los Angeles 'any hesitation from the part of the Congress and act accordingly' (Frente Civico Zacatecano, fieldwork interview, 2006).

The ‘Migrant bill’ was to be discussed in the legislature on the 22nd of August, the same day that Zacatecan legislators were to agree on an initiative to include in golden letters the name ‘*El Migrante*’ (‘the migrant’) on the wall of the legislative precincts, as part of a tradition to include the names of renowned personalities from Zacatecan political, social, and cultural life (Zacatecas Legislature LVII 2nd year, extraordinary period). Having secured the support of the PRD, PAN and PT parties, the ‘Migrant Bill’ was approved in general terms. It was mentioned during fieldwork interviews that once two thirds of the Congress (members of the PRD, PAN and PT) agreed to support it, PRI legislators then followed behind, as it was too politically costly to publicly oppose this bill. Taking advantage of the positive outlook, the PRD deputy Antonio Gonzalez Esparza also proposed two further reforms to articles 52 and 18, which referred to the formula of ‘*plurinominal*’ deputies (according to proportional representation) and residency requirements (Zacatecas Legislature LVII 2nd year, extraordinary period). In particular, the latter involved shortening from one year to six months the period of effective or bi-national residency as a prerequisite to be considered a Zacatecan citizen⁴². The migrant bill was finally unanimously approved with these modifications on the 23rd August.

The ‘Migrant Law’ meant reforming Art. 12; 13; 14; 17; 18; 51; 52; 53; 54 and 118 of the state constitution. Although the implications of this Law in the Zacatecan political landscape is the topic of the next chapter, it is worth noting now that the most far-reaching measure included in the bill is the incorporation of the notion of bi-nationality, revealing the situation of thousands of Zacatecan migrants who simultaneously inhabit and participate in the political, economic and cultural life of

⁴² The FCZ’ initiative mentioned one year

two places, as the case of Bermudez demonstrated. As one of the Zacatecan legislators stated, ‘if in our state, both the phenomenon of migration as well as the legal occurrence of bi-nationality are a social reality, thus it is necessary to recognise that the current requirements to be able to participate in the political life of the state are obsolete and incompatible with this reality, such as the use of the ‘effective residence’ among others’ (Rodriguez Santoyo 28 August 2003). This shift from ‘effective residence’ – as the rigid notion of an individual living in one single context – to ‘bi-national residence’ – that an individual can migrate from one place to another and be aware of two contexts – opens up opportunities to Zacatecan migrants to run in elections. In order to facilitate the condition of bi-nationality, the ‘Migrant Law’ recognises as Zacatecans ‘(...) those Mexicans neighbours of the state, with residency of, for at least, six months, including bi-national and simultaneous residency (...)’ (Para II, Art 13 Zacatecas Constitution). Bi-national Zacatecans and yet those Zacatecans that were not born in Mexico but have Zacatecan parents, can run for elections as deputies and municipal presidents as well as other local authorities positions (except for the governorship). Another feature of the Law is parliamentary representation – two migrant candidates have to be elected according to pluri-nominal lists. On the other hand, however, an absentee ballot system has still not been implemented. Consequently, Zacatecan migrants, at present, in order to be able to vote for the local elections have to return to Zacatecas and show their official voting credential.

The analysis of how this bill came into being indicates the manner in which the political transition in Zacatecas empowered new political actors such as the Zacatecan migrant federations in the US, facilitating in this way the formation of

new cross-border coalitions and cross-border civil society response. Although, as I have argued, the emergence of a strong civil society organisation representing migrants' interests was the result of the previous partnership of migrant associations with the centre-left PRD, the final path towards the passage of the bill relied more on presenting a bill with a neutral tone outside the influence of any political party, but with the support from the then Governor Monreal and making use of the importance that this issue played in bi-national public opinion.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter presents the argument that the institutionalisation of migrants' political rights at the sub-national level is a response of a newly formed state ('*estado*') – experiencing the revival of party politics and the emergence of new social actors – and its interaction with migrant organisations across the border. In particular, the case of Zacatecas illustrates how cross-border political coalition formation – between a migrant lobby group and a centre-left PRD party – has led to the implementation of the 'Migrant Law', which places migrants at the political centre stage. Migrant political participation is then co-related to local democratization processes that vary from state to state and economic integration between the both neighbouring countries in which the main agents are diaspora communities.

This indicates that migrants and migrant groups have been present in economic and political processes that have led to the re-emergence of party politics at the sub-national level. At the time when political change was taking place in Zacatecas, local democratization processes and the emergence of party politics was also gradually

appearing all over Mexico, with the exception of a few PRI enclaves. Migrant presence and campaigning during political shifts was also reported in other migrant sending states such as Michoacán, Guanajuato, Guerrero and Jalisco. Thus, this finding corroborates a recent study on the effects of emigration at the micro-level, which shows that between 1983 and 2007 municipalities where a high proportion of households that receive remittances were more prone to vote for non-PRI political parties (by 15 percent when party preferences are controlled) leading to political change (Pfutze 2008).

Moreover, the processes that accompanied the first change of government in Zacatecas to a non-PRI party were also reflected among the Zacatecan migrant communities in the US. Political division among migrant leaders resulted in the creation of political support committees for the PRD – the '*Frente Civico Zacatecano*' and for the PRI – '*Zacatecanos PRImero*'. The former went on to lobby for migrant political rights in the local congress as the PRD occupied the local governorship and enjoyed a large presence in the local legislature. This study also shows that during lobbying, the FCZ was able to re-invent itself as a neutral political organisation that did not align with any political party. This, as we have seen, was also a characteristic of the '*Coalicion por los Derechos Politicos de los Mexicanos en el Exterior*' (CDPME) that advocated migrant voting rights at the federal level. Despite negotiations and alliances with political parties behind closed doors, migrant lobby organisations try to maintain a non-partisan line, in order to gain more adherents among hometown associations and migrant groups, as well as local political parties and social actors.

Looking at the causes that have led to the implementation of a migrants' political rights bill makes us conclude that initiatives to allow political participation across borders have emerged at the sub-national level following a set of necessary steps, from the growing economic leverage and political influence of migrant associations to the formation of alliances with an opposition party – up to now, the centre-left PRD – ultimately resulting in the creation of legal instruments that establish new transnational political dynamics and as the case of Zacatecas illustrates, the construct of a bi-national state.

Yet, the 'Migrant Law' implemented in Zacatecas in 2003 and the 'vote abroad' initiative approved at the national level in July 2005 are recent legal mechanisms that can lead to the materialisation of new legal proposals with distinct formulas for migrants' political participation in other Mexican states. At the sub-national level, as the case of Zacatecas shows, a migrant political rights formula responds to a specific local context and political forces. The notion of bi-national residency, for instance, emerged to replace the strict residency requirements to occupy public office in Zacatecas, which prevented more than half of the population living abroad to participate politically in local affairs. An absentee voting mechanism for Zacatecan local elections was not part of the Zacatecan formula as, during negotiations, issues arose about whether it was viable under federal Law. In the same way, a PRD-dominated state and the momentum that migrant political participation gained in public opinion strengthened the leverage position of migrant lobby groups, whose legal initiative was approved without any major changes by the local legislature.

In the following chapter, I analyse the implications of the ‘Migrant Law’ in the Zacatecan political system. In particular, I show that the institutionalisation of emigrant political participation, by allowing migrant representation in the local congress and migrant candidacies, opens up the local political system to new political actors – migrants and migrant organisations – that are able to act across borders. As we will see, this has implications for both the local political structure and on the other hand, the perception of who is to be considered part of the constituency.

Chapter 7

7. The institutionalisation of transnational politics in Zacatecas

This chapter focuses on the impact of the implementation of the ‘Migrant Law’ as a formula to ensure emigrants’ participation within the political life of Zacatecas. Having explained in previous chapters that the current emergence of transnational political linkages and the efforts to institutionalise migrants political participation in Mexico and in particular in Zacatecas has been linked to the need to secure a flow of remittances, the economic and political leverage of Mexican migrant organisations in the US and the consolidation of competitive politics in the country and region of origin; the questions addressed here are whether the institutionalised intervention of émigrés in local politics changes its political order and to what extent this is transparent and compatible with democratic principles.

The evidence presented in this chapter, based on the 2004 local elections in Zacatecas, suggests a clear change in the political dynamics of the state with the rise of two new political actors, that is, migrant organisations and migrant candidates and the transformation of the roles of domestic political institutions such as local political parties and the state government. In particular, I argue that this shift constitutes a challenge to the structures of power and the socio-political hierarchies that existed before, albeit only to a certain extent. The main finding is that the Zacatecan ‘Migrant Law’ has, nonetheless, institutionalised some already existing forms of cross-border political participation in the region, although normative and practical

questions arise about how and to what extent institutionalised transnational politics can be regulated and by whom. The 'Migrant Law' in Zacatecas presents an effort to incorporate transnational political participation into the local political system; however, as I will show this formula presents a number of problems which indicates that further modifications to the Law are likely to be made in the future. It is debatable, for instance, if the implementation of the original Zacatecan formula for migrant political participation is fully consistent with the incipient local democratic context or if old clientelist practices are re-created within a transnational political field.

Recent literature on transnationalism and migration has emphasised how migrants' transnational political practices try to influence political events, as well as domestic and foreign policy in their countries of origin (Goldring 1988; Smith R. 1995; Mahler 1998; Faist 2000; Mahler 2000; Østergaard-Nielsen 2000; Smith R. 2001; Goldring 2002; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003; Smith 2003 ; Smith and Bakker 2008; Escobar April 2004). Earlier research described how migrants had an impact on events at home through their regular interactions with their home country at the societal level or through their participation in international social movements without being directly involved with home country's political institutions (Kaiser 1971; Keohane and Nye 1971; Wapner 1995). However, what most earlier and recent research have in common is that they have focused on informal forms of emigrant political participation in their country of origin (electoral and non-electoral), that is, migrants' cross-border political practices outside any legal national or local

framework⁴³. By overlooking how migrants respond to formal or institutionalised channels for emigrant political participation, scholarship has failed to provide answers to important questions such as whether or not the institutionalisation of cross-border political participation has an effect on the sending country's political system. Who does it benefit in the local political scenario? Also, how does emigrants' political participation have an impact on democratic practice?

This deficiency has also affected the construction of appropriate terminology. Emigrant political participation is often reduced to those lobbying activities carried out by migrant groups to gain more political and economic rights in their country of origin, which involves a clear demarcation between actors of the country of origin and settlement. It is also often mentioned that such practices represent a challenge to the nation-state (Soysal 1994; Rubio-Marin 2006). In the same vein, but from a different angle, early studies that analysed sending countries' integrative policies towards nationals abroad referred to the 'deterritorialization' of the nation-state (See notably Basch L., Glick Schiller et al. 1994). An insight into institutionalised emigrant political participation in domestic affairs demonstrates that both approaches are indeed misleading. By legitimising and institutionalising cross-border political practices, countries are in fact adapting to new globalising and transnationalising phenomena and accommodating new non-resident actors with different political interests back within their political system and structure. Enshrining the extension of political rights to emigrants in constitutional and electoral rules promotes its continuity and makes it immune to the political intentions of future governments

⁴³ For an insight into the definitions of formal and informal forms of transnational political participation see Chapter 1.

(Gamlen 2008, p.9). At the same time, as Baubock points out, sustained transnational political practices can only take place if emigration patterns persist as second and third generations born abroad are often less interested in following and influencing political developments in their country of descent (2003). Thus, cross-border political engagement is dependant on and reinforced by both actors: the state and the diaspora.

As discussed in chapter 2, formal forms of emigrant political participation are not restricted to sending countries with developing economies. Dual nationality and voting rights have been implemented in a number of industrialised countries for many years and it has become common practice in the Western world. Still, the participation of emigrant communities in developed countries' political affairs is far from controversial mainly because it is (perhaps wrongly) believed that they would not have an impact on homeland political affairs as emigrant populations are not considerably large and are expected to have low voting turnout levels. The expatriate vote in Spanish and Italian elections proves this assumption is incorrect. For instance, in the 2005 regional elections in the north-western province of Galicia, the postal vote was decisive for the Socialist Party (PS for its acronym in Spanish) to defeat the right-wing Popular Party (PP) and create a coalition government between the Socialist Party (PSO) and the Galician Nationalist Bloc (BNG). About 305,000 Spanish emigrants were eligible to vote, which represented 12 percent of the electorate (National Statistic Institute 2005). In Italy, about 1 million Italians abroad voted for the general election of 2008 (Ministero dell'Interno 2008). On the other hand, however, the extension of political rights to non-resident citizens has been an issue that has attracted great attention in middle-income and low-income sending

countries that also represent some of the youngest democracies. Indeed, the political opening to previously excluded migrant groups has been a common element of democratization processes in many countries that have large proportions of their populations living in the developed world.

Thus, the study of institutionalised forms of emigrant political participation is relevant for three main reasons. First, albeit not the focus of this study, migrants' participation in their home country's political developments can also determine their level of political engagement in the country where they live (Ostergaard-Nielsen 30 June - 1 July 2001; Soysal 1994; Jones-Correa 1998; Jones-Correa 2001; Jones-Correa 2002; Portes, Guarnizo et al. 2002; Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003; Escobar April 2004; Guarnizo, Portes et al. May 2003). Baubock rightly observes that migration 'becomes transnational only when it creates overlapping memberships, rights and practices that reflect a simultaneous belonging of migrants to two different political communities' (2003, p. 705). Consequently, the study of migrants' transnational political practices requires a multi-sited perspective in both the country of settlement and of origin as 'external citizenship often also means dual or multiple memberships' (Rubio-Marin 2006, p.120). Secondly, emigrant political participation directly affects the political system of the country of origin, where political structures and institutions have to transform themselves to accommodate new political actors and their interests. Importantly, when different forms of emigrant political participation are implemented at the distinct levels of territorial governance (national and state levels) such as the case of Zacatecas, the dynamics become even more complex.

Thirdly, at least in the case of sending countries with recent experience of democratization, the analysis of how formal cross-border political practices are implemented within an incipient democratic system is of paramount importance. Here, the focus is not to what extent emigrant political participation is consistent with democratic theory. Legal and political theory scholarship has mainly argued that migrants' participation in political affairs of the country of origin is democratic *per se* and consistent with the international human rights and democracy discourse (Spiro 15 March 2006; Itzigsohn 2000; Barry 2006; Rubio-Marin 2006; Gamlen 2008), disagreement arises about the weight that should be given to non-residents' votes. In practice, however, sending countries and, specifically, regions of origin that attempt to regulate emigrant political participation and contain it within an existing and still-evolving democratic framework do so with different results.

This chapter is therefore divided into three main sections. This first section gives a short introduction reviewing the main characteristics of the 'Migrant Law' – specifically describing the requirements to become a migrant candidate or bi-national legislator in Zacatecas. Second, I elaborate on the institutional structure of migrant politics in the state and address the question of who are the main political institutions in Zacatecan transnational politics and how their roles have an impact on the political order in Zacatecas. Here, I argue that despite the legal reform on migrant political participation included in the local constitution, alternative and additional responsibilities and tasks have been taken up by the main transnational political actors, that is, the local government, local political parties and hometown associations or migrant organisations. Third, I analyse to what extent migrant candidates displace traditional political classes both during the campaign phase and

once they become elected. I argue that old social and political hierarchies are challenged by migrant candidates and politicians, albeit to a limited extent, that is because they can bring more investment into their communities while they are not bound to those characteristics normally associated with upper political classes in Mexico such as corruption, deception and vote buying. Finally, I discuss the political mismatch that is created between territory and citizenship practices, specifically whether migrant political representatives are meant to serve the interests of their constituencies abroad or at home and consider what are the consequences that derive from this.

7.1. The Zacatecan legal formula for migrant political participation

The ‘Migrant Law’, as I have already mentioned in the previous chapter, ensures migrant political participation in local politics in two ways: as candidates for local elections (except for the governorship⁴⁴) and parliamentary representation (two seats out of thirty) by reforming articles 12, 13, 17, 18, 51, 53, 54 and 118 of the state Constitution and the state electoral code. Despite the novelty of this formula, one of its main shortcomings is that, at the time of this writing, it does not yet implement a vote abroad mechanism for local elections. Let us explore, however, the notions of migrants as candidates and as legislators separately as they involve different parts of this Law.

⁴⁴ Zacatecan Electoral Code, Article 14

Migrants are able to run for elections as ‘bi-national candidates’ thanks to the notion of bi-national residency adopted in the Migrant Law. The Zacatecan Electoral Code defines a ‘migrant candidate’ as ‘a person who meeting the requirements stipulated by the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States and its law that regulates on the issue of nationality and citizenship, occupies a position of public election, possessing Zacatecan citizenship and bi-national residency’ (Art. 5). Bi-national residency cancels then the previous requirement of living for one entire year in Zacatecas to be able to run for local elections. In addition, it also extends this political entitlement to first generation Zacatecans who were not born in the state. Previously, the constitution required first generation Zacatecans by descent to live within Zacatecan territory for three subsequent years. Thus, both Zacatecas-born migrants and first generation Zacatecans born-abroad can claim bi-national residency.

In accordance with the Zacatecan Electoral Code, ‘bi-national residency is the status that a person assumes to possess simultaneously a residence abroad; and at the same time, a residence and vicinity within the territory of the state, maintaining in it a home, family and interests’ (Art. 5). Therefore, it mainly refers to those Zacatecan nationals that have emigrated alone and have left their families behind. In practical terms, however, bi-national residency entails different requirements. The local constitution (Art. 12) points out that to be able to claim simultaneous residency in Zacatecas and abroad (beyond Mexican borders), Zacatecan-born migrants and first-generation Zacatecans of descent have to comply with the following requirements:

- To have an address in Zacatecas even though they might hold another address in any other country

- To be registered as a tax payer (to be included in the Federal Register of Taxpayers)
- To be included in the National Population's Register and count with a unique population registry code ('*clave unica de registro de poblacion*')
- And to have an official voting credential granted by the Federal Electoral Institute

In other words, a bi-national resident could be a Zacatecas-born or first generation Zacatecan who might live permanently or temporarily in another country and yet, have a second address in Zacatecas, have all official documents (which would have entailed having had to go back home to process them) and be a registered tax payer for at least six months. Thus, a bi-national lifestyle seems to represent an expensive endeavour that only few can afford. It might also be a factor that enhances inequality among the migrant community, closely related to the legality issue in the US, creating a gap between those who have both the legal and financial means to move freely between the two countries and enjoy fully economic and political rights in both countries and those who do not.

On the other hand, the 'Migrant Law' also ensures migrant representation at the local congress, where at least two migrants are appointed migrant legislators. However, in contrast to migrants running for local political positions, migrant legislators are not elected through competitive elections, but through a mechanism denominated '*plurinominal*' lists. Out of the thirty legislators at the Zacatecan Congress, eighteen are elected and twelve are appointed through proportional representation. From the

latter, two must ‘be migrant or bi-national’⁴⁵. That is to say, that after each political party includes a candidate for migrant legislator in the last place of their lists, two migrants or bi-nationals from the two political parties that had won the majority of seats become legislators (even when the political party that received the highest number of votes secures a total of 18 seats).

Although the legislative representation provisions of the ‘Migrant Law’ are similar to those of other countries such as Colombia, Italy and India, the Zacatecan formula, however, diverges in three ways: it only applies to a region within a country (Mexico); it does not implement a vote abroad mechanism for local elections and it adopts the notion of bi-national residency, which also allows migrants to run for elections. The main paradox of having two migrant seats by the principle of proportional representation and a lack of an absentee voting system is: who gets to elect those migrant representatives in the first place? We will turn to this discussion in the final section of this chapter.

In the 2004 local elections, the first time that the ‘Migrant Law’ was implemented, at least five Zacatecan migrants claimed bi-national residency and ran for local elections, two of them were then elected municipal presidents. Andres Bermundez from the PAN party won by over two thousand votes in the town of Jerez and Martin Carbalal from the PRD party became mayor of the town of Apulco by 45 votes (Instituto Estatal Electoral 2006). In addition, the PRI and PRD parties were the ones that gained the highest number of votes in the local legislature. In this way, the two migrant seats, which as we have seen are granted according to proportional

⁴⁵ State constitution, Article 51

representation, were assigned to Roman Cabral, who was included as migrant representative in the PRI '*plurinominal*' list and Manuel de la Cruz, who was supported by the centre-left PRD.

Looking at the bi-national participants of the 2004 local elections, we can find similar attributes. Firstly, bi-national candidates were not 'return migrants', so to say, they did not reside in Mexico prior to elections nor had any intention to return permanently to this country. Zacatecan bi-national candidates thanks to the new legal requirements were able to operate from the US, where they maintained a home, family and business. It is important to note that the five migrants running for elections in 2004 were already naturalised US citizens or had permanent residency in that country ('green card holders'). Most of them immigrated into the US illegally in the 1970's in their late twenties (fieldwork interviews, Zacatecas, 2006). Taking into consideration that most migrant candidates were already settled in the US where they had their families and business, we should consider that their participation in their homeland elections and eventual victory would not necessarily entail their permanent return, albeit a couple were actually interested in pursuing a political career in Mexico. The PRD migrant deputy, in particular, mentioned 'today I feel that there is a void in Mexico because there are rules that you cannot break, today my only wish is to look for a municipal presidency...the only close position to the people are the municipalities...otherwise I will go back again to the US' (fieldwork interview, 2006). In fact, most of them decided to go back to the US once they completed their term in office with the exception of Andres Bermudez, who was elected in 2006 as federal deputy for Zacatecas. Secondly, we should note that most bi-national candidates were successful entrepreneurs in the US and had previously held

important leadership positions within migrant organisations. The bi-nationals running for local elections in Apulco and Jerez (Martin Carvajal and Andres Bermudez) had their own business in the US and often participated as donors in the 3x1 government funding programmes. Migrant legislators, on the other hand, were prominent migrant leaders who had held important positions within the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California and governmental positions as representatives abroad, as in the case of Manuel de la Cruz Ramirez.

In fact, those migrant or bi-national candidates did not necessarily meet the legal definition of 'having a home, family and interests in Zacatecas' (Art. 5, Zacatecan Electoral Code) as their homes and families were all along based in the US. What they did have, on the other hand, was a motivation in achieving a higher level of economic and political development for their communities as demonstrated by their membership in hometown associations with a record of involvement in infrastructure and development projects in their communities of origin and by their candidacies back home. A more recent legal initiative presented by the PRD migrant candidate Manuel de la Cruz in 2005 attempted to add three more requirements to those candidates that aspired to 'bi-national legislative seats' such as 'to demonstrate active membership in a Zacatecan hometown association in the US; show a proof of economic activity and a curriculum of activities that strengthen the bi-national bond' (Cruz 2005, p. 5). What was relevant in this proposal, widely discussed, but not approved by the local congress, was that it attempted to narrow down those Zacatecan migrants that could consider a political career back home to those that had already a career within the migrant political circles in the US; creating in this way a political bond between the local political system and the net of Zacatecan hometown

associations and migrant clubs that could complement the economic ties already in place with the governmental matching funds.

To sum up, despite efforts to regulate who is allowed to participate in politics at home, the debate still continues. While the government attitude is to foster loyalty and genuine interest for local economic development among its growing community abroad, more emphasis is placed on the economic-political link even by migrant candidates themselves. As I will demonstrate in subsequent sections, bi-national residency not only encourages investment and capital mobility to communities of origin, but also promotes brain circulation among political circles.

The inclusion of migrants as new political actors, however, also tests the ability of the current local political institutions to accommodate their interests, give them a political voice and ultimately allow their participation in and adaptation to the local political scenario. Yet, in order to identify the challenges that the Zacatecan formula faces we should analyse how the legal language translates into practice.

7.2. Main institutions in Zacatecan transnational politics

Empirical investigation and theorising on migrants' political practices has focused more on the reasons for participating than on analysing what are the implications of migrants' engagement in their home country's politics. However, the lack of research may also stem from the fact that there are very few advanced legal structures that institutionalise transnational political practices, such as in the case of Zacatecas and the fact that they are also quite recent. Itzigsohn explores migrant politics in

Dominican Republic, Haiti and El Salvador and identifies political parties and hometown associations as the main actors in the transnational political field (2000). He states that what is new in transnational politics is not the occurrence of this phenomenon, but 'the inclusion of political organisations organised by immigrants abroad in the democratic political competition of the sending countries' (Itzigsohn 2000, p. 1144). Nonetheless, he goes on to argue that those organisations do not really alter the local balance of power in the communities where they are linked. Goldring, on the other hand, argues in her study entitled 'Power and Status in Transnational Social Spaces' that migrant organisations serve as the vehicles by which Zacatecan migrants from the village of Las Animas are able to claim a different social status and express their meaning of community (Goldring 1998). The political leverage that these institutions hold realigns political power in the community *vis a vis* other political actors.

I agree with the latter; however, analysing the recent implementation of the migrant reform in Zacatecas I argue that the implementation of a legal structure for migrants' political participation has meant the institutionalisation of both the extension of political competition beyond the limits of the state and the inclusion of political actors which reshape old structures of power and social hierarchies in local communities. Firstly, I discuss the roles of political parties and hometown associations in migrant politics focusing on the process of selection of migrant candidates and how their campaigns are supported. Then, I discuss some of the main challenges for the local political system that derive from that, such as to what extent are migrant associations representative of the migrant population and the vicissitudes that this represents for an incipient democratic transition.

In the 'Migrant Law' provisions, as we have seen, there is no mention of the role of migrant associations in local politics, as it was assumed that political parties as the main institutions for political participation for Zacatecan citizens would also act as representatives of the political interests of Zacatecans abroad. Normative questions arise, however, as to what extent are political parties allowed to run activities in receiving countries and gather adherents among expatriates. In practical terms, on the other hand, for citizens abroad participating politically in their country of origin might not be a priority (unless there exists an adverse regime at home), as we have seen with the minimal participation in the Mexican vote abroad experience for presidential elections in 2006 analysed in chapter 5, as it is to express socially and culturally. In particular, when facing a disadvantaged position in the country of reception, migrants try to retain ties and identities associated with their home countries and communities and build and maintain kinship and friendship networks.

Although, how can migrants interested in participating in politics in their local communities and willing to run for elections get the support from political parties in the first place? Despite Mexican political parties having engaged in new forms of extension of their activities in the receiving country, as we have seen in previous chapters, their sphere of influence and power among the Zacatecan migrant community is limited, contrary to Itzigsohn's findings in other countries (2000). The main Mexican political parties – PRI, PAN and PRD – have opened up offices in the main destination cities for migrants, but they have not been successful in attracting high numbers of affiliates in comparison to migrant organisations (see chapter five). '*Zacatecanos PRImero*', the PRI organisation created to get support for the 2004

local elections based in the US counted on about 200 members in that year (Alvarado 2004).

Migrant organisations, on the other hand, have acted and continue to act as intermediaries between the state and the Zacatecan communities abroad and have fulfilled a central role in involving the migrant communities in local politics. An average of 40,000 Zacatecans are members of hometown associations. Migrant organisations, I argue, play a central role in selecting migrant candidates that would run for local elections or become migrant legislators, serving as intermediaries between Zacatecans abroad and local political parties. One of the main Zacatecan migrant political organisations is the Zacatecan Civic Front (FCZ), which represents the political arm of the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California. As it has been mentioned in the previous chapter the FCZ is a civic society organisation originally created to support the campaign of Monreal, the first non-PRI governor elected in 1998 and, subsequently, its central purpose was to lobby for the approval of the 'Migrant Law' at Congress. In a controversial interview with the then president of the FCZ, Javier Gonzalez, he explained that the organisation would select the candidates that truly represent the Zacatecan migrants. At the same time, he disengaged from party politics and stated that: 'we have broken various myths, such as the one that the PRD was the migrants' party; we migrants do not have a party' (Amador 2003). In an interview, the migrant deputy for the PRI party Roman Cabral also affirmed that the selection of migrant deputies for proportional representation, to be included in the PRI list in 2004, had been carried out within the migrant political club, 'Zacatecanos PRImero'. 'It was quite simple. Four candidates were registered, but there was no need for a vote, two of them did not qualify as they

did not have a voting credential. So, then it was Rigoberto Castaneda and I. [...] At the beginning I wasn't sure, all that time against the government and now to do government, no. But then, we have always complained about the government taking advantage of the '3X1' and migrants' work in their communities, providing services. There were incentives to participate' (fieldwork interview, 2006).

It is the case that despite the fact that Zacatecan migrant organisations portray themselves as politically neutral in regard to their party loyalties, they still have a strong effect on the political environment. One could even argue that, after the local political transition, migrant leaders and their organisations have endorsed a public position of political neutrality as a joint strategy to open up new political spaces. Migrant organisations view as the main advantage of their neutrality their ability to win candidacies supported by different political parties, increasing in this way their sphere of influence. As Landolt and her collaborators mention analysing Salvadoran migrant organisations in the US: 'In spite of their self-professed neutrality and their emphasis on the humanitarian nature of the agenda, the hometown association is a political actor' (Landolt, Autler et al. 1999, p. 308). As we have seen in the previous chapter, migrant organisations play an important role challenging traditional political actors through their economic influence and interest in local development, which on the extreme is illustrated with cases in which donations from migrant clubs supersede the governmental budget at the municipal level.

The passage of the 'Migrant Law' has marked, however, the beginning of a new phase in Zacatecan politics, as hometown associations do not only get involved with local politicians to plan a development agenda, but they also nominate those citizens

that can become local leaders. As we have seen in the previous section, bi-national participants in the 2004 local elections were either powerful migrant leaders, members of migrant clubs or successful businessmen who often participated in '3x1' government development programmes in their communities of origin. Bi-nationals included in the *plurinominal* lists of the main political parties, for instance, had been members of the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California. Manuel de la Cruz (PRD migrant legislator) was president of the Federation from 1993 to 1998 and a strong supporter of Governor Monreal (Valadez Rodriguez 2004 ; Website 2006). Roman Cabral, PRI migrant legislator, was also a member of the Federation from 1985 to 1995 and then participated in the PRI organisation '*Zacatecanos PRImero*'. The two bi-nationals that were elected municipal presidents in the towns of Jerez and Apulco were also respected businessmen among the migrant population, as well as members and benefactors of the Federation of Southern California and the Federation of Fort Worth, Texas, respectively.

In most of the cases cited above, Zacatecan hometown associations and migrant political groups based in the US supported migrant leaders or even supported them for political positions in Zacatecas. In all cases, migrant candidates had already a well-established career within their migrant clubs, which allowed them to foster networks with the government and political parties during the local political transition, in particular, by negotiating remittances projects. The main finding, thus, is the new role of these organisations and the weight of their political decisions versus local political institutions.

The transnationalisation of Zacatecan politics, however, also required new *de facto* responses and responsibilities carried out by local branches of political parties and the local government. For instance, the local governments of PRD governor Monreal and his successor PRD governor Amalia Garcia named a government representative abroad at the start of their time in office, who was a migrant leader or ex-president of Zacatecan federations. The local branches of political parties, on the other hand, have lacked the same degree of involvement in migrant political affairs and often recurred to hometown associations and migrant organisations to reach out for supporters. Fieldwork interviews revealed that migrant leaders often complained about the lack of real support from political parties, including those that were leaders of political committees abroad. As we have seen in the previous chapter, it was not until the local political transition in Zacatecas when the first PRI and PRD supporting committees in Los Angeles were created. Even then there were complaints about the absence of legitimacy that they badly needed from the local branches of their political parties. Comparing the PRI party's activities abroad with those of other parties (such as the PRD and PAN), the PRI migrant deputy Federico Cabral complains 'there is much dissatisfaction with our party, our party abroad does not have a representative, we don't have any migrant in a federal deputy position in Mexico' (fieldwork interview, 2006). In 2004, Zacatecan political parties' committees became the most dependent on migrant organisations to help them select candidates for the bi-national legislative seat. However, candidacies for municipal presidencies in towns with high emigration such as Jerez and Apulco often resulted from a common agreement between hometown associations and local political parties' committees (fieldwork interviews, Zacatecas, 2006). Table 7.1 illustrates

what are the main activities of the state, political parties and hometown associations in the inclusion of émigrés in Zacatecan politics.

Table 7.1 Main institutional actors in the practice of migrant politics in Zacatecas

Main actors	Official roles according to the 'Migrant Law'	Additional activities undertaken (not stipulated in the 'Migrant Law')
Local government	Legal structure that allows: Bi-national residents to run for elections. Two migrants to be appointed to the state Congress.	Government representative abroad to deal with migrant organisations and migrant leaders.
Political parties	They can support bi-national candidates to run for local elections. They must include a migrant legislator in their ' <i>plurinominal</i> ' lists.	Main parties (PRD, PRI and PAN) count with branches in the US cities with high number of Mexican (Zacatecan) migrants. Parties mobilise political and financial support abroad.
Hometown associations	None	Migrant organisations nominate possible migrant candidates to political parties. They support migrant candidates' campaigns through real investments or business promises. They maintain a strong link with migrant or bi-nationals in local governments. They support bi-national investment projects in communities run by migrants.

Source: Own elaboration (Based on fieldwork interviews 2004; 2006; Zacatecan Constitution)

It is not difficult to conceptualise that hometown associations and migrant clubs have more access to Zacatecan migrant communities abroad than US branches of Mexican political parties as they provide places that fill in cultural and social aspects of the migrant life. Leaders that emerge from these organisations are well-respected by the

migrant community and the main hosts when Zacatecan politicians visit US cities. It is seen as natural that hometown associations and migrant clubs have the faculty to propose or approve those migrant candidates for the position of migrant deputy that political parties have to include in their '*plurinominal* lists'.

This pattern of migrant political transnationalism described here also raises democracy-related questions such as: to what extent migrant organisations represent the migrant population abroad, which Ostergaard-Nielsen has already signalled previously, as well as to what extent migrant political networks are based on democratic principles. In regards to the former, Ostergaard-Nielsen argues that '(...) part of the difficulty with assessing the contribution by transnational political networks to democratization in homelands relates to the lack of accountability of transnational political networks. It is, for instance, difficult to determine 'who represents who' in terms of political organisation of migrants'. (Ostergaard-Nielsen 30 June - 1 July 2001, p. 19). As we had previously seen, members of hometown clubs are only a minority of the emigrant population in Zacatecas, representing two percent of the total. In the description of hometown associations' activities, it is also notorious that not all of them have the same political leverage *vis a vis* the state and local governments. The most powerful hometown associations such as the Federation of Zacatecan clubs from Southern California are those that have the biggest share in the investment for local development projects.

It is not only a question of how representative they are, but to whom. In other words, what are the main purposes of migrant associations – to advance migrants' interests at home or in the US? The current decade has witnessed a vast number of hometown

associations created specifically to participate in the government remittances matching funding programmes or to mobilise their own investment to foster economic development in their local communities; activities that are also fostered by the local and federal governments. However, the current events in regards to immigration issues in the US have prompted Zacatecan migrant associations to switch their focus toward defending the interests of the immigrant community in the country of reception. Thus, we should bear in mind that migrant associations do not only serve political interests in their regions of origin, as they also have a political impact in their country of reception.

In addition, we should also question to what extent migrant political networks are based on democratic principles. In spite of the fact that migrant associations often try to advance migrants' human rights in the country of reception and their political rights in the country of origin, it has been pointed out that their structures are often corporativist and non-transparent (Goldring 1999). In recent years, Mexico has focused on creating and enforcing norms that regulate political party competition and parties' internal structure, as well as setting up transparent and democratic forms of selecting representatives and candidates. These norms do not apply to hometown associations and migrant political organisations that seek to represent politically Mexicans residing abroad and support their candidacies for local political positions in Mexico. It follows that these associations, which are registered as charitable organisations in the US, are not accountable in their countries of origin. More research is indeed needed into how these organisations work and how their leaders are selected. Fieldwork interviews revealed that in the case of the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California, which is made up of approximately 75

Zacatecan local clubs, the board of directors, composed of 16 people in different positions, is elected every two years. However, nominations of those that can aspire to these posts are at the discretion of current clubs representatives. Regular members only vote from a list of pre-selected candidates (fieldwork interviews, Zacatecas, 2006).

To sum up, our discussion suggests contradictions in the role of migrant organisations in comparison with political parties in the institutionalisation of Zacatecan transnational politics. In one sense, we can argue that migrant organisations play a central role in Zacatecan local politics as their sphere of influence has reached beyond borders, as they are the vehicles by which potential bi-national candidates can be recruited for local elections. Migrant organisations play a more effective role in involving migrant communities in local politics than political parties. On the other hand, however, a number of normative and practical questions arise in regards to how legitimate is the political influence of these organisations. In particular, three key questions arise: how representative they are of the migrant population?; how they can have a decisive political role in their home communities in spite of being located across the national border?; also, are they based on democratic principles without being held accountable? This discussion is incomplete without analysing the role of migrant candidates in comparison with the traditional political elite.

7.3. Bi-nationals in local politics

Having explained the transnational political structure that supports the practice of migrant politics in Zacatecas, by highlighting the role of migrant associations and their relationship with political parties and the local government, this section aims at addressing the questions: what does migrants' participation as candidates in local elections mean? Also, what effects does this have on the realignment of power in local politics? Answers to these questions make it possible to determine the role of migrant candidates in the ongoing saga of democratization in contemporary Mexico and specifically their significance in the political developments in Zacatecas. I argue that the inclusion of migrant candidates in local migrant sending communities challenges old social hierarchies, specifically the traditional political classes, although only to a certain extent. I begin with an explanation of the major approaches salient to Mexican migrant political transnationalism. Secondly, I re-take the discussion on the characteristics of bi-national candidates running for the 2004 Zacatecan local elections and what advantages they represented against traditional political classes. Finally, I assess both bi-nationals' political campaigns and the political and economic developments experienced in their communities following the election.

A number of scholars have debated on the characteristics of the participants in transnational political practices and they seem to agree on the fact that they might be well-educated, wealthy men with increased economic clout and relative independence from the coercive apparatuses of the state (Itzigsohn 2000; Guarnizo 2001; Portes, Guarnizo et al. 2002; Guarnizo, Portes et al. May 2003). The analysis of the participants in the first exercise of the vote abroad for the 2006 presidential

elections constructed in chapter 5 revealed similar findings. Migration scholars, however, seem to differ on the effects of migrants' direct political participation on the practice of democracy. Bakker and Smith seem to summarise this debate well in regard to Mexico's transition to democracy. They termed these frameworks: an 'emergent transnational elite' approach and a 'transnational democracy' perspective (Bakker and Smith 2003). Whereas the former refers to an emerging transnational political class, who operate through the traditional avenues of political power distribution and who are uninterested in transforming the unequal power structures and social hierarchies in their countries or communities of origin, the latter envisages an emerging cross-border community that want to transmit the political and economic opportunities of developed countries – that is, more democracy and jobs – to their home countries. Itzigsohn, as representative of the first approach, affirms that 'transnational politics reflects the social mobility of certain groups of immigrants abroad, creating new elites' (Itzigsohn 2000, p.1146). But he goes on to argue that regardless of the elite members' intentions, the inclusion of new political actors constitutes a new form of democracy and political opening by itself. As I try to illustrate here, bi-national candidates in Zacatecan local elections demonstrate to what extent both approaches are consistent. Whereas Zacatecan bi-national candidates portray themselves as cross-border agents that want to promote more democracy and economic opportunities, they also often make use of traditional clientelist techniques. They are successful to a certain extent, nonetheless, at challenging established political elites in their communities of origin.

In section one I highlighted the general characteristics of the 2004 migrant candidates – their economic clout and improved social status – which can help us

understand the success of their political campaigns at attracting the imaginations and hopes of local populations, that having relied for several decades on the traditional political elite with poor results, were ready to look for solutions beyond state boundaries. In section two, we have seen how migrant candidates are supported, more often than not, by hometown associations and migrant clubs, which are able to place them according to their preferences among the different local political parties. Let us, then, analyse how migrants' attributes and characteristics play a key role during their political campaigns and during their term in office.

Migrants' attributes, as Bakker and Smith argue, showing the case of the candidacy of Andres Bermudez in the town of Jerez, played a key role in his political campaigns in 2001 and 2004 in relation to those of home candidates (Bakker and Smith 2003; Smith and Bakker 2005). Bi-national candidates, in contrast to 'home' candidates do not belong to a traditional class and it is particularly this fact that is exploited the most in their campaigns (Smith and Bakker 2005). In contrast to the traditional political class, the general public in migration-stricken communities sees migrant candidates as their equals, people that experienced poverty, which forced them to emigrate in the first place. Migrant candidates in the 2004 Zacatecan elections were home-grown Zacatecans that emigrated in the 1970's taking advantage of better job opportunities abroad, which allowed them to enjoy an affluent economic situation that translated itself into a higher social status in their communities of origin. For instance, Andres Bermudez often mentioned in several interviews that he entered the US illegally in 1974 and had made a fortune selling tree and vegetable seedlings to the US Forestry Service and Wal-Mart. Martin Carvajal continuously narrated how he had crossed the border illegally, but was now

a naturalised American citizen and an entrepreneur with a furniture store in Texas (fieldwork interviews, Zacatecas 2006).

It was, thus, these particular skills gained during their time living and working abroad that helped them become successful businessmen and entrepreneurs in the US that were exploited by migrant candidates during their campaigns. Bermudez' campaign slogan in 2001 was very clear: "If I made it 'there', with your vote I will confirm it here" ('*Si alla lo logre, aqui, con tu voto, lo confirmare*') (Cano 2001). Bermudez also claimed in his first campaign for the municipal presidency of Jerez that he was not part of the upper social stratus in Mexico. Citing his own words: 'I am a peasant like you, I do not know how to talk in public, but here I am trying to do the politician as I want to help my people' (Cano 2001). By differentiating from the traditional political elites, bi-national candidates portray themselves as corruption-free and benefactors with alternative sources of financial resources (Smith and Bakker 2005). During his subsequent campaign for the municipal presidency of Jerez in 2004, Bermudez also mentioned in a media interview: 'I will personally invest \$1 million in two canneries that will create 600 jobs if I win...you have my word on that' (Los Angeles Times 2004). Carvajal's political platform included campaigning with a Washington-based NGO's to obtain matching funds to train migrant workers, create new investment opportunities in Apulco and promote open markets to trade local products such as honey (Corchado 2004). Migrant candidates appeared in the 2004 local elections as both the embodiment of democratic ideals – free of corruption and genuinely interested in local development– and of economic integration – promoters of foreign investment and free trade.

Migrants' campaigns not only differed in their content, but also in the form they were carried out. Migrants' campaigns seem to prove more effective than home-based candidates' for four main reasons. Firstly, in the first Zacatecan local elections in which the 'Migrant Law' was implemented, it was mainly non-PRI political parties that supported migrant candidacies. In the towns of Jerez and Apulco, where migrant candidates were victorious, the 2004 elections marked a political transition with a first non-PRI municipal government. As we have seen, Andres Bermudez ran twice for the municipal presidency of Jerez, the first time with the centre-left PRD and in 2004 with the PAN and both times he won the elections. The candidacy of Martin Carvajal in Apulco was supported by an alliance between the PRD, the PAN and Convergence for Democracy (fieldwork interviews, Zacatecas, 2006). Thus, it is non-PRI political parties that seem to benefit the most from migrants' political inclusion.

Secondly, their campaigns are transnational, that is to say, campaigning takes place physically in different locations both sides of the border where the community is concentrated or/and make use of the Internet and other media published in multiple locations to keep the community informed. For instance, the main debate among candidates running for the municipal presidency of Jerez took place in California, where most of the constituents live. In addition, political platforms of candidates running for municipal presidents in Jerez and all events related to the campaigns and the elections appeared on an Internet portal created to serve as a virtual meeting point for Jerezianos abroad and at home⁴⁶. The Internet has served as a means of identity formation and participation in domestic politics for old diasporas and new migrant

⁴⁶ www.jerez.com.mx

groups (Koslowski 2004). New media technologies also allow Zacatecan migrants to be engaged in political developments at home, despite the most recent ban on Mexican candidates' political campaigning abroad. As Manuel de la Cruz argues, 'the national law that bans political campaigns abroad does not impact the activities of migrant organisations. The Zacatecan Civic Front can face the people and can raise awareness, even through video-conferencing with candidates in Mexico' (fieldwork interview, Zacatecas, 2006). Migrants' hometown clubs in the US, as we have seen, also support migrant candidates politically and at times financially from abroad. That is the case of the Federation of Migrant Clubs of Fort Worth, Texas, which campaigned among its members in this American state for Martin Carvajal to become municipal president of Apulco (fieldwork interviews, Zacatecas, 2006).

Thirdly, foreign investment and collective remittances play a significant role in bi-national campaigns, both symbolically (in the form of promises) and with tangible investments. As the PRI migrant deputy mentioned '... in these towns, there is not enough money. That is why '3x1' investment is so important in the (political) campaigns. Here nobody is going to vote for the old man that has never done anything for the town. They will vote for someone young that is able to attract the money from abroad, someone that will ultimately have to keep going there and coming back' (fieldwork interviews, 2006). Whereas Andres Bermudez promised to ensure free bus rides for students and open a campus of the University of Zacatecas in Jerez, Martin Carvajal promised to start an apiculture project with foreign investment in Apulco (fieldwork interviews, Zacatecas, 2006). It is clear, however, that investment promises and development projects used as a strategy to win more votes falls into a new form of vote buying developing across borders. Bermudez, for

instance, in addition to his promises for new jobs being created in Zacatecas, gained significant support because of his role as a potential large-scale employer in the United States. During his early campaign, he claimed that he was able to provide up to 300 temporary visas to fellow Jerezianos (Mena 2001).

Fourthly, the Americanization theme is another one of the political positions that was introduced by bi-national candidates in their campaigns, albeit to a lesser extent (see also Smith and Bakker 2008). It has been mentioned that given Mexico's historically antagonistic relationship with the United States, bi-national candidates' attempt to 'Americanise' their local communities seems an especially risky campaign proposal. Bermudez used to mention in his 2001 campaign: 'we should have a government with American ideas, not Mexican' (fieldwork interview, 2006). However, the success of the Americanization theme perhaps arises from the characteristics of migrant-sending communities, where half of their residents live in the US and might also have strong historic ties with that country.

The political success of bi-nationals in comparison with 'home' candidates signals how they have a clear impact on the realignment of power in their migrant-sending communities. The image migrants present together with the transnational nature of their campaigns are able to challenge the traditional political elite, albeit to a limited extent. In the 2001 local elections, when asked what was the difference between her campaign and Bermudez', the PRI candidate Alma Avila responded that 'it was the money' illustrating the role that '*migradollars*' (migrants' finances) play in local politics. She elaborated further in another interview saying: 'I do not oppose the fact that emigrants come here to participate, what I do not like is the way in which they

are campaigning' (Cano 2001), referring to the clientelist practices that had taken place. It is not only the role of migrants' economic leverage, but also the political context with a weakened PRI in which this phenomenon has developed.

From a theoretical perspective, evidence presented above suggests that bi-national candidates have been successful at presenting themselves as new democratic agents operating across borders, at the same time as making use of traditional vote buying techniques, suggesting the limitations of strictly applying an elitist interpretation or a transnational democracy perspective, as Smith and Bakker also indicate (2003). In contrast, the nature of migrants' campaigns, as well as their democratizing practices and plans create a more complex outcome, which as a result, it is difficult to place them at either extreme of the democratisation range. The election of bi-national mayors in the 2004 Zacatecan elections proves a potential tendency that could spread to other migrant-sending regions. However, this analysis would be incomplete without exploring what are the main implications of having 'bi-nationals' occupying public positions at home, whether serving as public representatives or as migrant legislators.

7.4. Walls falling – constituencies at home or abroad?

"I'll be the mayor for constituents in two countries' Martin Carvajal affirmed when his victory as municipal president of the town of Apulco was announced (Corchado 2004). Months later, Bermudez held his swearing-in ceremony at a bullfighting ring decorated with US and Mexican flags – while the outgoing mayor and City Council were waiting for him at an auditorium (Rodriguez 2005). These events illustrate a

paradox in the Zacatecan formula, that is, once migrants are elected for office in their home communities, who are they meant to serve? Is it their constituencies at home, or also those abroad? The fact that the right to eligibility for public positions is not matched by a vote abroad mechanism complicates the panorama. The same can be said about the impossibility to vote for migrant representatives in the state legislature, as it is political parties' task to include migrant candidates in their *plurinominal* lists. I illustrate this debate by discussing both issues separately.

Bi-nationals that now hold public office positions in Zacatecas were elected by their constituencies at home, as it is not yet possible to cast votes from abroad. However, as I have mentioned above, external citizens and migrant organisations played a key role in their political campaigns by granting financial support and encouraging relatives and friends at home to vote for them. Also, in a limited number of cases, external citizens returned home to cast their votes. Yet, bi-national mayors of the towns of Jerez and Apulco seem to play both roles as representatives of their constituents at home and abroad – external citizens in the two cases exceed those that have remained. Bermudez and Carvajal often visited their '*paisanos*' abroad as counting on a US citizenship allowed them free movement between the two countries.

However, they are not only promoters of political integration, but also economic unification, as they seem to engage both constituencies in bi-national business projects. Taking a closer look at the apiculture project in Apulco, for instance, foreign and national investment converge with governmental funds from the federal, state and municipal levels to benefit both Zacatecan investors abroad and

approximately sixty families at home (Gonzalez 2005). Martin Carvajal mentioned how in just three months after being elected, he was invited by the newly elected governor Amalia Garcia to visit the Zacatecan community in Dallas, Texas where the majority of '*Apulqueños*' live. He explained how it was an imperative to meet regularly with the members of the Federation based in Fort Worth to discuss projects and social development programmes. 'Economic development in Apulco can only be possible with partnerships between *Apulqueños* here and our community and entrepreneurs there [...] even with the support of US institutions', he affirmed. 'For instance, one of the main projects carried out during my time as municipal president is the '*Abeja de Oro*' project, an apicultural company, which was the result of the support of several actors: the Mexican federal, state and municipal government, the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Fort Worth, Texas, and the Inter-American foundation, an independent American charity that donated an investment administrated by a Mexican NGO based in Mexico city, *Migracion y Desarrollo AC*' (fieldwork interview, 2006). In the same way, Bermudez through his international business contacts has been able to aid Jerezian peasants to sell their products (mainly chilli) to entrepreneurs in California, a project that, according to him, has economically benefited dozens of families in Jerez (fieldwork interviews, Zacatecas, 2006).

On the other hand, nonetheless, it is claimed that bi-national candidates are not really aware of the problems that experience their local communities after having resided most of their adult life abroad, as well as being unfamiliar with new political, economic and social contexts. For instance, the PRD migrant deputy Manuel de la Cruz said in an interview: 'I have spent 34 years in the US and have been a PRD

militant for a long time... I forgot a bit about what the system was like (in Mexico) in comparison with the US. Here, very personal interests are handled and the people's issues are left out' (fieldwork interview, 2006). This debate is the cause of clashes between local populations and bi-national leaders and we would expect it to exacerbate as more migrants return to Mexico to hold public office positions. In the first interview with Andres Bermudez when he was still municipal president of Jerez, he mentioned how many people opposed him and wanted him to give up his municipal presidency. He continuously referred to the fact that he was a 'migrant' and wanted to do things very differently (fieldwork interview, Zacatecas, 2006). Andres Bermudez was accused in various occasions of corruption, nepotism and transgressing laws (Reynoso 2006). In particular, he was accused of faking official documents from a federal governmental department (SEDESOL) in order to build a campus of the University of Zacatecas in the Sports Unit located in Jerez. This issue also affected the Federation of Zacatecans in California that had agreed to finance the building work.

The responsibility of migrant legislators to oversee the interests of migrants and their families is not as controversial as they are nominated to represent precisely those Zacatecans abroad and their relatives. As the 'bi-national' legislator for the PRI, Roman Cabral mentioned in a personal interview: 'we are the voice of Zacatecans in the US and our job is to make that voice heard in the [Zacatecan] congress and try to convince the other deputies to create better laws for migrants and their families' (fieldwork interview, 2006). Manuel de la Cruz, PRD 'bi-national' deputy, stated that 'what brought me back to Zacatecas was not the money or the power, but instead the interest in protecting my own people abroad, and protect their families, all of

these to benefit our people and our communities in Zacatecas and abroad' (fieldwork interview, 2006). However, the fact that migrant legislators are not elected through competitive elections is a major setback. As we have seen, the candidates for the two 'bi-national' legislative seats, that each political party has to include in its '*plurinominal*' list, is jointly agreed with Zacatecan hometown associations and migrant clubs. Migrants' representation in the local congress combined with the possibility for external citizens to cast a vote from abroad would resemble more advanced mechanisms for migrants political participation such as the cases of Colombia and Italy.

The two migrant legislators appointed for the first time in 2004 aimed at serving migrants' and migrants' families interests by promoting a series of initiatives in both countries. In Mexico, most migrants' legislative work concentrated on regulating pending payments to Zacatecan ex-braceros and their relatives; the creation of fiscal incentives to promote migrants' investment in productive projects at home; promote resources assigned to 3 for 1 projects; facilitate migrant political participation at home (absentee voting, granting voting ID's abroad, etc.); observance of migrants' human rights abroad and at home, amongst other migration issues. In the US, most initiatives focused on requesting the Mexican federal executive to be more involved in judicial processes against crimes perpetrated against Zacatecan migrants crossing the border (i.e. vigilante activities and murders on the Mexico-US frontier); supporting a veto against a anti-migrant legal proposal in California; supporting a comprehensive immigration reform in the US; campaigning for a labour migration agreement within the NAFTA and establishing legal regulations that would facilitate and cut the costs of remittances' transfers. A closer analysis of all the legal

initiatives, points of agreement, resolutions ('exhortativas') and declarations authored by the migrant legislator Manuel de la Cruz during his participation in the 58th legislature of Zacatecas is included in Annex 6. As we can see, by gaining direct access to foreign policy making, migrant representatives directly influence their state's and country's position on US domestic issues that affect Mexican communities abroad. What is relevant in this analysis is that those activities carried out from an official public office position, nonetheless, ultimately favour more economic integration and political coordination between the two countries.

It is not only paradoxical that bi-nationals (and dual nationals) may hold an elective or other public office in two countries, but considering the number of fellow Zacatecans abroad it becomes more controversial who are they meant to represent and serve when they get appointed for leadership positions at home? Evidence suggests, however, bi-nationals in public positions facilitate the creation of new circuits of capital and human resources, which provide the context in which migrants and residents construct and maintain new transnational political, social and cultural interconnections.

7.5. Conclusion

International migration creates a mismatch between territory and citizenship, which initiatives like the 'Migrant Law' in Zacatecas attempt to overcome by facilitating external citizens to participate in the political life of their state of origin, despite the fact that they might reside in another country or have acquired a second citizenship. Migrants' right to eligibility in the Zacatecan transnational context eliminates a

necessary territorial tie among citizens, which contradicts with liberal theories of democracy. As Spiro explains political theory until recently presumed that if a government is largely a territorial enterprise 'then the absent citizen will not have cause either to be protected from, or participate in, the home government' (Spiro 15 March 2006, p. 102).

Novel initiatives that aim, however, at extending political rights to external citizens abroad present two main problems. The first question is what sort of rights can be assigned to their emigrants without interfering with the host state's territorial sovereignty. Many countries now accept dual nationality and the right to vote for local elections from abroad. In addition, as our case study illustrates there exist recent innovative laws that also guarantee migrants' right to eligibility in their countries of origin or local communities. The second question, which has been the subject of our study, is to what extent migrants' political participation – by being able to occupy public positions and having legislative representation in their regions of origin – affects the political scenario at home. Looking at the case of Zacatecas, I have argued that this has as a result the transformation of political communities, not only due to the inclusion of new political actors (migrant organisations and migrant candidates), but also challenging old social hierarchies and realigning power structures at home, as well as lifting borders between constituencies at home and abroad. The findings in this study then support Baubock's theory of transnational citizenship, which recognises migrants' overlapping political affiliations which result in linkages between states (Baubock February 2002). Legal and policy developments like the one presented in this study only prove how political integration seems to

accompany increased economic interconnectedness between Mexico and the United States.

Scholars sceptical of Mexican transnational politics tend to cite survey data that is systematically biased against the undocumented and recent arrivals, who, in their view, are probably most likely to maintain links with Mexico (Huntington 2004). This study of Zacatecan transnational politics has shown that the opposite is actually the case. Bi-nationals that have been elected mayors and have been nominated migrant legislators are in most cases US citizens or permanent residents, who are either successful businessmen or migrant leaders. As Guarnizo asserts migrants' political participation is positively correlated with length of residence in the US because long-term residents are more likely to enjoy the legal status and level of economic well being that facilitates cross border travel and political activities (see also Itzigsohn 2000; Guarnizo 2001; Guarnizo, Portes et al. May 2003). We should also bear in mind that the current legal debate in the US could allow millions of Mexicans a path to acquire US citizenship, which as a result would facilitate more Zacatecans abroad to engage in local politics if they so wish.

However, as we have seen, the institutionalised intervention of immigrants in local politics enters into conflict with democratic principles. Firstly, it does not regulate the selection of candidates abroad as it cannot enact any regulation that would have an impact beyond the national and state borders. Migrant organisations are the main vehicles by which potential bi-national candidates are selected, as political parties' offices abroad do not have significant levels of involvement. Graham describes a similar pattern in the case of Dominican migrants (2001). It is questionable, however,

to what extent migrant organisations represent the migrant population and their workings are transparent and democratic. Secondly, bi-national campaigns fall into past corporativist and clientelist practices, although reinvented in a transnational form. A third dimension is what constituencies they tend to serve –the people who live in the municipalities or those that have emigrated. That is not the case with migrant legislators whose responsibilities are clearly to represent emigrants and their families as well as those that had immigrated to Zacatecas. However, it represents an issue in migrant-sending communities that might have more than half of their populations in the US. Nonetheless, as long as there is a continuous flow of emigrants or migrants' loyalty persists, we would expect transnational economic and political structures to remain. 'Bi-national' legislators and politicians are in the case of Zacatecas a driving force of political and economic integration between both countries.

In the next chapter, we will be able to compare the case of the 'Migrant Law' in Zacatecas with the case of Michoacán showing what are the main determinants of the formula for emigrant political participation adopted by local legislatures in Mexico and whether the findings presented in this case study can be extended to other regions in Mexico.

Chapter 8

8. Migrant political participation in Michoacán

In chapter 6, we have seen that the events that led to the implementation of the ‘Migrant Law’ in the state of Zacatecas suggested that the interaction of different political factors – party politics, the rebirth of civil society and growing empowerment of migrants’ hometown associations – are necessary ingredients to create legal recognition of migrants’ political rights. Chapter 7 has explored the central features of the transnationalisation of local politics in Zacatecas where the ‘migrant’ and migrant organisations have a place at the centre stage. Would that, then, imply that in a state in which similar dynamics take place, migrants’ political rights could be legally recognised? Would it be right to expect the transnationalisation of political dynamics at the local level in other Mexican migrant sending states? Also, what does determine the formula for migrant political participation?

This chapter proposes to account for the adoption of migrants’ political rights in the Mexican migrant sending state of Michoacán, the second Mexican state where a law that explicitly grants migrants’ political rights at the state level has been implemented in February 2007. This Law allowed Michoacano migrants to be able to cast a vote for governorship elections, for the first time, in November 2007. I put to the test the argument that the interaction of a centre-left PRD government with a strong presence in the local congress and politically active migrant organisations in a context of a democratic transition and increasing economic integration between the

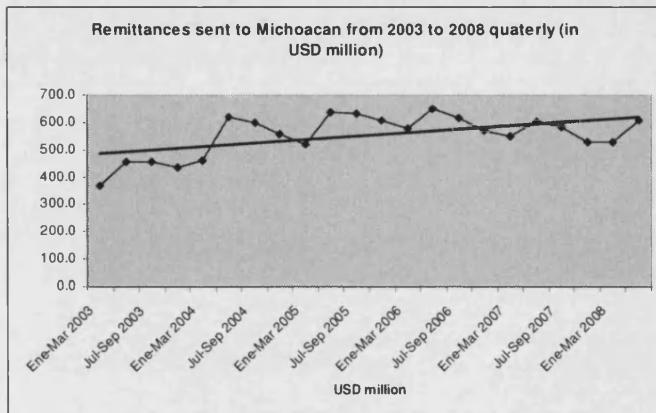
US and Mexico would guarantee the implementation of a migrants' political rights bill at the state level. This chapter is divided into three parts. First, I analyse the factors that triggered the approval of the local vote abroad in Michoacán and compare them to the case of Zacatecas. Here, I argue that the case of Michoacán corroborates the argument that a coalition between a centre-left party and migrant lobby groups in the US triggers the approval of a migrants' political rights bill at the sub-national level in Mexico. Then, I discuss why the Michoacano 'vote abroad' bill differs from the "Migrant Law" implemented in Zacatecas. I argue, however, that despite those differences, the Michoacano formula has also a strong effect on the local political order, extending party competition beyond the country's borders and allowing the inclusion of new transnational political actors such as migrants and migrants groups. Finally, I discuss whether we can forecast the approval of similar migrants' political rights bill in other migrant sending states in Mexico.

Although this chapter undertakes a comparative approach, the analysis is based on information compiled during fieldwork visits in Michoacán and Zacatecas in 2006 and 2007, consultation of local legislative archives and media sources over a period of three years. In Michoacán, a number of in-depth interviews were carried out with Michoacano migrant activists and legislators involved in the passage of the local vote abroad bill and telephone communication was established with Michoacano migrant leaders based in the US and personal interviews carried out in Chicago in April 2008. Unstructured interviews were also carried out during the implementation phase of the vote abroad mechanism with members of the vote abroad commission, part of the Michoacán's Electoral Institute.

8.1. Migrant politics and the emergence of party politics in Michoacán

Michoacans like Zacatecans have been engaged in migratory movements to the US for over 100 years. Located in west-central Mexico, Michoacán is one of the main Mexican migrant sending states with an estimated 1.06 million Michoacans living in the US by 2003, representing 11 percent of the total state's population ((CONAPO) 2007). Michoacano migrants mainly reside in the US states of California, Texas, Illinois, Indiana, Arizona, Nebraska, Nevada, Washington and Alaska. The effects of emigration in this Mexican state are clearly visible – it is, for instance, the only Mexican state that reported a negative annual population growth between 2000 and 2005 (Consejo Estatal de Poblacion (COESPO) 2007). The migration phenomenon in Michoacán has led to the reduction of the work force, as well as the desertification of rural communities and concentration of Michoacans in urban centres (Michoacan 11 July 2007). Michoacán, however, is still the biggest receiver of remittances in Mexico – in 2007, it received 2.26 billion dollars, which represented more than 9 percent of total remittances received (Banco de Mexico 2008). Last reports from the Mexican central bank, nonetheless, show that remittances sent to Michoacán are starting to stagnate, which could be attributed to a shift in the state's migration dynamics and weakened US economy (see Figure 8.1. below).

Figure 8.1 Individual remittances sent to Michoacán (2003-2008)



Source: Bank of Mexico, 2008.

The question here is how the state of Michoacán came to reconcile its position as a migrant sending state with its democratic and electoral processes opening the doors to Michoacano émigrés to participate in the local political sphere. In particular, what were the factors that secured the approval of migrants' political rights bill at the local level? Also, why does this kind of emigrant political participation differ from the Zacatecan "Migrant Law"? In this section, I argue that the proposal to take into account those Michoacano citizens residing abroad in political processes at home arose as the result of gradual cross-country political interaction linking Michoacano migrant groups in the US and opposition parties in Michoacán. As in the case of Zacatecas the trigger that led to the inclusion of migrants in the political map, I would argue, was the political transition and the (re)emergence of party politics in the state combined with economic changes in the region influenced by international migration. I will then, in turn, examine how Michoacano migrant groups have progressively emerged as transnational political actors and how opposition parties have benefited from migrants' increasing political leverage, attempting to attract not only collective remittances, but also their votes.

8.1.1. The political role of Michoacano migrant organisations

A number of scholars have pointed out the significant civic and political involvement of Michoacano hometown associations in their communities of origin. Most of the available migrants' collective action literature, however, focuses on the impact of these groups in fostering development at home and advocating migrants' rights in the US (Rivera-Salgado, Bada et al. 2005). From an anthropological perspective, extensive ethnographic work has been undertaken in migrant sending regions such as Gomez Farias, Jaripo, Chamitlan, Tzintzuntzan and the Tarascan zone that focus on the effects of the international migration phenomenon on community and family dynamics (Dinerman 1978; Fonseca 1984; López 1986; Massey 1991; Kemper 1995). These studies, however, fall short to explain migrants' motivations to be involved in community political affairs. Fitzgerald, on the other hand, has carried out the first ethnographic study published in the year 2000 that looks into migrants' transnational identity formations and how this phenomenon shapes their relationship with their communities of origin. He shows how Michoacano migrants from the municipalities of Sahuayo and Jiquilpan and the village of El Granjenal claim citizenship in their places of origin through public displays and using moral justifications (Fitzgerald 2000). From a political science perspective, however, this study attempts to complement the existing gap in the literature by offering a systematic study that helps explain what has been the role of Michoacano hometown associations and migrant groups in the legal recognition of their political rights at home and to what extent they have been responsible for the approval of this bill *vis a vis* local political actors. That is to say, how they have evolved from being cross-

border charity organisations to becoming transnational lobby groups with enough political leverage to assert their claims and how, on the other hand, domestic political actors have tried to shape migrants' political interests. The insertion of the Michoacano migrant in the public imagination has not only been the result of their tangible contributions to their communities of origin, but also, as in the case of Zacatecas, a consequence of media attention in both countries – an expanding Spanish-language media in the US run by Michoacano migrants, as well as local newspapers' increasing interest in migration issues. For instance, the local newspaper '*La Voz de Michoacán*' has a supplement on migrant affairs entitled '*Al Otro Lado, La Voz de los Migrantes*' (On the Other Side, the Voice of the Migrants). '*La Diligencia Michoacana*' is a weekly newspaper that is distributed simultaneously in Michoacán and in various US cities.

According to figures provided by the Institute of Mexicans Abroad, Michoacano migrants currently have over 200 hometown associations distributed across 13 American states. Migrants from this state have a long history of involvement in community organisations, which in many respects resembles the case of the Mexican state of Zacatecas. In accordance with fieldwork interviews, the first Michoacano hometown association was created in the 1960's, whose main purpose at that time was to function as a meeting point for social and sports events. Similarly, various migrant clubs were created by Michoacano migrants from different communities of origin and living in different locations. All these migrant clubs grouped together for the first time in 1997 to form the 'Federation of Michoacano Clubs in Illinois' (FEDECMI), Chicago. By the beginning of this century, Michoacans in the US had already four federations; two in Illinois and two in California. In 2007, the number of

federations almost tripled. There are now eleven Michoacán federations: four federations in California that are grouped together under the ‘Confederation of Organisations in California and Migrant Clubs in Michoacán’, two federations in Chicago and four federations in US states with less or more recently-arrived Michoacano migrants such as Texas, Nevada, Washington, Indiana and Alaska (see Table 8.1 below) (Summer 2007). We should bear in mind, however, that the multiplying number of federations should not be translated into growing cohesion amongst the Michoacano population in the US, but quite the opposite. Fieldwork interviews revealed that sometimes new federations emerged out of fractures of already existing ones. This tendency does show, nonetheless, the organisational character of the Michoacano community in the US.

Table 8.1 Federations of Michoacano Migrant Clubs in the US

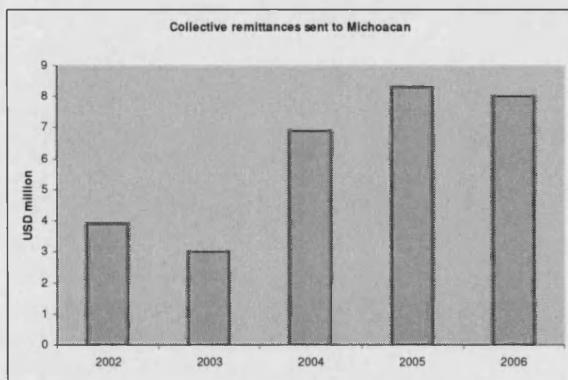
US state	Federations	Number of Michocano Hometown Associations
Chicago	‘Federation of Michocano Clubs in Illinois’	37 clubs
	‘Association of Michocano Migrants’ Clubs in Illinois’	19 clubs
California	‘Association of Michoacano clubs in California’	15 clubs
	‘Californian Federation of Michoacans <i>‘Lazaro Cardenas del Rio’</i> ’	13 clubs
	‘Federation of Michocans from the Orange County and Santa Ana, California’	3 clubs
	‘Organisations of Agricultural Workers’	N/A
Texas	‘Federation of Michoacans in Texas’	13 clubs
Nevada	‘Federation of United Michoacans in	21 clubs

	Nevada'	
Washington	'Association of United Michoacans in Washington'	N/A
Indiana		
Alaska	'Federation of United Michoacans in Alaska'	7 clubs

Own elaboration. Source: Institute of Michoacans Abroad (2007), Institute of Mexicans Abroad (2006).

As Michoacano migrant clubs reach maturity in the level of their organisation, this has had an impact on the increase and resonance of their activities in the US, as well as in Mexico. Focusing on the South side of the border, Michoacano organisations like migrant groups from other Mexican states have been increasingly involved in development projects in their communities of origin. If we measure collective remittances, that is, donations sent by hometown associations to support public works in their home communities, in terms of their participation in the governmental programme 'Citizen initiative 3X1', we observe that the programme's budget for the state of Michoacán has doubled in only four years – from 4 million dollars in 2002 to 8 million dollars destined for development projects in 2006 – making a total of almost 30 million dollars spent on 538 projects during this time (see Figure 8.2 below).

Figure 8.2 Collective remittances sent to Michoacán (2002-2006)



Own elaboration. Source: Eneida Reynoso Acosta, Instituto Michoacano de los Migrantes en el Extranjero, 2007

In addition, as the number of hometown associations grows, so does the number of communities that benefit from donations sent by those community members living abroad. Out of 113 municipalities that exist within Michoacán's territory, 30 participated in the '3X1' programme in 2002 and more than 72 did so in 2006. According to Eneida Reynoso Acosta from the Institute of Michoacans Abroad, '20 percent of Michoacán's population has benefited from the '3X1' programme covering around 80 percent of all municipalities' (Summer 2007). '3X1' projects in Michoacán are being increasingly implemented in smaller, more vulnerable communities less connected to urban centres, rather than town centres or '*cabeceras municipales*' (heads of municipalities) (Reynoso Acosta, Summer 2007). We should bear in mind that most communities that experience high emigration in Michoacán are mainly rural with a population of less than 20,000 inhabitants (Verduzco 1998).

In contrast to the controversial debate on individual migrants' remittances and their impact on development, collective remittances sent by hometown groups and supported by matching funds from the different levels of government are normally perceived as one of the most successful ways to foster the implementation of infrastructure and productive projects in stricken communities. Here, the debate turns to whether migrant groups should carry out activities that are mainly responsibilities of the state. In fact, those collective remittances sometimes exceed the local governments' budget allocated for public works in small and remote communities, as we have also seen in the case of Zacatecas (fieldwork interviews, SEDESOL, 2007; fieldwork interviews, Michocano hometown associations, 2007 and 2008). As Rivera-Salgado and his associates carefully formulate: '[...] it can not be denied that

this program has empowered migrant communities, helping them to build more and better social capital networks as well as to restore the shattered social fabric of many communities of origin' (2005, p. 15). Ethnographic studies in Michoacán's communities – such as Gomez Farias by Gustavo Lopez and Copandaro by Luis Rianda – have indeed described that communities that experience intense migration and receive donations by groups of residents abroad look different. In a study carried out by Gustavo Verduzco and Kurt Unger using statistical techniques they found out that in 1998 of all the municipalities in Michoacán with the best housing conditions (56 municipalities), 41 percent experienced intense migration conditions (Verduzco 1998). A more recent study reveals that remittances have a positive impact in recipient communities, which tend to have better public infrastructure such as drain access (Adida and Girod 2006).

Through their participation in '3X1' programmes, migrant groups, have not only formalised alliances with their communities of origin and contributed to a sense of belonging to migrants, but have also reinvented migrants-state relationship to a degree that was previously unthinkable. As Levitt and Landolt have noted, helping finance local development projects represent effective mechanisms to uphold high status and political influence in the communities of origin (Levitt 4 July 2003; Landolt 2001). Rivera-Salgado and his associates, on the other hand, show how Michoacano migrant groups are, sometimes, able to implement projects that do not fall directly into municipal responsibilities such as rodeo rings and churches, convincing state and federal governments to fund them through the '3X1' programme. In particular, as I have already argued elsewhere, the negotiation of '3X1' projects with all the different levels of government – federal, state and

municipal – have given these groups a place for political expression. A platform they utilise for making demands on both the town political elite and the national government on a whole range of issues from project ownership, decision-making and allocation of funds to issues such as transparency and more democratic standards. At the municipal level Michoacano hometown associations seem even more assertive in exercising their political demands.

On the other hand, it is not only a one way relationship. Local governments also make direct investments in their migrant communities, to the extent that privileged relations are compromised by the fact that they might rely on the state government as a source of funding. For instance, in 2004 the Federation of Illinois received a donation to buy a building in the neighbourhood of Pilsen in Chicago. This building would offer a space to Michoacano hometown associations and other Michoacano organisations, as well as counting with a representative of the state' General Coordinating Office for Michoacano Migrant Attention to provide services to the Michoacano community (fieldwork interviews, 2006; fieldwork interviews, Chicago, April 2008).

It follows, then, that migrant organisations' involvement in activities that were until recently carried mainly by governments seems not only to portray migrants as benefactors, but also and most significantly to place them in the political sphere as community leaders, altering in this way traditional hierarchies at the municipal level. A few community studies have pointed out how in migrant sending towns, political decisions are often taken on both sides of the Mexico-US border. Fitzgerald, for instance, describes this as 'transnational migrant collective action'. In his own words:

‘the political structure of El Granjenal has been transplanted 1500 miles to a ‘satellite community’ in Santa Ana that is bigger than the community of origin’ (Fitzgerald 2000, p. 12). He shows how the main public positions in this community are held by long-term migrants that have houses in Santa Ana, California and El Granjenal, Michoacán, and travel back and forth to reach their constituency on both sides of the border. Migrant participation in this community is not only political, but also economic as the committee in charge of public works counts with a fund-raising committee based in Santa Ana (Fitzgerald 2000). This example illustrates how economic involvement seems to lead to political participation.

8.1.2. Migrant political influence and the change of government in Michoacán

I would argue that these events, however, have been part of the democratization and economic liberalisation processes that have shaken the country and the state of Michoacán in the last two decades. Michoacán experienced an alternation of government control, a year later than at the federal level, having a different political party in power after more than seven decades. Michoacán, nonetheless, is the birthplace of the centre-left PRD party and ‘*Cardenismo*’ (Bruhn 1995; Bruhn 1999). The PRD had won half of the contested state legislatures and 52 municipal presidencies in 1989, the same year that the party was founded. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano, a former PRI governor of Michoacán and son of the prominent PRI Mexican president in the 1930’s Lazaro Cárdenas, was the founder of the PRD party and the first PRD presidential candidate. His son, Lazaro Cárdenas Batel, became the first PRD governor elected in Michoacán in 2001.

The cases of Michoacán and Zacatecas show that participation of migrant groups in the economic and political development of their communities of origin, thus, seem to coincide with the opening up of political spaces for previously excluded social groups. Mexican migrants present a working class challenge to the traditional political class. Those migrant activists that have taken the lead in the voting rights movement are frequently professionals or self-made businessmen in the US, but with a working class or agricultural background before they left Mexico. Migrants, in that respect, together with indigenous groups, young people, etc., are part of wider prospects for democratization from social movements.

As migrants' significance grew both in economic and political terms, local political actors, in particular those from the opposition, saw in them the opportunity to win important allies. It was not a coincidence that the first opposition government of Lazaro Cardenas Batel had resorted to migrant support just as his father Cuauhtémoc Cardenas Solórzano had done during his various presidential campaigns in 1988, 1994 and 2000 (fieldwork interviews, 2006; fieldwork interviews, Chicago, 2008). During his political campaign for the governorship of the state of Michoacán, Cardenas Batel assured Michoacano migrant leaders in the US that they would have a voice in Michoacán's political affairs if he was victorious. During his several visits to the US he reiterated that he would promote a legal initiative to allow Michoacán migrants to vote and be voted (fieldwork interviews, 2006). Cardenas Batel was a leading figure in Mexican politics with a proven commitment to migrants' political rights – being the first one to send an initiative to allow Mexican migrants to vote for presidential elections from abroad when he served as federal deputy representing the state of Michoacán in 1998 (see chapter 4).

Even before the PRD party won the governorship of the state of Michoacán, the PRI government had already started efforts to reach the Michoacano migrant community in the US. Government initiatives dealing with migrant issues under a PRD government, nonetheless, were unprecedented not only in numbers, but also in scope. In 2002, the General Coordinating Office for Michoacano Migrant Attention (COGAMIM for its acronym in Spanish) was created and followed in 2006 by the Institute of Michoacano Migrants. This Institute provides both migrants and members of their families with a range of services (advice on remittances transfers, matching funds, health, education and legal and administrative services), as well as providing useful contacts of migrant organisations in the US. Several innovative services for migrants have also come into place. For instance, Michoacán has been the first state in Latin America to launch distance-learning education for its migrant population in the US. Since 2005, the Michoacano Institute for Job Training (ICATMI for its acronym in Spanish), which has two educative spaces in the US, in Chicago, Illinois and San Diego, California has trained around 700 Michoacano migrants and has provided them with studies that are valid in both countries (Michoacan 6 August 2007; Morelia 23 Julio 2007). Cárdenas Batel's administration has also made available government-sponsored migrant medical insurance under the programme '*Vete Sano, Regresa Sano*' ('Go Healthy, Come Back Healthy'), which provides medical services to Michoacano migrants when they return to or visit Michoacán (Michoacan 6 August 2007; Health 9 October 2003).

What the above suggests is that migrants' insertion in the economic and political development of their places of origin and the political transition evolving in the state

are not simple parallel events, but they reinforce one another and should be seen as two complementing aspects of democratization experienced at the sub-national level. That is to say, from the top-down involving an alternation of power and on the other hand, perhaps more efficient processes that take place from the ‘bottom-up’ similar to the actions carried out by previously marginalised social groups such as the migrant population.

Political involvement of migrant groups in home processes, like the case of Michoacán demonstrates, thus, a contradiction of the notion that migration provides a ‘safety valve’, that is, people discontent with the political and/or economic context of their countries of origin ‘vote with their feet’. In contrast, current technological advances in communication and travel provide migrants with a transnational platform to make their political claims. As we have seen, Michoacano migrants might have first silently tried to find economic solutions to economic problems, by emigrating and sending remittances home, as well as supporting public works, but after gaining enough public recognition they have been able to exert pressure on the local political leadership.

On the other hand, the rise of party politics in the state has strengthened migrant groups’ political leverage not only in comparison with traditional political elites, but in particular, in relation to the opposition. As we have seen, the centre-left PRD government succeeded at attracting more migrants’ political support, firstly by creating a network of services for them and their families and helping them organise themselves better in the US; secondly, by putting more investment into matching funds programmes for local public works and productive projects in more vulnerable

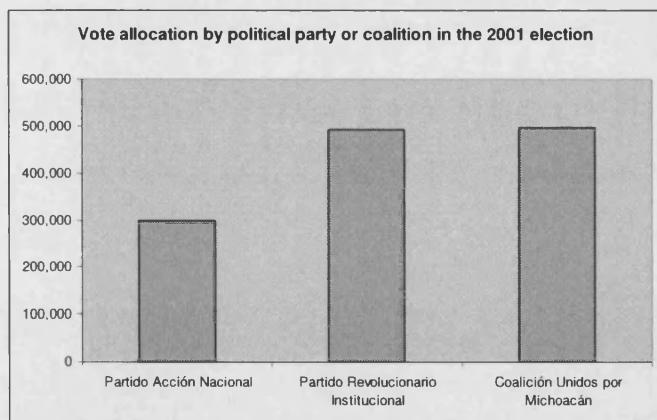
regions. We shall see, however, how the different Michoacano political actors have responded to migrants' demands, translating their symbolic support into the legal language by providing them with a comprehensive bill that included electoral participation and representation at the local congress. We now turn to this discussion.

8.2. The Vote Abroad Negotiations

In the previous section, I have argued that Michoacán's change of government and the economic participation of US-based Michoacano migrant groups in their communities of origin have opened up political spaces for the three key players present in the transnational debate on migrants' political rights. That is, opposition parties, US-based migrant groups, and public opinion based in both countries. I will now analyse how these actors reacted in the final step towards the institutionalisation of Michoacano migrants' political participation from abroad through the passage of the local absentee vote bill. Here, I corroborate my thesis that the trigger that institutionalises the political participation of migrants at the sub-national level is a cross-country coalition, between the most prominent US-based migrant lobby group – in the case of Michoacán that is the FREBIMICH, the political arm of Michoacano hometown associations – and the centre-left PRD party – both the government and legislative faction of the party. However, the main question is why the Michoacano migrants' political rights formula was different from the one advocated and implemented in Zacatecas. As I show, this was the result of the timing of the negotiations, the local legal framework and the main advocates of the bill in the Michoacano congress.

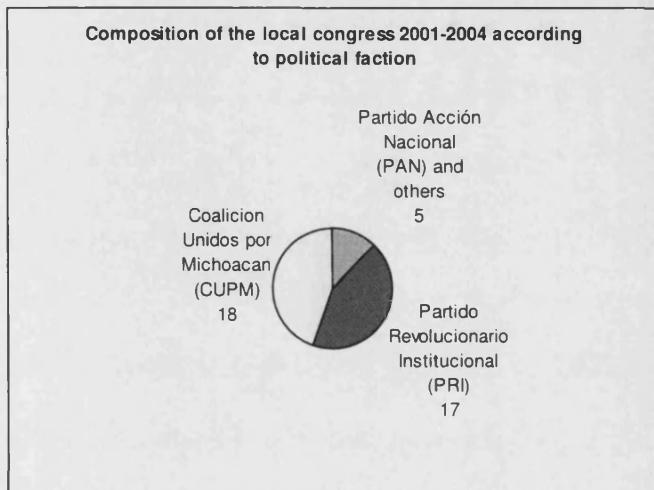
In order to understand what the dynamics were that led to the long-distance incorporation of the Michoacano migrant population into the state's political affairs, we should first bear in mind the government composition at the time legislative negotiations began. As I have already mentioned, the post-PRI era in Michoacán was burdened with a divided government and a fragmented legislature, where not a single party held an absolute majority. The centre-left PRD won the governorship in the year 2001 (for a period of 6 years according to the constitution) under an alliance known as '*Coalicion Unidos por Michoacán*' ('United for Michoacán' Coalition, CUPM for its acronym in Spanish), with two small parties, the Workers' Party (PT for its acronym in Spanish) and the Green Party (PVEM for its acronym in Spanish). The PRD, however, only held 18 seats in the Michoacano congress out of the total 40, and the PRI followed closely with 17 local deputies (see figures 8.3 and 8.4).

Figure 8.3 Results of the 2001 election in Michoacán to renew the local legislature



Source: Instituto Electoral de Michoacan, Resultados de los Procesos Electorales 2001-2005, Morelia, 2005

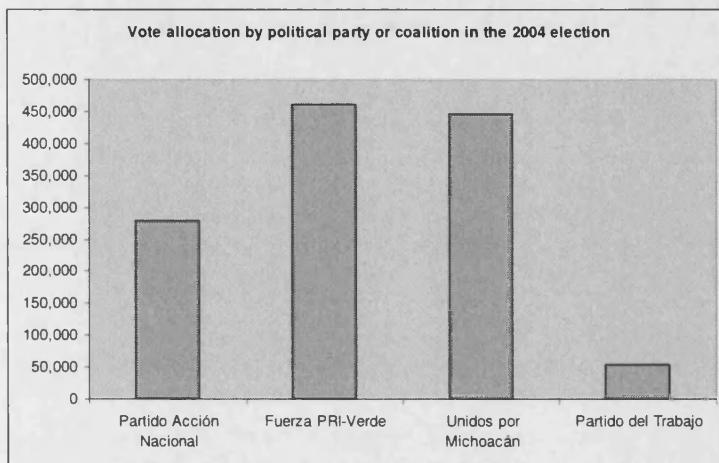
Figure 8.4 Composition of Michoacán's local legislature between 2001 and 2004



Source: Instituto Electoral de Michoacan, Memoria del Proceso Electoral 2001, Morelia, 2002

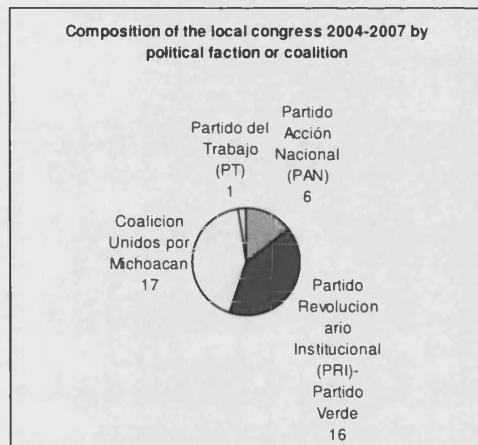
The local elections to renew the state's congress that took place in 2004 did not change the political scale. The PRD's '*Unidos por Michoacan*' (United for Michoacan) emerged with 17 deputies and the PRI-PVEM alliance with 16. The rest was distributed amongst the PAN and the PT (see figures 8.5 and 8.6 below). From the onset, the first non-PRI government in Michoacán knew that it faced a changing political context in which political power has become dispersed and divided. Political parties, however, as we have seen, seem to play roles according to cost-profit calculations taking into consideration migrants' voting preferences, economic contributions and public opinion, but during phases of party fragmentation they do not necessarily act in a unified and rational manner (see chapter 4). The negotiation of the vote abroad bill in the Michoacano congress shows that whilst aware they will not be able to obtain all their demands at the negotiating table, the main political parties still hope to 'make a dent in the government's armour'.

Figure 8.5 Results of the 2004 election in Michoacán to renew the local legislature



Source: Instituto Electoral de Michoacan, Resultados de los Procesos Electorales 2001-2005, Morelia, 2005

Figure 8.6 Composition of Michoacán's local legislature between 2004 and 2007



Source: Instituto Electoral de Michoacan, Memorial del Proceso Electoral 2004, Morelia, 2005

The case of Michoacán corroborates how transnational civic mobilisation drives and spreads the debate on migrant political rights across Mexican states. Similarly to the case of Zacatecas, local legislative negotiations on Michoacano migrants' political participation was preceded by various debates organised by migrant groups and migrant rights' activists in Mexico and the US since 2002. The '*foros de consulta*' (consultative forums) on migrants' political rights held in this new millennium

evoked to a great extent the '*consultas ciudadanas*' (citizenship referendums) on indigenous rights issues held in the second half of the 1990's. Civic mobilisation in this respect seems to offer more effective democratic means to discuss and make decisions on issues that directly concern and affect a social group. These bi-national forums – as they took place in various US and Mexican cities – were organised by US universities in California, Texas and Chicago, as well as by the University of Michoacán (fieldwork interviews, 2006). They provided a meeting point for different political actors such as Michoacano migrant leaders, migrants' rights advocates, government representatives, deputies and academics from both sides of the border to discuss tête-à-tête their different positions and interests. As Gonzalo Badillo Moreno mentions 'the general characteristics of the Michoacano vote abroad initiative emerged there' (Badillo Moreno, 2006). He recounts how participants formulated and voted for the main components of a migrants' political rights initiative in the forum that took place in the city of Hidalgo in May 2003. The main points were that the Michoacano migrants should be able to elect governor and deputies according to the principle of proportional representation; electoral campaigns should be regulated by the Michoacano Electoral Institute and contributions towards local electoral campaigns from abroad should not be allowed. Also, there was an agreement on 'the right to vote and be voted according to what the national and state constitution establish' (Badillo Moreno, 2006).

However, even though the many bi-national forums organised in both countries represent innovative participatory structures, only a fraction of Michoacano migrants were willing or able to participate in such consultations. Questions arise about who are the main promoters of migrants' political participation in Michoacano politics

from afar and over the long term and what were their motivations? Similarly to the case of Zacatecas, a migrant lobby group was created with the task of advocating migrants' political rights in Michoacan, as well as in the US. The idea of the Binational Michoacano Front ('*Frente Binacional Michocano*'); FREBIMICH for its acronym in Spanish) arose during the VI Michocano Binational Forum in Hidalgo, Michoacán in May 2003. It was mentioned that many migrant leaders disagreed on the composition of this organization as 'not all migrant groups were admitted, the founders of the '*Frente*' established some sort of right for admission' (fieldwork interviews, 2006). Such disagreements led to the formation of another independent organisation the '*Frente Civico Michoacano Binacional*' by a group of Michoacano migrant group from California (Najar 25 April 2004).

We should bear in mind that hometown associations and federations are legally prohibited from getting involved in electoral or campaigning activities. At the same time, they are aware that political differences can jeopardise the unity of the migrant club, as well as its relations with local and national governments as it has occurred in the past. As we have seen, during the 1998 elections in Zacatecas, for instance, differences erupted within the Zacatecan Federation between those that supported the PRI and those that favoured the opposition. Thus, by creating new groups with solely political goals, migrant leaders are able to uphold the neutrality of their hometown associations whose focus is mainly social and economic. Michoacano migrants that lead hometown associations, however, have become influential political activists and the ones that make up the leadership of migrant lobby groups. As Jose Luis Gutierrez explains '*El Frente*' is an organisation in which the most renowned Michoacano migrant leaders in the US participate. '*El Frente*' is a

complement to what the Federations do in the social and economic ambits; we should make the next step because we now want political representation' (Najar 25 April 2004).

The goals of the '*Frente Michoacano*' as other migrant lobby groups are merely political, although, they claim they do not ally with political parties in any country. Like the case of the CDPME (at the national level) and the FCZ (in Zacatecas), the FREBIMICH's main aim is to advocate migrant political participation in Mexico and in the US. They do so in two forms, lobbying in the local and national congresses for the implementation of migrants' political rights and on the other hand, supporting the candidature of migrants for public positions in the two countries. As Jose Luis Gutierrez explained when asked about the support offered by migrant groups to emigrant candidates in Michoacán: 'we support Michoacanos with American citizenship who want to stand up for public positions in the US, or those who aspire to become mayor or congressman in Mexico. The only requirement is that the candidates are members' (Unstructured interview, 2006). By not allying with any political party, they believe they have a competitive advantage. As Gutierrez puts it, 'we create a list with whoever aspires to become local deputy that we give to the parties; then we do the final 'tying up' with each one so that the candidature takes place ... if we become '*partidistas*' (politically biased) we will spoil the movement; we cannot afford to take that risk' (Unstructured interview, 2006). Therefore, migrant lobby groups are not only authors of the reforms or policies they advocate, but they also serve as a bridge between the different political parties and Mexicans abroad.

The vote abroad initiative sent to the Michoacano congress (LXIX legislature) by the PRD Governor Cardenas Batel in July 2003 was elaborated by one of the main migrants' political rights advocates, Gonzalo Badillo Moreno, based on the points agreed in the various bi-national forums (Marquez 27 December 2003). Badillo Moreno was also member of the CDPME that advocated the vote abroad bill at the national level, which shows how the people behind the migrants' political rights movement might be the same. The FREBIMICH with the backing of a large number of Michoacano hometown associations supported the PRD government initiative (fieldwork interviews, 2007). We should also consider that the Michoacano debate on migrants' political incorporation from abroad took place at the same time as a similar bill had been approved in Zacatecas under a PRD government and several initiatives on absentee voting for presidential elections had been sent to the federal congress.

Batel's initiative would have allowed Michoacano migrants to participate in local elections for deputies according to proportional representation that took place that same year. It consisted mainly in the following points: Michoacano migrants would be able to vote from abroad for state governor and for deputies according to proportional representation. The latter could be possible as all votes emitted in Michoacán, as well as abroad by Michoacano migrants would be taken into account to determine the number of deputies assigned to each political faction according to this principle (at present, 16 out of 40 deputies are elected by proportional representation). Political campaigns could be carried out abroad, but funds and donations for campaigns that did not come from the national territory would be forbidden (15 July 2003). In regards to 'migrant candidates', this initiative mentioned

that 'the Michoacanos outside the national territory that want to be candidates for any public position should comply with the requirements established in the Political Constitution of the United States of Mexico, the Political Constitution of the State of Michoacán, (the State Electoral) Code and other applicable legal requirements. The application to register the candidature should include an address within the state' (15 July 2003). This ambiguous statement meant that Michoacano migrants that were born in the state or were descendants of Michoacano parents do not have to comply with residency requirements according to the state constitution (art. 5, chapter III), also supported by article 36 of the federal constitution (after the 1996 reform). Migrant candidates only had to include, nonetheless, an address in Michoacán.

Batel's initiative was brought to a standstill at the local congress as the PRI and PAN decided not to take any action. When the bill was read in the legislature on August 12, 2003, however, it prompted a heated debate that displayed the conflicting positions of the main political factions. The PRI intervened establishing the position of the party, which is unusual during the analysis of a bill, as well as calling on an agreement to send the bill for further analysis to the state electoral bodies, specialists on the subject and state political parties' leaderships, that is, to be stopped (*'la congeladora'*). The PRI Martin Acosta Rosales in an ambiguous address advocated for migrants' well-being, which could be enhanced by the approval of a multilateral agreement with the US and possibly an amnesty, the implementation of services and migrant policies and productive projects that address the causes of the migration phenomenon. However, Martin Acosta signalled that the PRI opposed the migrant vote on the grounds that the bill was a populist tactic with the end of attracting more political support. In his own words: 'We should not fall in the populist trap that they

pose in the name of democracy by means of an initiative that anybody that reads it realises that it does not correspond to the ambit of this congress'. He then mentions 'We "priistas" are concerned about the lightness with what the Congress wants to address the migrant vote. We think that it is only a resource to attract media attention "con tintes partidistas electoreros" (with the end of gaining more votes) (12 August 2003). In addition, the PRI argued against the migrant vote by arguing that it led to dual citizenship and dual allegiance and it would grant rights to Michoacano migrants who want 'all the benefits of democracy, but none of its obligations' (12 August 2003). The PRI legislator also mentioned that this bill did not pertain to the ambit of the local congress as it contravened federal constitutional rules⁴⁷.

The PRD position on the migrant vote was visibly in favour. In response to the PRI intervention, the legislator Efrain Garcia Becerra pointed out '(...) today we have 36 municipal presidents out of 113 municipalities in Michoacán that are migrants! 36 municipal presidents! And I would not be surprised if our fellow Martin has also been a migrant! And some of us migrants! And that is how you have accessed elected positions! There are many deputies that were there, in the United States, and that were working there as migrants! And we should not be ashamed of saying it! And here they are as deputies! About dual nationality, dual citizenship, I am not saying that we should put it aside. No. Only that we should always do it in positive, affirmative, the vote of the Michoacanos abroad' (12 August 2003). The PRD governor, Cardenas Batel, justified his initiative as a response to the '(...) many contributions from Michoacano migrants: the promotion of our culture, their economic contributions for investment and social development, among others. The

⁴⁷ In particular he mentioned articles 32, 89, 117, 121, and 133 of the federal constitution

latter is an unquestionable proof of their affection to their roots' (15 July 2003). In several interviews, Cardenas Batel affirmed that the PRD was in favour of the migrant vote not only because it responded to democratic processes, but also because they were obliged to do so in response to Michoacano migrants' interest in the economic (and political) development of their places of origin.

The PAN faction in the XXIX legislature, aligned with the PRI not to have a vote on the bill. It emerged during fieldwork interviews that the PAN awaited for the developments of the vote abroad for presidential elections in order to define its position on the issue. It was mentioned that 'there was a widespread fear that if a vote abroad bill was first implemented at the state level, it would determine the form of the mechanism implemented for presidential elections. We had to see how things evolved in the federal congress first and what the results were'. At the same time, as we have seen, the PAN did not favour an advanced migrants' political rights bill.

Many Michoacano migrant groups showed publicly their discontent against the PRI and PAN for their lack of support for the political participation of Michoacano migrants in local elections. Jose Luis Gutierrez leader of the Federation of Michoacano Clubs in Illinois and member of the FREBIMICH mentioned: 'we do not want to be second class citizens, because for many the dollars we sent are welcome, but our rights are ignored' (Unstructured interview, 2006). Other migrant leaders claimed that some local political actors were trying to stop the democratic change (La Jornada 20 July 2003). Given the amount of international and national coverage, it was evident that migrants' political participation in Michoacano politics had already become a public debate strengthening the position of the FREBIMICH.

Since the local vote abroad bill was dormant in the Congress, the FREBIMICH and other Michoacano migrant organisations decided to lobby for an agreement with the main political parties to include a migrant candidate in their lists of deputies according to proportional representation with realistic possibilities of winning in the 2004 local elections. The figure of a migrant legislator would represent the migrant population in the LXX legislature. The FREBIMICH proposed three candidates to the main political parties: Californian businessman Rodrigo Ruiz Fernandez; Roberto Chavarria Cornejo, head of the Michoacano migrant clubs in Texas and Martinez Saldana, a Mexican academic based in California. While the PAN rejected Rodrigo Ruiz Fernandez, the PRI, on the other hand, placed Roberto Chavarria Cornejo in the 6th position of its '*plurinominal*' list, that is, with no chance of occupying a legislative seat. The PRD was the only political party that responded to the requests of Michoacano migrant groups by including Martinez Saldana, a professor in 'Chicano and Latin American studies' from the University of California in Fresno, and Reveriano Orozco, president of the Association of United Michoacans in Nevada, as his substitute, in the 3rd place of its list of deputies according to proportional representation (Najar 24 October 2004). Martinez Saldana and his substitute were the only ones that had a clear chance to become legislators.

The presence of a PRD migrant deputy in the newly formed LXX legislature, I suggest, became the symbol of a coalition between the centre-left party and the Michoacano migrant lobby in the US. The main goal of having a migrant deputy was to keep alive the migrant debate and guarantee the approval of the local vote abroad bill on time for the next governorship elections. As Cardenas Batel mentioned in an

interview in 2004: 'I think the presence of Jesus Martinez will be very important as catalytic element in this sense' (Prensa 4 February 2005). In regards to the PRI and the PAN response to the vote abroad initiative in the Michoacano congress, he said: 'Not a single political party would want to fail to recognise this right, which is why the opposition did not reject the initiative. They just put it aside without discussing it' (Prensa 4 February 2005). As in the case of Zacatecas and the vote abroad bill for presidential elections, the Michoacano vote abroad bill became a priority issue for public opinion where not a single party would want to carry the political costs of rejecting it publicly.

The second condition that was to guarantee the approval of the vote abroad bill in Michoacán, I would argue, was the passage of the vote abroad bill at the federal level in 2005 and its implementation in 2006. As we have seen, the first experience of the vote abroad for presidential elections failed to attract a large number of Mexican citizens abroad. Even if that same number of Michoacano migrants voted for local elections – that is 2,670 – it would not have much influence in the results. In this way, it could be said that not even the PRI could fear an impact from the participation of Michoacano migrants in the governorship elections. As an interviewee stated: 'it was more (politically) costly to oppose the bill than have a few votes against' (fieldwork interviews, Summer 2006).

A new version of the Michoacano vote abroad initiative was presented to the LXX Michoacano legislature for voting in February 9, 2007. It was part of a larger reform to the state electoral rules, which was known as the 'electoral justice' bill as apart from implementing the absentee vote, it included limits to local campaign spending

and management of campaigns (such as disqualification of candidates), as well as reducing the number of advisors within the Electoral Institute of Michoacán from seven to five (Jornada 11 February 2007) (Michoacan 11 February 2007). The vote abroad mechanism would be added to the state electoral code as a ninth book entitled 'the vote of Michoacanos abroad'. It differed from the original PRD bill as it allowed Michoacano migrants to vote only for state governor and not deputies according to the principle of proportional representation. In addition, political campaigns abroad were forbidden. On the other hand, it did not specify if Michoacano migrants could stand for public positions. As we have seen earlier, the condition of citizenship for Michoacanos by birth is not linked to residency requirements.

As it had occurred before, there was opposition from the PRI and PAN, only this time the position of the PRD was not well defined. In particular, 'the PRI was against, the position of the PAN was halfway, and suddenly the PRD seemed to change its mind' (Unstructured interview, Raul Ross, Chicago, April 2008). According to Raul Ross from the '*Coalicion*', the coming elections for governor in Michoacán led to disagreement in the PRD party, between those that supported the internal candidate, Leonel Godoy and those that supported Enrique Bautista for party candidate (apparently Cardenas Batel's choice). However, he goes on to explain that local deputies do not decide by themselves and they would act according to the party label. 'It is the head of parties that decide, not the deputies. The '*Frente*' had meetings with each party and both the PAN and PRI wanted something in return⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ According to Raul Ross, the PAN wanted that 1) the state and federal elections took place in the same year, 2) that the government had to guarantee the resources and 3) the State Electoral Institute

In the end, due to pressure from the PRD leadership, the PRD internal candidate, Leonel Godoy, and his followers supported the initiative' (Unstructured interview, Raul Ross, Chicago, April 2008).

During the vote on the floor, the PRD faction was the only one to praise migrants' political inclusion guaranteed in the 'electoral justice' bill. The PRD and migrant lobby groups' arguments in favour of the migrant vote can be summarised in Martinez Saldana's address to the legislature, where he mentioned that the migrant vote improves local democracy; guarantees political electoral rights that migrants are denied of in their country of reception and is a response to migrants' participation in the region's development. He then mentioned that '...three years ago, the Michoacano PRD opened its doors to a migrant and included me in its list of '*diputados plurinominales*' in a privileged position. Two years ago, I started working with the other 16 members of our parliamentary faction. Since then, I have not been denied any support to carry out the leading works to the migrant vote and that firm position reflects its democratic vocation" (9 February 2007).

This account on the vote abroad bill negotiations in Michoacán corroborates the thesis that an organised migrant community that is involved in economic investment at home, together with a political transition taking place in the state are necessary preconditions for the institutionalisation of migrants' political participation at home. Cross-country negotiations have taken place in the form of transnational political coalitions between a centre-left party and Michoacano migrant lobby groups in the

has to consider the initiative as feasible. On the other hand, the PRI asked for 1) a change in the legislative vote from absolute majority to relative majority and 2) keep the control of the electoral institution

US. However, despite the similarities in the determinants that led the Záratecan and the Michoacano bills to be approved, migrant political rights implemented in both cases differed greatly from each other. Migrant political participation advocated by the FREBIMICH and supported by the PRD party in the Michoacano context, was based on assimilated representation, that is, voting rights according to the last electoral district of residence. In contrast to the discrete representation formula implemented in Záratecas, that involved special representation of the particular interests of citizens abroad in the local decision-making process. That was in the form of two seats in the local congress reserved for migrant representatives and the reform of residency requirements for public office-holding (on assimilated and discrete representation see Spiro 15 March 2006, p.118-123).

Why did the FREBIMICH and the PRD propose absentee voting rights instead of migrant representation in Michoacán's local congress? Three main reasons stand out. First, in Mexico's federal system, local constitutional structures vary from one another and local residency requirements to occupy public office are not an exception. As we have seen, according to Michoacán's local constitution, Michoacano citizens by birth do not have to meet any residency requirements to run for elections. In the case of candidates for state governor, Mexicans not born in the state have to live in Michoacán for a period of five years (Art. 49, Constitution of Michoacán). Second, as there were no legal impediments to prevent external citizens from holding office, the Michoacán migrant lobby did not consider special migrant representation in the local congress a priority. It was often mentioned during fieldwork interviews that Michoacano migrants increasingly held legislative seats – by election and according to proportional representation. In addition, the Michoacano

migrant political rights' lobby was more aligned with the national movement for absentee voting rights led by the CDPME. As Raul Ross, member of the CDPME, mentioned: 'the bi-national residency in Zacatecas was just an invented concept that made things more complicated and messy. Residency requirements could have disappeared from the (Zacatecan) constitution. For us, voting rights were definitely more important and only a stepping stone in our struggle' (unstructured interview, Chicago, April 2008). Lastly, the timing of the negotiations was key to shape the outcome of the Michoacano migrant political rights' bill with the PAN delaying any pronouncement until the fate of the vote abroad bill at the federal level had been decided.

It is clear from the above discussion that local political actors make cost-benefit calculations mainly in terms of remittances and votes, which may be disguised under their view of democracy. Both opponents and supporters of the migrant vote made use of the democratic ensign to sustain their views – whereas the PRI argued back in 2003 that the migrant vote infringed the democratic principles of equal rights and obligations and favoured dual allegiances; the PRD, on the other hand, sustained that migrants' electoral participation improved local democracy as it extended the franchise to a previously excluded social group. Michoacano migrant groups, on the other hand, have used their economic and political leverage in terms of remittances and votes to gain participation in Michoacan's political affairs. However, why did Michoacano migrants in the US choose to get involved in Mexican politics? What is it in Mexico for them? From the above discussion, it is evident that migrant groups aim at translating their economic power into political weight, being able in this way to make decisions over issues that affect them directly or indirectly.

Whether that is choosing the administrators of their donations or appointing representatives that will focus on issues relevant to Michoacano communities in the US. The ultimate goal, then, is to improve the well-being of their migrant communities and foster integration between their communities of origin and reception. A number of migrant activists, however, would do so to be able to launch a political career back home. I now analyse how Michoacano migrants respond to these opportunities of political participation at home and how it affects the local political scenario.

8.3. Migrant voting rights and local transnational politics

It is hard to argue that the local vote abroad bill *per se* can have significant effects on the transnationalisation of Michoacano politics. In many respects, it resembles the bureaucratic and cumbersome bill implemented at the national level in 2005 that allows all Mexicans to vote for presidential elections by post. I would argue in this section, however, that the implications of this bill go beyond Michoacán's governorship elections carried out abroad as it has opened the debate on other direct forms of migrants' political participation, that is, parliamentary representation and the figure of the migrant candidate. I will explain how, in turn, each of these aspects transforms the political power balance as party competition is extended beyond the country's physical frontiers. I will argue, however, that this legislation creates controversies in the implementation of Michoacano migrants' right to participate in political process at home by creating a constituency outside the national territory and giving unregulated political power to migrant associations, similarly to the case of Zacatecas. I divide this section into two parts; first I describe the main aspects of the

Michoacano vote abroad bill for governorship elections and the outcome of the 2007 governorship elections. I show how the absentee voting system for governorship elections in Michoacán recreated the same limitations of the 2006 presidential election. Second, I discuss how this bill institutionalises other forms of transnational political participation and whom it seems to benefit the most.

Firstly, the first experience of migrants' participation in the 2007 governorship elections failed to induce large numbers of Michoacano migrants. Only a very small proportion of the Michoacano migrant population actually registered to cast an absentee vote, that is, 980 people out of an estimated 1.06 million. That is even much lower than the number of Michoacanos that voted to elect Mexico's president in 2006, as I have already mentioned, 2,670 Michoacano migrants voted for president by postal vote (Instituto Federal Electoral 2007). Why did Michoacano migrants choose not to participate in the local election? I would argue that the same reasons that apply to the lack of participation in the presidential elections from abroad can be applied to the Michoacano case. It can be mainly attributed, on the one hand, to the lack of political willingness on the Mexican side – due to the restrictive character of the absentee voting mechanism, no voting credential issuance abroad, logistical problems and lack of an efficient awareness campaign – and on the other, to the lack of interest among Michoacano expatriates to participate in the elections, albeit only to a certain degree.

The Michoacano formula for migrants' electoral participation to appoint the state governor generally coincides with the vote abroad bill for presidential elections. It is also based on a postal system with a temporary registry of 'Michoacan citizens

residing abroad'. Michoacano migrants have to apply to be included in this registry by filling in an application form and enclosing a photocopy of their voting credential issued in an electoral district within Michoacán 130 days prior to the elections (2007). If the application is successful, they are sent a ballot package by post. Apart from the ballot and an instructions leaflet, this electoral package includes the candidates' proposals which is the only means for Michoacano migrants to familiarise themselves with the candidates' political platforms since political campaigning outside Mexico is barred. The ballot has to be returned to the electoral institute of Michoacán using the provided pre-paid postage envelope and received at least 24 hours before the day of the local elections.

Given that this bill was adopted after the vote abroad for presidential elections was implemented, there were a number of initiatives to make this bill less restrictive and time-consuming (fieldwork interviews, State Electoral Institute, Morelia, July 2007). In this respect, there are three main differences between the vote abroad mechanism implemented in Michoacán and the federal vote abroad bill. First, Michoacano migrants do not need to include a proof of their address abroad and only have to mention their address in their application form. This has been one of the main complaints of migrant groups that argued that it was particularly cumbersome for migrants who were sub-letting for a short period of time, or had an irregular status, to get hold of a document that establishes their address. Second, the applications to register in the absentee voters' registry do not have to be sent by certified mail, as was the case with the absentee vote applications for presidential elections. This was a response to migrants' complaints about the cost of certified mail, which was about 8 dollars from the US. Third, perhaps more significant was the fact that this vote

abroad mechanism was implemented and entirely managed at the local level. Even the budget for this task has to be completely allocated by the state. Some might argue that absentee voting in local elections should be regulated at the national level by the federal electoral institute that might count not only with a greater budget but also more expertise and technical knowledge in the field (Interview with Yuri Beltran May 2007).

Nonetheless, one of the main obstacles for migrant voters remained, that is, the requirement to have a voting credential issued by the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) as the only form of identification. Migrant leaders attribute the failure of initiatives like the Michoacano absentee voting system to attract a large number of voters to the fact that a large majority of Michoacano migrants do not have one (Truax 22 July 2007; Delgado July 2007). The decision that voting credentials cannot be issued outside Mexican territory narrows the potential number of votes in Michoacán from the 1.06 million of Michoacano migrants living legally or illegally in the US to an estimated 200,000 according to figures from the IEE of Michoacan (interviews, State Electoral Institute, Morelia, July 2007). Of course, perhaps this number is overestimated as Michoacano migrants' voting credentials have to be issued in an electoral district within Michoacán, otherwise migrants from this state are unable to cast an absentee vote for state governor. It has been mentioned that during the last presidential elections, Michoacano migrants applied for voting credentials in border cities or in Mexican states other than their places of origin, curtailing their chances to participate in the Michoacán's local elections (Interview with Salvador Esparza August 2007). In addition, other logistical problems remained, for instance, the awareness campaign only took place a couple of months before the deadline for

registration, as happened with the vote abroad campaign for president in 2006. We should bear in mind that the Michoacano vote abroad bill was also implemented at the very last moment when reforms could be made to the local electoral code ahead of local elections. It is not surprising, then, that such a small number of Michoacano migrants would participate in the elections. Unless a further reform allows the issuance of voting credentials abroad, logistical problems are tackled and an effective awareness campaign is in place, the number of Michoacano migrant voters is unlikely to increase in future governorship elections. However, the reversal of these policies and reform is also highly unlikely depending on the political composition of Michoacán's government.

However, migrants' electoral participation, I would argue, has also institutionalised other forms of cross-border political interaction such as the figure of the migrant candidate and migrant representation at the local congress. Migrants in political positions were already common in Michoacán prior to the approval of the local vote abroad bill. It is estimated that under Batel's administration about 38 percent of municipal presidents had lived for a certain period of time in the US and in addition to the official migrant legislator Martinez Saldana other 5 PRD legislators have also lived and worked in the US for several years (fieldwork interviews, Summer 2006).

It was also mentioned in fieldwork interviews that, more often than not, Michoacano migrants' first allegiance is with their migrant organisations, which have provided them a political platform to enter politics at home (Chicago, April 2008). By barring political campaigns abroad, the present local legislation on migrants' political rights strengthens the power of migrant groups, which, as we have seen, negotiate with

political parties both in the country of origin and reception to support migrant candidatures. According with fieldwork interviews, political parties' chapters abroad still fail to attract enough migrant support (Chicago, April 2008). In this way, migrant groups, such as the FREBIMICH, serve as US based clubs for the rising transnational Michoacano elite by promoting the inclusion of their members in public office positions in both Mexico and the US.

It follows, then, that the transnationalisation of Michoacano politics has as a consequence the transformation of the Michoacano expatriate community into an extra-territorial constituency. By giving them the right to choose their government representatives, local political actors have to hear the voice of those Michoacano citizens living outside the country's territory. As Martinez Saldaña rightly asserted during his address when the local vote abroad bill was approved: 'now we are creating the means to exert a real power, whilst participating as voters in the next election, necessarily obligating candidates and political parties to include in their political platforms and government proposals, issues that are important to the migrant population'. Especially, migrant politicians that have been elected to govern migration-stricken communities have the dual responsibility of representing and serving those at home and abroad. Those campaigning to become migrant legislators, a figure that is still not part of the Michoacano legislation, have the specific responsibility to represent, in particular, the interests of the Michoacano migrant population.

What we can conclude from this discussion is that the opening up of the local political system does not only extend political competition past the physical frontiers

but also institutionalises the presence of new transnational political actors such as migrant groups that are better enabled than local political parties to represent a rising transnational political elite. Their competitive advantage is the use of networks to guarantee their presence in public positions which allows them to increase their political power within national and local circles but also mirror it in the United States. Although, it is only a minority that undertakes transnational political action, they have become the main promoters of regional integration. This analysis of Michoacano transnational politics, thus, seems to coincide with Guarnizo's view that frequent transnational political participation is only undertaken by a small minority of people who have benefited economically from migration (Guarnizo, Portes et al. May 2003).

8.4. The determinants and consequences of the adoption of a migrants' political rights bill at the sub-national level

Mexico is currently the only Latin American country in which the political inclusion of its migrant population has also taken place at the sub-national level. The 'Migrant Bill' approved in Zacatecas in 2003 was a constitutional reform that changed the notion of residency and allowed Zacatecan migrants to run for elections and have parliamentary representation in the local congress. And in 2007, the local vote abroad in Michoacán reformed the local electoral code to grant migrants from this state the right to participate in governorship elections by absentee voting. This poses the question – could we expect that more Mexican migrant-sending states adopt similar legislations? In order to answer this, we should first look at other Mexican states in which the necessary conditions for the approval of a migrants' political

rights bill have taken place, that is: 1) intense migration and high flow of remittances, 2) organisation of the migrant community and participation in public work projects in their regions of origin and 3) experience of party politics and in particular a centre-left PRD government and a significant PRD presence in the legislature. The matrix below (Figure 8.7) – that only includes Mexican states that experience intense migration and receive a high flow of remittances – shows what states fulfil these criteria⁴⁹.

Figure 8.7 Selected migrant-sending states and collective remittances-receivers in Mexico

		Change of government		No change of government	
		Nayarit (PRI)			
		Guerrero (PRD)			
San Luis Potosí (PAN)		Zacatecas (PRD)		Michoacán (PRD)	
No strong presence of US-based migrant organisations		Jalisco (PAN)	Aguascalientes (PAN)		
DF (PRD)		Guanajuato (PAN)		Strong presence of US-based migrant organisations	
Durango (PRI)		Oaxaca (PRI)			
Hidalgo (PRI)		Puebla (PRI)			
Colima (PRI)					
		No change of government			

⁴⁹ The migrant-sending states shown in Figure 8.7 were selected according to the following parameters (except for Mexico City): 1) states that experience ‘very high’ and ‘high’ emigration levels according to the migration index of CONAPO (sample from 2000 Mexican census); 2) main participant states in the ‘3X1’ programme according to SEDESOL (2008 data). The variable ‘strong presence of US-based migrant organisations’ has been defined according to data provided by the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME for its acronym in Spanish) and interviews carried out there in 2006. According to the IME the states with the highest number of hometown associations are: Zacatecas, Jalisco, Guerrero, Michoacán, Guanajuato, Puebla, Oaxaca, Nayarit and Aguascalientes.

Own elaboration. Sources: (CONAPO, index of migration, 2000); (SEDESOL '3X1' by state, 2007); (Institute of Mexicans Abroad, data and interviews, 2006)

Local political changes in Mexico are occurring fast, so is the collective organisation of migrants from other Mexican states. Thus, as economic integration and migratory movements continue, we would expect more Mexican migrant-sending states to move to the first quarter of this matrix. What we can predict is that it is more likely that the institutionalisation of migrants' political participation would occur once the state undergoes a change of government and there is a strong presence of US-based migrant organisations in the political and economic life of the state. What we can observe in the figure above is that at the moment five migrant-sending states have experienced both a change of government and a strong involvement of US-based migrant organisations in community projects. It is in these states where the debate on migrants' political participation has taken hold. In the PAN-governed migrant state of Jalisco, for instance, migrant organisations from this state have recently made public their demand to have a migrant deputy in the local legislature (Partida 18 September 2007).

However, as we have seen, it is in the PRD governed states of Zacatecas and Michoacán where migrants' political rights legislations have been approved in the local congress. Most recently, in December 2007 an absentee voting system to elect the head of government (of the Federal District) was approved in Mexico City and will be implemented for the first time in the 2012 local elections (Notimex 2008; Vargas 2008). Mexico City, however, can be considered a special case as with a PRD government and an absolute majority in the legislative assembly (2006-2009

period), it has become a scenario where most centre-left PRD proposals are tested.

Why has this not occurred in Guerrero? Guerrero has a PRD government since 2005 but does not hold an absolute majority in the local congress. In contrast to Michoacán and Zacatecas, Guerrero differs in two aspects. It is not a traditional migrant sending state, as it is only in the last decade that it has experienced increasing levels of migration (CONAPO, 2006). On the other hand, although it has an organised migrant community in the US, hometown associations from this state were created mainly in the 1990s, more than two decades after Michoacano and Záratecán migrants had commenced to set up their own hometown associations in the US (fieldwork interviews, IME, 2006). Thus, migrant groups from Guerrero lack the degree of involvement in and exposure to governmental programmes such as the '3X1' over a long period of time. Furthermore, at the time of writing, a migrant lobby group has not yet been created that consistently lobbies for migrant' political rights in Guerrero's local congress. However, political involvement in home politics among migrants from Guerrero should not be underestimated. Thousands of migrants from this state showed their support for the PRD governor Zeferino Torreblanca Galindo in various US cities during his campaign in December 2004 (December 30, 2004), when campaigning abroad was still not banned by the 2005 electoral reforms, which demonstrates the existence of a strong migrant activity during Guerrero's change of government.

8.5. Conclusion

As we have seen in this chapter, the case of Michoacán resembles Zacatecas both in terms of migratory activity to the US and local political environment. Michoacán,

like Zacatecas counted on a highly organised migrant lobby such as the '*Frente Binacional Michoacano*', whose members have frequently interacted with the PRD government for the implementation of public work projects under the matching funds programme. In addition to our main thesis other dynamics that took place in Zacatecas have been replicated in Michoacán. First, hometown associations from the same state unite to create a political arm whose aim is to lobby for migrants' political participation in both countries – whether advocating the passage of migrants' rights bills in local congresses or supporting the candidature of migrants for elected positions. That was the case of the 'Bi-national Michoacano Front' (FREBIMICH) in Michoacán and the 'Zacatecan Civic Front' (FCZ) in Zacatecas and at the national level, the 'Coalition for the Political Rights of Mexicans Abroad' (CDPME). Second, migrant lobby groups have enough assembling power to attract media and public support from both sides of the border. That is illustrated by the several bi-national forums organised with the support from Mexican and American academic institutions to discuss the 'Migrant Bill' in Zacatecas, the local vote abroad bill in Michoacán, and the vote abroad bill for presidential elections. Thirdly, both local migrants' political rights' bills have been formulated by migrant rights activists and academics and were the product of bi-national collective action. As we have seen, the 'Migrant Bill' in Zacatecas was elaborated by the migrants' rights activist and academic Miguel Moctezuma Longoria, whereas the local vote abroad bill in Michoacán was authored by the migrant rights activist Gonzalo Badillo. In turn, both of them were members of the CDPME. Fourthly, a migrant public figure in the local political scenario has been the symbol of the local migrants' political rights movement and has been able to trigger and keep alive the debate on migrants' political inclusion. That was the case of Andres Bermudez, a migrant mayor in

Zacatecas, and Martínez Saldana, a PRD migrant legislator in the Michoacano congress. What we can conclude from both cases is that the migrants' political rights movement is a grass-roots transnational movement authored by civil society groups on both sides of the border, but perhaps led by a handful of transnational political activists. However, it is worth noting that they were not able to mobilise voters in the abroad.

Despite the fact that the local vote abroad bill in Michoacán differs greatly from the Zacatecan migrants' political rights formula, both reforms seem to transnationalise local politics through the inclusion of new political actors (migrant organisations and migrant candidates) and through lifting borders between constituencies at home and abroad. The reason, however, why the two formulas differed from one another was threefold. Firstly, the local context and constitutional rules impact the form of emigrant political participation. For instance, residency requirements and the cancellation of the victory of a migrant candidate in the municipal presidency elections of Jerez, led Zacatecan migrant groups to campaign for the institutionalisation of 'bi-national residency'. On the other hand, Michoacán's local constitution did not include residency requirements for local candidatures. Secondly, the timing of the legislative negotiations and the approval of the vote abroad bill for presidential elections has influenced the type of emigrant political participation advocated at the sub-national level. The Zacatecan 'Migrant Law' was a pioneer entitlement for emigrant political inclusion, whose supporters' intentions pre-dated the federal negotiations on the migrant vote. On the other hand, the vote on the Michoacano bill was postponed at the local legislature as mainly the PAN party waited for a decision on the vote abroad initiative at the federal level. Michoacán's

local absentee voting system, thus, resembles in large part the vote abroad mechanism for presidential elections. Thirdly, the migrant lobby group was more consolidated during the negotiations of the vote abroad bill in Michoacán. In particular, this electoral bill satisfies the migrant lobby agenda of gradual migrant political rights – the migrant lobby network has centred first on achieving voting rights before securing representation at the local legislatures. The approval of a similar vote abroad mechanism to elect the Head of Government in Mexico City in December 2007 proves this point.

This chapter further demonstrates that transnational political participation is only carried out by a handful of transnational political activists who are interested in challenging old social hierarchies and realigning power structures at home and eventually achieving more regional integration between Mexico and the US.

Chapter 9

9. Determinants and implications of emigrant political participation in Mexico

This thesis is the first major study of the politics of Mexican migration to the US and the impact of emigrants' electoral involvement in their home country's affairs presented in political and institutional terms. My analysis has shown that the adoption of constitutional reforms and electoral norms that guarantee emigrants' participation in domestic affairs has been the result of democratization and decentralization processes that have unfolded in the country in the past decades, as well as Mexico's recent insertion in the global economy. These two events have, in turn, given place to the three main determinants for the approval of migrants' political rights legislations at the national and sub-national levels. That is, a continuous inflow of family and collective remittances; the rise of political migrant groups that lobby for political rights and promote migrants' political involvement at home; change of government and a centre-left PRD party that has favoured the implementation of migrants' demands. Thus, the three migrant political rights' bills that were analysed and compared in this thesis have been formulated, proposed and advocated by specific political migrant groups and civil society organisations and approved as the result of the formation of a cross-border political coalition between these groups and non-PRI political parties (mainly the centre-left PRD).

At the same time, the case of Mexico demonstrates that it is not so straightforward to re-include citizens abroad back into the domestic political sphere. Most of the

migrant political rights' bills approved by national and local legislatures in Mexico have been extremely limited and complicated, and their implementation has been hampered by the lack of support from electoral institutions and other domestic political actors, having as a result a minuscule number of citizens abroad availing themselves to these opportunities of political engagement at home. For instance, in the case of the federal absentee voting mechanism, less than half percent of Mexican émigrés voted in the first presidential election carried out abroad in 2006. At the same time, the difficult implementation of electoral mechanisms for emigrant political participation creates new challenges to Mexico's incipient democratic practice such as the insertion and growing influence of migrants and migrant organisations in domestic politics, the complexities of representing and being accountable to constituencies abroad and to a limited extent, the transformation of traditional political power structures especially in communities that experience high levels of emigration. In addition, institutionalised forms of emigrant political participation have often contravened previous constitutional and electoral rules making them, at times, subject to different interpretation. That is the case, for instance, of whether dual-nationals can run and occupy public office positions in Mexico.

Migrant political engagement in home country's affairs also raises questions about whether this influences political participation in the country of reception. This is particularly important in the case of Mexico-US migration, as Mexican-Americans are one of the fastest growing electorate in the US; more than one million Latinos have registered to vote since 1996. Latinos are currently the majority in California and are expected to outnumber white Americans in Texas by 2008. However, as we

have seen, it is not recent immigrants the ones that participate the most in political developments at home, but rather Mexicans that have lived in the US for longer, are more educated and have the financial means to engage in cross-border activities. For which, this study has supported transnational theories to international migration, that is, the belief that migrants are able to participate in social, economic and political activities in two polities, the country of origin and of reception without hampering their integration in the country of reception, in contrast to assimilation theories.

9.1. Determinants of formal emigrant political participation

The first scope of analysis addressed in the preceding chapters was how formal emigrant political participation was implemented in Mexico. I defined 'formal electoral emigrant participation' as institutionalised cross-border channels of political participation that focus on migrants' right to vote or to be voted in their country or region of origin'. Research that addressed this first question revealed three important findings. First, how and when Mexico's emigration policy shift took place and what were the factors that contributed to that. Secondly, the interconnection between migrant politics and local democratization processes in Mexico. And finally, the formation of novel migrant political groups that have been especially created to advocate the institutionalisation of migrant political participation in their country of origin and also of destination and support migrant candidatures for public office positions.

Mexican emigration policy shifted from mainly non-institutionalised initiatives that focused on consular protection and the maintenance of Mexican culture and values

among Mexican communities abroad which allowed, in the view of the state, to assist Mexicans in their temporary journeys to the neighbouring country to new state emigration policies implemented since 1988 with PRI's Salinas' administration. New emigration policies aim for the first time at incorporating those Mexicans abroad into the economic, social, cultural and increasingly the political life of the country without necessarily expecting them to return. This policy shift has converged with decisive economic and political national decisions, as well as a globalising and transnationalising international environment, in which advances in travel and media technologies have allowed people to be ever more connected challenging space and time barriers.

In particular, the case of Mexico shows that initial policies and programmes that facilitated Mexicans abroad to participate in social, cultural and economic aspects of their communities of origin were mainly the result of the last two PRI administrations' agenda on economic liberalisation. For Salinas and Zedillo, a Mexican-American lobby abroad and migrants' remittances were instrumental for Mexico's insertion in the global economy, which included the adoption of the NAFTA. That was for instance some of the main motivations behind the dual nationality reform adopted in 1996. On the other hand, however, as I have argued, electoral and constitutional reforms that guarantee Mexican migrants' political participation in domestic affairs have been mainly the direct result of democratic contestation and decentralisation processes. As we have seen, the precursor of migrants' political rights was the modification to constitutional article 36 which allowed citizens to vote outside their electoral district, Mexican migrants could then vote but only if they returned to Mexico to do so. This was part of the 1996 political

reform, which was key to guarantee more transparent and fair elections in Mexico, which combined with unfavourable political conditions paved the way to change of government and the re-emergence of party competition in the country.

9.1.1. Democratization and migrant politics

The empirical findings of the analysis of the extension of political rights to Mexicans abroad also add to the theory of democratization and in particular how democratization and decentralization processes have unfolded in the Mexican case. Indirectly, this thesis has shown that migrant politics has been part of Mexico's democratization processes from the start. At the sub-national level, change of governments in migrant sending states have often been accompanied by US-based hometown associations' fragmentation, the formation of support groups abroad, and/or mobilization among Mexican communities in the US. For instance, during the change of government in Zacatecas, two migrant groups were created by Zacatecans abroad – a PRD-support committee (the Zacatecan Civic Front) and a PRI-support group ('*Zacatecanos PRImero*'). In this regard, democratization at home has not only given migrants reasons to mobilize abroad, but also to increasingly value political participation in their country of origin. Thus, migrant lobby groups have taken advantage of the political openings, albeit limited, as well as processes of contestation that have resulted from Mexico's unfinished democratic transition. In particular, the return of policy-making to the legislature(s), political decisions taken at the party level and political party fragmentation especially during internal elections (for the selection of party candidates) have been decisive for the institutionalisation of emigrant political participation. As we have seen, the vote

abroad bill for presidential elections was approved as the result of the last minute support from the moderate wing of the PRI party. I have argued that at this stage of democratic transition in Mexico political parties do not necessarily act rationally according to their main interests.

9.1.2. Political migrant groups and cross-borders lobbying strategies

As I have demonstrated in the preceding chapters, migrant groups matter more than political party chapters abroad among Mexican migrant communities in the US, at least up to now. Although Mexico's main political parties are expanding their structures to include party militants in the US, that is opening up chapters and committees in the main US cities with high concentration of Mexican nationals and including migrant militants in internal decision-making structures, their efforts are still at an embryonic stage. An important empirical finding is that specific migrant political groups are created with clear political goals addressed to the country of origin, that is, to advance migrant candidatures and advocate for political rights at the national and sub-national levels. Their presence and pressure has been decisive for the extension of political rights to Mexicans abroad. At the same time, political migrant groups serve as a *bridge* between migrants interested in participating politically in their country of origin and domestic political parties in Mexico that agree to formalise migrant candidatures.

Another significant characteristic of migrant lobby groups is their ability to carry out cross-border strategies to gain domestic political actors' support and win public opinion both at home and among their migrant communities. Their transnational

strategies consist first of a position of neutrality. The migrant lobby groups studied in this thesis, have either re-formulated themselves or funded as non-partisan in the first place and have been careful not to be publicly associated with any political party. Yet, they often got involved in negotiations and formed coalitions with local political parties behind closed doors. Secondly, migrant lobby groups have been successful at using the mainstream media in Mexico and the transnational media, that is Spanish-language local media published simultaneously on both sides of the border and often run by migrant leaders themselves, to win the support of the public in Mexico and their communities in the US.

One of the main questions raised was how were these migrant lobby groups constituted? The three groups studied (CPDPME at the national level, the FCZ in Zacatecas and the FREBIMICH in Michoacán) were in fact formed by well-known migrant leaders, some of whom were ex-presidents of hometown associations and federations, who had exposure to negotiations with government officials on collective remittances projects (under the '3X1' programme). It was relevant that the majority of founders and leaders of these organisations were also long term residents in the US and some had already acquired American citizenship. Most importantly, most members of these migrant groups knew each other and often coordinated their activities according to what other migrant lobby groups planned in other Mexican states. Thus, we can conclude that migrant political rights in Mexico have been advanced by a network of a few transnational activists acting in diverse localities both in the US and in Mexico who also see it as a way to further integration between both countries. A finding that is consistent with earlier research on transnational

practices among Latin American immigrants in the US (Itzigsohn, Dore Cabral et al. 1999; Guarnizo, Portes et al. 2003; Itzigsohn and Villacres 2008).

9.2. Implications of emigrant political engagement

Our second scope of analysis was to explore what were the main implications of migrant political rights' legislations in Mexico. We should bear in mind that the three migrant political rights formulas analysed differed from one another. In particular, the shape and scope of a migrants' political rights bill depend on the (local) context, the migrant lobby group's strategy, as well as the degree of support from political parties and its level of significance for bi-national public opinion. Of the three migrant political rights' bills analysed, two were electoral reforms that permitted emigrants to cast an absentee vote – for president in the case of the national vote abroad bill and for governor in the case of Michoacán. The third was a local constitutional reform that allowed migrants from the state of Zacatecas to have special representation in the local congress (two migrants deputies) and allowed migrants to run for public office by implementing the new notion of 'bi-national residency' – simultaneous residency in two different countries.

Although emigrant political participation is rapidly expanding at the sub-national level in Mexico – in less than five years three migrant sending states have adopted some sort of migrant political rights and proposals have reached many other local legislatures –, their political influence is certainly very limited. Absentee vote abroad mechanisms in the Mexican case, specifically, have had a very low turnout. In the presidential elections carried out abroad only 33,111 people cast an absentee vote out

of the estimated 4 million of Mexicans abroad that had an official voting ID (IFE figures, 2006). In the case of the local election in Michoacán to elect state governor, only 980 Michoacano migrants voted out of the estimated 1.06 million Michoacanos residing abroad (CONAPO, 2007). As we have seen, the main causes for such a small number of migrant votes were not only the restrictive character of the bills and their inefficient implementation, but also the lack of political will from electoral institutions to implement an efficient awareness campaign, as well as from the legislatures to approve timely and sufficient resources. What is more interesting is to identify who were 'the new members of Mexican democracy', that is, those people that engaged in cross-border electoral participation. Chapter five, in particular, has revealed that those Mexicans abroad that self-selected themselves to be part of this new experiment of absentee voting tend to be well educated, affluent migrants with longer periods of residence in the US. They do not necessarily engage in economic cross-border practices such as sending remittances home, but they keep aware about developments in Mexico by often telephoning kin and friends in their home country and following the news (social transnationalism). The demographic and socio-economic profile of the migrant voter helps explain the lopsided results of absentee elections, in which the PAN candidate proved to be the favourite among Mexicans abroad, as income level and education are predictors of PAN support. It is worth noting, nonetheless, that mechanisms for migrant political participation are still at an early stage and more time is necessary to see whether migrants' electoral participation increases over time, although legal modifications will be most likely required.

On the other hand, however, the minuscule electoral results of Mexicans voting abroad has removed a potential threat to political parties as emigrant electoral participation does not seem to influence electoral results. At the same time, most bills that allow migrants' electoral participation seem to curtail political parties' activities abroad to a certain extent. In the case of Michoacán's absentee vote system and the national vote abroad bill, political campaigns abroad, which as we have seen became increasingly common among Mexican candidates since the 1990's, were forbidden. Once elected, however, Mexican politicians still make those unavoidable trips to visit their expatriate communities in the US. Financial support for domestic campaigns received from external sources has also been banned in some migrants' rights legislations. However, as we have seen, migrant candidates often publicly refer to future investment opportunities available through their contacts with hometown associations and other US-based non governmental groups if they become elected.

9.2.1. Ambiguities in Law and practice

Emigrant political participation legislation is particularly difficult to implement, not only because it often conflicts with existing constitutional and electoral rules bounded by a nation-state logic but also because it presents new challenges to the practice of democratic citizenship. That was mainly observed in the case of the 'Migrant Law' in Zacatecas, which offers a more advanced formula of emigrant political engagement and representation. In particular, two main problems were identified, these are, what rights can be granted without interfering in the host country's sovereignty and secondly, what are the effects on the home country's political scenario. In regards to the former, the institutionalised intervention of emigrants in domestic politics does not regulate the selection of emigrant candidates

in the first place as it cannot enact any regulation that could have an impact beyond the national borders. On the other hand, I argued that one of the main implications of emigrant political participation on the domestic political scenario has been the transformation of political communities with high levels of emigration for three main reasons. First, emigrant political participation in the case of Zacatecas and to a lesser extent in Michoacán has opened up the political system to not only Mexican citizens abroad, but also to the migrant organisations that represent them. Migrant organisations are the main vehicles by which potential bi-national candidates are selected and then presented to political parties. Secondly, the insertion of these new political actors challenge, albeit only to a limited extent, old social hierarchies and political structures at home. Last but not least, the presence of migrants in public office and in representative positions in the local legislature (as in the case of Zacatecas) increasingly lifts borders between constituencies at home and abroad. That is because the distinction between local constituencies and natives living abroad becomes increasingly blurred.

At the same time, constitutional and electoral reforms that guarantee emigrant political participation tend to be extremely ambiguous. Although Mexico granted dual nationality rights in 1996, it has also restricted the participation of dual nationals in Mexico's domestic affairs at least in print. Article 32 of the Mexican Constitution and the 1998 Law of Nationality ban dual nationals from occupying public office unless the second nationality is given up. However, in practice, dual nationals often run for public office or are invited by political parties to join their '*plurinominal*' lists, as we have seen in our cases studies at the sub-national level. Even, in the case of Andres Bermudez, a Mexican and US national whose victory of the municipal

presidency of Jerez was revoked in 2001, the federal electoral court did not cancel his victory because of his dual nationality, but instead on the grounds that he did not comply with the residency requirements stipulated in the Zacatecan local constitution (prior to the 2003 reform). Emigrant political participation laws, thus, are often subject to changing interpretations, as, at times, local political actors do not want to appear as opponents to migrants' or dual nationals' participation in domestic politics.

9.3. The Mexican case in comparative perspective

The case of Mexico has not developed in isolation, as we have seen, the extension of political rights to citizens abroad has become a worldwide phenomenon in the past two decades (currently about 115 countries have granted voting rights to non-resident citizens (IDEA 2007)). Decoupling political participation from national territory has been especially significant in the Latin American region, where most countries have high proportions of their populations living outside their national borders and their national economies depend, to different degrees, on family remittances.

How does the case of Mexico differ from other countries in the region? To begin with, the main point of convergence is the context in which migrants' political rights are implemented. Like Mexico, the majority of Latin American countries that have extended the franchise to nationals abroad or have adopted other forms of emigrant electoral participation are young democracies, which are, to some extent, integrated in the global economy⁵⁰. Emigrant political participation goes hand in hand with

⁵⁰ Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Venezuela. In El Salvador, absentee voting rights exist but have not yet been implemented.

internal democratizing processes, as well as with the restructuring of the global economy in a similar way as other policies and programmes that sending countries have formulated in order to re-build and strengthen their relationship with their migrant communities. The fact that emigrant political rights are enshrined in constitutional and electoral laws reveal to what extent incipient democratic systems are adapting to the reality of international migratory movements in the long term (Gamlen 2008).

The main points of divergence, however, are the ways in which migrants' political rights are implemented and the actors that are involved. I identify two main models in which the institutionalisation of emigrant political participation has taken place in Latin America. The first model applies to those countries in the region in which migrants' political rights have been proposed and favoured by national governments without the involvement of migrant leaders or migrant groups abroad – that is, *government-led formal emigrant political participation*. In particular, the expatriate population does not represent a challenge to the *status quo* either in terms of numbers or political activism, neither is this issue significant for public opinion. This group can be sub-divided, on the one hand, into those countries in which political rights have been extended to nationals abroad as a symbolic gesture and part of the state efforts to re-formulate the notion of the nation during democratic transitions such as the cases of Colombia and Argentina (Hazan 2001; Torres 2006; Margheritis 2007). On the other hand, some Latin American countries have extended political rights (mainly in the form of voting rights) to their emigrant communities as part of a regional and international trend. As we have seen in the opening chapter, migration organisations in the Latin American region (such as the South American Conference

on Migration and the Regional Conference on Migration) have in the last few years adopted the view of an 'enlarged citizenship', which they see as the consequence of political rights being enjoyed in both the country of reception and of origin; a view that is also supported by the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. Countries that fit in this category are the cases of Bolivia and Panama.

The second model comprises those countries in which migrants' political participation in their home country's affairs has been the result of cross-border coalition formations between political parties and migrant groups such as the case of Mexico. That has also been the case of Dominican Republic, Ecuador and El Salvador, even if in the latter, voting rights' provisions have not yet been implemented. In particular, countries that fall in this group have experienced out-migration for a long period time and their emigrant communities are well organised and with a proven record of involvement in their home country's economic and political affairs. In addition, the issue of widening democracy to include non-resident citizens back in the political map has played significant importance for public opinion. As we have seen in the Mexican case, emigrants' involvement in their home country's and communities' affairs only took place once the socio-economic profile of the Mexican community abroad commenced to change. As shown, most Mexican migrant leaders and activists were long-established residents in the US with economic and time resources to engage in cross-border political lobbying. At the same time, the rise of competitive politics in the sending country and the interest of 'opposition' political parties in extending the franchise is a central factor. Despite the corporatist attitude of the PRI federal governments between 1988 and 2000 that

adopted policies and programmes to gain the loyalty of Mexican communities abroad, legal initiatives to grant migrants' political participation remained curtailed and opposed by the PRI party (Goldring 2002). The migrants' right to vote in domestic elections was proposed by the opposition centre-left PRD party during the 1996 political reform and adopted as the party's project since then. Similarly, in the case of the Dominican Republic, migrant activists maintained active links with the two main opposition parties, the Party of Dominican Liberation (*Partido de la Liberación Dominicana* – PLD) and the Dominican Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario Dominicano* – PRD). Temporary coalitions formed between US-based migrant groups and the main political parties, as well as groups of returnees in the Dominican Republic (Itzigsohn and Villacres 2008). The precursor of migrants' voting rights was the retention of nationality Law in the new 1994 constitution, however external voting rights were not put into practice until an electoral reform was approved in 1997 (Itzigsohn and Villacres 2008). Table 9.1 shows what routes Latin American countries have followed to extend political rights (mainly the right to vote) to their non-resident citizens.

Table 9.1 Determinants of emigrant political participation in Latin America

Government-led	Coalition formations Migrant groups/leaders and political parties
Argentina	Mexico
Bolivia	Dominican Republic
Brazil	Ecuador
Colombia	El Salvador
Honduras	(Chile)
Nicaragua	(Uruguay)
Panama	
Peru	
Venezuela	

Own elaboration. *Legal provisions exist but have not been put into practice. In Chile and Uruguay migrants' voting rights are still being discussed in the legislature.

What makes the case of Mexico unique, however, is the scope of migrants' political rights, which have been implemented both at the national and sub-national levels. This, I have argued, has been the result of decentralization processes that have taken place in the country in the last few decades. A clear example is the collective remittances matching programmes implemented in migrant sending states, which, as I have shown, have been a determinant for the increasing political leverage of migrant associations at the local level.

The effects of institutionalised forms of emigrant political participation in other Latin American countries also show some similarities with the Mexican case. Firstly, Latin American countries that have allowed their expatriate citizens to vote for national elections have generally experienced low voting turnout rates. For instance, the first vote abroad experience among Dominican expatriates in the 2004 presidential election was as controversial and received the same amount of coverage as the Mexican absentee vote for the 2006 presidential race. Yet, only about 50,000 Dominicans registered to vote abroad, which represented about one percent of the total expatriate population. The main reasons cited to explain such a low voting turnout abroad was emigrants' lack of trust in electoral institutions and fear that their vote would be manipulated (Itzigsohn and Villacres 2008). Nonetheless, the Dominican experience has also shown that the migrant vote can indeed increase over time. For the 2008 election, the number of Dominican migrants registered to vote more than tripled and reached 155,000 (Junta Central Electoral- Republica Dominicana 2008).

Importantly, the Mexican case also resembles cross-border political practices among migrants from El Salvador, the only Latin American country where a governmental collective remittances matching programme has also been put into practice – ‘ *Unidos por la Solidaridad*’ (United for Solidarity). As I have shown, the local emigrants’ political rights’ bills in Michoacán and Zacatecas have been partly the result of translocal political migrant groups’ activism. These political migrant groups were created by migrant leaders with long experience in hometown associations and participation in ‘3X1’ matching programmes. In the case of El Salvador, albeit formal local migrants’ political rights bills do not exist, scholars have recently illustrated how Salvadoran hometown associations’ involvement in public works in their communities of origin challenge local political elites and lead to the formation of more participatory institutions (Itzigsohn and Villacres 2008).

9.4. Contributions to the field and opportunities for further research

The novel empirical research presented in this thesis raises a number of significant normative questions in an area that has been under-researched in political studies. By showing how the Mexican state has gradually legitimized cross-border political participation of its non-resident citizens by implementing constitutional and electoral reforms, I demonstrate how sending countries have, if not permanently at least in the long-run, opened up their political systems. Understanding why this takes place and what are the main consequences is of paramount importance as this phenomenon challenges traditional concepts such as ‘national territory’, ‘citizenship practices’, ‘nation-state’ and the limits of democracy. Some of these normative and practical questions are, for instance, how does international migration impact democratic

developments in the country of origin? What are the determinants of migrants' political participation at home? How does international migration impact the political behaviour of those that have stayed behind? What is the country of reception's response to immigrants' participation in their country of origin's political developments? How can emigrant political participation be better regulated? Thus, the phenomenon of emigrant political participation provides opportunities for further research from many different disciplines and perspectives, such as political theory, political economy, public policy and political sociology.

In particular, this thesis has sought to advance the development of two specific areas, namely, the transnationalist approach to international migration and democratization studies. From the transnationalist perspective, this thesis proposes the study of institutionalised or formal forms of emigrant electoral participation, as different from informal forms of migrants' cross-border political practices that have been mostly emphasised by earlier research in this field. From the democratization viewpoint, this thesis has proposed to view the extension of political rights to citizens abroad as an intrinsic part of recent democratization movements in migrant-sending countries, especially in the Latin American region.

The analysis presented raises the comparative enquiry of whether migrant politics have had similar effects in other Latin American countries and suggests analytic directions for future research. First, this work can be complemented by also including the perspective of the country of reception. What is the reception country's position regarding immigrants' participation in the political developments in their countries of origin? What actors are in favour and which oppose it and on

what grounds? Secondly, the Mexican case could be enriched by a comparative study with other countries in which government-sponsored collective remittances programmes take place such as El Salvador.

International migratory movements create ambiguities on who gets to participate in domestic political affairs and from where. In particular, it raises the question of whose responsibility is it to ensure migrants' political participation, the state of origin or of residency? In contrast to individual human rights, whose universalistic nature supersede national legislation (Soysal 1994), political rights, on the other hand, as the maximum expression of membership to a nation-state, depend ultimately on the approval of national governments. Emigrant electoral participation in the home country's domestic politics goes hand in hand with democratization processes and the adoption of an open economy that are experiencing an increasing number of sending countries. As these tendencies deepen and expand to other sending countries and regions, we will expect more people that have engaged in migratory movements to be able to participate in elections at home, for instance, by casting an absentee vote, having parliamentary representation or being able to run for public office in their country of origin without having to fulfil any residency requirements. International migration, thus, transforms how domestic politics are practiced and understood.

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Appendices

Annex 1. Government institutions, political parties, and migrant organisations in which unstructured interviews were conducted

Selected interviews conducted in Mexico City in 2005/2006

Government institutions

Federal Electoral Institute, Coordination of the Vote Abroad (IFE-COVE)

Ballados, Patricio. Coordinator of the COVE

Beltran, Yuri. Advisor

Palma Rangel, Manuel. Director of Planning

Polanco Gomez, Ana Maria. Sub-director of Outreach and Promotion

Lopez Margalli, Patricio. Sub-director of Postal Logistics and Follow-up

Sanchez Seabrook, Susana. Chief of the Department of Promotion and Outreach Support

Institute of Mexicans Abroad

Morales Rosas, Candido. Director

Gonzalez Gutierrez, Carlos. Executive Director

Medina Mora, Luisa. Director of Attention to Advisors

Flores Diaz, Margarita. Sub-director of Attention to Advisors

National Institute of Migration, Coordination of Migratory Studies

Rodriguez Chavez, Ernesto. Director

Calleros Alarcon, Juan Carlos. Advisor and researcher

Cortez Perez, Daniel. Legal studies

Ministry of Social Affairs (SEDESOL)

Mejia Guzman, Luis. Sub-minister of Social and Human Development

Palafox Palafox, German. Chief of the Micro-regions Unit

Legislators in the Senate and the Lower Chamber

Senators

Ortega Martinez, Jesus. PRD

Luebbert Gutierrez, Oscar. PRI

Rios Alvarez, Serafín. PAN, Michoacán representative and Rodrigo Franco his adviser

Max Jones Jones, Jeffrey. PAN
Hernandez, Silvia. PRI
Cardenas, Raymundo. PRD
Borrego Strada, Genaro. PRI, but later he switched to the PAN party
Corral Jurado, Javier. PAN

Federal deputies

Chauyffet Chemur, Emilio. Coordinator of the PRI parliamentary group
Guajardo Anzaldia, Juan Antonio
Ramirez Badillo, Emilio. PRI
Fernandez Caracho, Jaime. PRI and Francisco Gonzales his adviser
Hernandez Martinez, Ruth Trinidad. PAN
Aviles Najera, Rosa Maria. PRD
Mora Cipres, Francisco
Rodríguez Rocha, Ricardo. PRI
Torres, Enrique. PRD
Alejo Lopez Nunez, Pablo. PAN
Molinar Horcadita, Juan. PAN
Trejo Reyes, Jose Isabel. Representative for Zacatecas
Gonzalez Carrillo, Adriana. PAN
Garcia Ochoa, Juan Jose. PAN
Zebadua, Emilio. PRD but then he joined '*Nueva Alianza*'
Espinoza Perez, Luis Eduardo. PRD
Gomez Alvarez, Pablo. Coordinator of the PRD parliamentary group
Hernandez Perez, David. PRI
Cortez Jimenez, Rodrigo Ivan. PAN

Migrant groups

Coalition for the Rights of Mexicans Abroad (CPDPME)

Rodriguez, Primitivo
Ross, Raul (also interviewed in Chicago in April 2008)
Calderon, Leticia
Olamedi, Carlos
Badillo, Gonzalo
Martinez, Jesús
Pelayo, Luis

Selected interviews conducted in Zacatecas and Los Angeles in 2006 and 2007

Legislators

Pinto Nunez, Carlos. PRD
Cabral Banuelos, Ramon. PR
De la Cruz Ramirez, Manuel. PRD

'Bi-national' municipal presidents

Carvajal, Martin. Municipal president of Apulco and his main advisers
Bermudez Viramontes, Andres. Former municipal president of Jerez and currently
PAN federal deputy and President of the Commission on Migratory Issues.

Migrant groups

Zacatecan Civic Front (FCZ)

Moctezuma Longoria, Miguel.
Gomez, Guadalupe
Gonzalez, Francisco Javier

Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California

Hurtado, Rafael. Current president
Gomez, Guadalupe. Former president.

Reyes Mendez, Armando. Vice-president of 'Vanguardia Migrante' in Mid West

Other interviews were carried out with members of the academia

Garcia Zamora, Rodolfo
Delgado Wise, Raul

Selected interviews carried out in Michoacán in 2007 and in Chicago in 2008

Government institutions

Institute of Michoacans Abroad

Reynoso Acosta, Eneida and assistants

State Electoral Institute

Esparza, Salvador

Migrant groups

Binational Michocano Front (FREBIMICH)

Badillo Moreno, Gonzalo
Gutierrez, Jose Luis
Martinez Saldana. Also PRD local deputy.

Federación de Clubes Michoacanos en Illinois

Chávez, Rubén. Presidente (Chicago, 2008)

Asociación de Clubes Michoacanos en Illinois (ACMMI)

Estrada, Jesús. Presidente. (Chicago, 2008)

Other interviews cited:

Martinez, Erasmo Roberto. Mexican Mission to the UN agencies and the Human Rights Council in Geneva, 12 March 2005

Annex 2. Descriptive statistics on Mexico-US migration over history

Figure 1. Population of Mexican-origin residing in the US from 1900 to 2007 by 'Mexican-born' and 'second and third generation Mexican-origin'

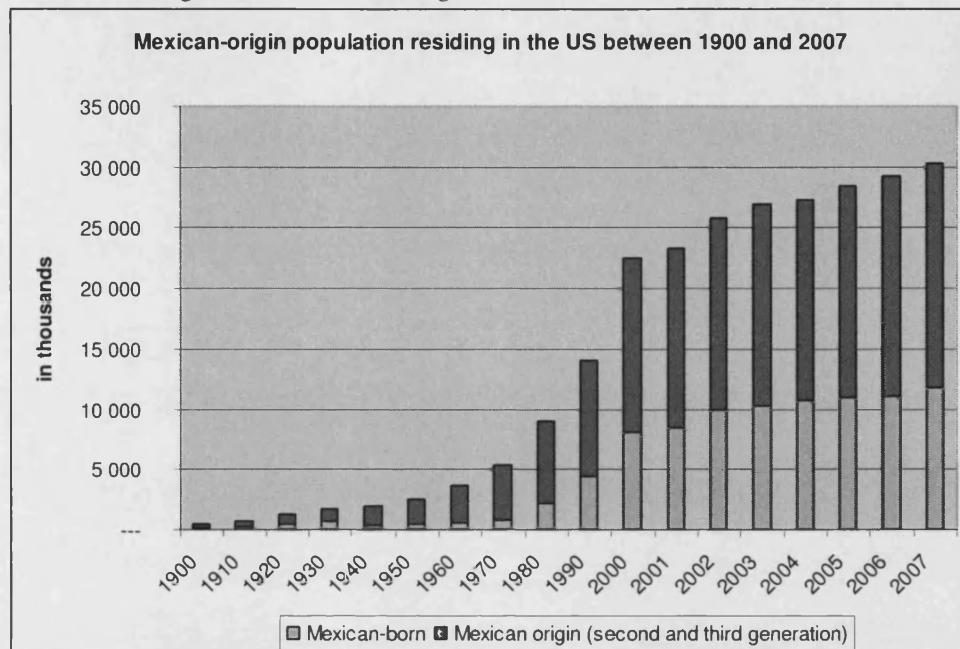


Table 1. Mexican-origin population residing in the US (1900-2007)

Year	Total	Mexican-origin			
		Mexican-born	Mexican-origin (second and third generation)	Second and third generation	
				Second generation	Third generation
1900	463	103	360	---	---
1910	718	222	496	---	---
1920	1 210	480	730	---	---
1930	1 729	640	1 089	---	---
1940	1 904	377	1 527	---	---
1950	2 573	451	2 122	---	---
1960	3 671	576	3 095	---	---
1970	5 422	788	4 634	---	---
1980	9 071	2 199	6 872	---	---
1990	14 094	4 447	9 647	---	---
2000	23 208	8 072	14 428	7 029	7 398
2001	23 997	8 494	14 855	7 303	7 552
2007	30 000	11 552	18 448		

2002	25 487	9 900	15 983	8 151	7 832
2003	26 663	10 237	16 797	8 116	8 681
2004	26 871	10 740	16 641	8 302	8 339
2005	28 059	11 027	17 465	8 650	8 815
2006	29 307	11 132	18 175	9 204	8 971
2007	30 266	11 812	18 454	9 632	8 823

Source: CONAPO 2008. From 1900 to 1990 based on: Corona Vazquez, Rodolfo. Estimate of Mexican-origin population that resides in the US, Colegio de la Frontera Norte, November 1992. From 2000 to 2007 based on: Estimates from the CONAPO based on Bureau of Census, Current Population Survey (CPS), March, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 y 2007.

Table 2. Characteristics of the working Mexican-born population in the US (by gender)

Mexican-born population of over 15 years old residing in the US by labour characteristics and gender (2007)			
Labour characteristics	Total	Gender	
		Men	Women
Working status			
Economically active population	10,946,362	6,153,023	4,793,340
Working	7,662,853	5,387,020	2,275,832
Unemployed	421,586	5,111,174	2,130,093
Economically inactive population	3,283,510	766,002	2,517,508
Working status (percentage)	100	100	100
Economically active population	70	88	47
Working	66	83	44
Unemployed	4	4	3
Economically active population	30	12	53
Working hours per week	100	100	100
34 or less	10	5	24
From 35 to 44 hours	75	78	67
45 or more	14	16	9
Average working hours per week	40	41	37
Type of work	100	100	100
Paid work	94	94	94
Other	6	6	6
Annual salary in dollars	100	100	100

Less than 10 000	11	7	20
From 10 000 to 19 999	34	32	40
From 20 000 to 29 999	28	29	23
From 30 000 to 39 999	14	16	8
From 40 000 or more	13	15	8
Average annual salary in dollars	24,270	26,265	19,237
Number of employees	100	100	100
Less than 10 people	27	28	23
From 10 to 24 persons	17	19	11
From 25 to 99 people	17	18	15
From 100 to 499 people	14	13	15
From 500 to 999 people	4	4	4
From 1 000 people or more	22	18	32
Type of economic activity	100	100	100
Primary sector	4	5	2
Secondary sector	41	50	18
Third sector	55	45	80
Type of job	100	100	100
Professional occupation	7	6	11
Job in services, sales and administration	15	8	31
Cleaning and preparation of food products	23	20	32
Agriculture, fishing	4	5	2
Construction, maintenance and repairing	28	39	2
Transport and production	23	23	21
Extraction	0	0	0

Source: CONAPO, Table III.3.4, 2007

Table 3. Main destinations in the US

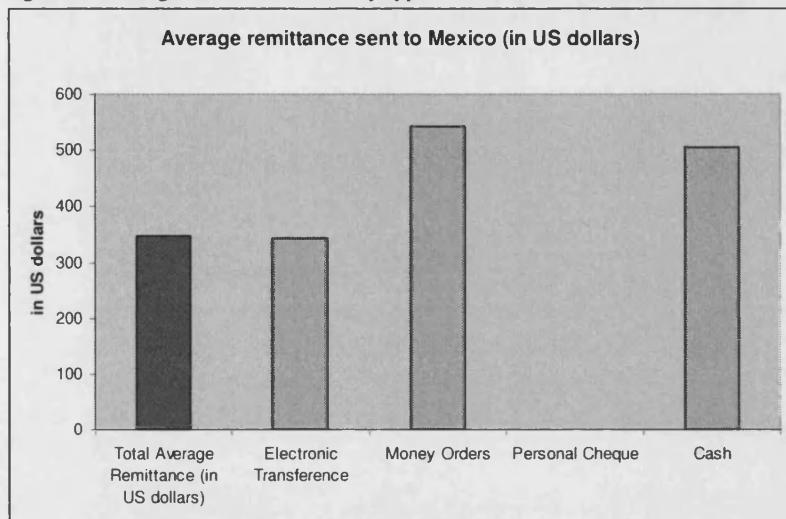
Rating of main US states where Mexican-born immigrants reside (in absolute numbers)	
State of residence in the US	Mexican population
California	4,319,797
Texas	2,311,450
Illinois	715,174
Arizona	593,954
Florida	289,455
Georgia	274,331

Colorado	245,161
North Carolina	228,256
Nevada	201,212
New York	196,961
Washington	196,284
Oregon	147,988
New México	119,651
Utah	94,923
New Jersey	91,654
Indiana	83,804
Michigan	83,038
Oklahoma	77,331
Wisconsin	76,149
Kansas	69,291
Tennessee	62,972
Minnesota	62,623
South Carolina	58,179
Virginia	55,715
Idaho	54,111
Arkansas	50,601
Pennsylvania	47,063
Missouri	42,546
Iowa	40,728
Ohio	40,728
Nebraska	39,633
Alabama	36,101
Maryland	34,272
Kentucky	24,712
Connecticut	18,572
Delaware	15,937
Mississippi	14,686
Louisiana	13,536
Wyoming	5,971
District of Colombia	3,492
South Dakota	2,581
Alaska	2,412
Virginia	1,851
Montana	1,278

Source: CONAPO, Table III.1.3, 2007

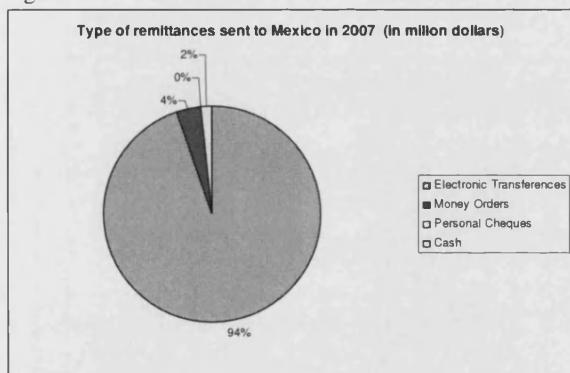
Annex 3. Family remittances

Figure 1. Average remittance value by type of transference (2007)



Source: Bank of Mexico, 2008

Figure 2.



Source: Bank of Mexico, 2008

Table 1.

Concept	Type of remittances sent to Mexico		Variation 2007	Variation (B/A)
	Annual	January-September		
	2007 (A)	2008 (B)		
Total Remittances (in million US dollars)	23,969.53	18,198.26	17,525.67	0.96 -3.7
Electronic Transferences	22,715.38	17,234.68	16,744.83	3.11 -2.84
Money Orders	859.67	685.86	464.77	-36.78 -32.24
Personal Cheques	0	0	0	N/E N/E

Cash	394.48	277.73	316.07	11.7	13.81
Number of total remittances (in millions)	68.78	51.76	50.19	1.3	-3.04
Electronic Transferences	66.41	49.95	48.56	3.11	-2.78
Money Orders	1.59	1.26	1.06	-44.25	-15.65
Personal Cheques	0	0	0	N/E	N/E
Cash	0.78	0.56	0.57	21.71	1.97
Average Remittance (in US dollars)	348.51	351.57	349.21	-0.34	-0.67
Electronic Transference	342.05	345.04	344.83	0	-0.06
Money Orders	542.08	545.33	438.11	13.41	-19.66
Personal Cheque	0	0	0	N/E	N/E
Cash	504.63	499.9	557.96	-8.22	11.61

Source: Bank of Mexico, 2008

Table 2.

Family remittances received by state in 2007 (in million dollars)	
Mexican states	Remittances received
Michoacán	2262.7
Guanajuato	2142.2
Estado de Mexico	2022.4
Jalisco	1937.1
Puebla	1495.3
Veracruz	1473.3
Distrito Federal	1371.5
Oaxaca	1271.8
Guerrero	1239.1
Hidalgo	952.2
Chiapas	779.4
San Luis Potosí	669.1
Zacatecas	595.6
Morelos	581.2
Sinaloa	495.4
Tamaulipas	488.3
Queretaro	436.1
Chihuahua	426.3
Durango	399.5
Nayarit	349.3
Nuevo Leon	349.1
Aguascalientes	338.8
Baja California	332.5
Sonora	330.8

Tlaxcala	282
Coahuila	281.7
Colima	186.8
Tabasco	164.3
Yucatan	124.4
Quintana Roo	95.3
Campeche	64.8
Baja California Sur	31.5
Total	23969.8

Source: Bank of Mexico, 2008

Annex 4. Collective remittances through '3X1' programme (information compiled during interviews and data provided by SEDESOL in 2006 and 2008)

Objectives of the '3X1' programme

The '3X1' programme is a federal government's response to migrants' demands to carry out community projects, adding the participation of the three levels of government, as well the clubs and federation of migrants.

- a. to channel collective remittances for social projects
- b. to benefit communities of origin directly, many highly marginalized and poor
- c. to promote and strengthen the creation of Mexican clubs settled in the US
- d. to increase the interaction between society and government
- e. to create migrants' identity bonds with their communities in Mexico and the country

Requirements for eligibility

Projects that:

- 1. respond to initiatives of groups and organisations settled abroad
- 2. that have the financial participation of migrant groups or organisations and the three levels of government
- 3. that contribute to solve shortages in basic infrastructure and services, as well as how to generate more jobs and income for the population

Types of projects:

- a. drinking water, drainage, and electrification
- b. Paving and construction of roads
- c. Education, sports and health infrastructure
- d. Streets and roads
- e. Community productive projects
- f. Community centres

Types of project financing

- 1. Normally SEDESOL give 25%, migrants 25% and the state and municipality governments give 50%
- 2. SEDESOL can give a maximum amount of 800,000 pesos per project
- 3. In 2008, the rules of operation allow financing 1X1 (SEDESOL-Migrants) when migrants do not have state or municipal support
- 4. Also, '4X1' and '5X1' schemes can be implemented when other federal institutions or private sector companies participate

Statistics

27 state participants: Aguascalientes, Campeche, Colima, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Durango, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Oaxaca, Puebla, Queretaro, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosi, Sinaloa, Mexico, Michoacán, Morelos, Nayarit, Nuevo Leon, Sonora, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala, Veracruz, Yucatan, Zacatecas.

Table 1.

Evaluation according to main indicators		Results (in percentage)
Indicators	Description	
Rate of approval	Number of approved projects (1072)/ number of projects presented (1222)	87.70%
Percentage of social infrastructure projects	Social infrastructure projects (794)/ total of approved projects (1072)	74.10%
Resources used in localities of high or very high marginalization	Federal budget applied to localities with high or very high marginalization (39.7)/Federal budget in the programme (479.6)	8.30%

Table 2.

Participants of '3X1' programmes (2002-2007)						
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Projects	942	899	1436	1691	1274	1613
Municipalities that participate	247	257	383	425	417	443
Mexican states that participate	20	18	23	26	26	27
Migrant groups that participate	20	200	527	815	723	857
US states of residence	8	17	31	35	34	37

Table 3.

Budget in million dollars (10 pesos=1 dollar)						
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Federal (assigned to '3X1' projects)	11.37	9.99	17.59	23.21	19.2	25.77
State, Municipality and Migrants	26.65	27.77	46.18	61.97	55.69	69.08

Table 4. Types of projects implemented with '3X1' funding (2002-2007)

Types of projects	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Drinking water, drainage, and electrification	226	274	547	440	236	376
Roads and streets	67	57	83	100	58	77
Health, Education and Sports	190	113	114	151	122	186
Urbanization and Paving	276	282	477	591	452	623
Scholarships '3X1'	0	0	0	15	25	66
Community centres	127	143	160	298	317	220
Productive projects	40	22	53	77	45	50
Other	16	8	2	19	19	5
Total	2944	2902	3440	3696	3280	3610

Annex 5. COVE survey questionnaire (translated into English)

Sample size: 580 people (2.96% response rate)

People that received the questionnaire: 19,571

Date: December 2006

Gender groups

Female (42%)

Male (55%)

Age groups

20-24	4%
20-25	20%
30-34	26%
35-39	18%
40-44	13%
45-49	7%
50-54	5%
55-59	2%
60-64	1%
65 or more	1%

Questions:

1. How did you find out you could vote for the presidential elections in Mexico abroad this year?
 - TV ad (29%)
 - News (25%)
 - Internet (12%)
 - Print media (12%)
 - Friends and family in Mexico (11%)
 - Embassy or consulate (8%)
 - Friends and family (7%)
 - Radio ad (2%)
 - Don't know. Don't remember (2%)
 - Other (3%)
2. The time you had since you found out you could vote and apply for registration, was it enough? You had time but not enough? Or you did not have time at all to carry out the process?
 - Enough time (73%)
 - Not much (13%)
 - Not enough (14%)
 - Don't know; don't remember (1%)
3. How did you obtain the application to be able to vote?
 - On Internet (59%)

- In paper (39%)
- Don't know (2%)

4. If in paper, where did you get it from?

- Consulate (17%)
- Mexican embassy (5%)
- By mail (4%)
- Airport (4%)
- In a store (2%)
- You sent it to me (1%)
- Home address (1%)
- Mexican shop (1%)
- Other (6%)

5. If in paper, how easy was to get it?

- Very easy (28%)
- Not very easy (7%)
- A bit difficult (4%)
- Very difficult (1%)

6. What conditions they set for you to get it?

- None (32%)
- Don't know; don't remember (7%)

7. If by Internet, How easy was to navigate in the webpage?

- Very easy (36%)
- Not very easy (16%)
- A bit difficult (5%)
- Very difficult (1%)
- Don't know, depends (1%)

8. When you found the webpage, how easy was it to find the application?

- Very easy (37%)
- Not very easy (17%)
- A bit hard (6%)
- Very difficult (1%)
- Don't know, depends (1%)

9. Together with your application you were given a booklet with instructions on how to fill it in and send it. You, personally, did you think that the booklet was clear in the instructions or not?

- Yes (77%)
- In some cases, in others not (14%)
- Not (4%)
- Did not receive any instructive (2%)
- Don't know; don't remember (1%)

10. Did the booklet have complete instructions? Or were there some missing?

- Full instructions (80%)
- Some things missing (11%)
- Don't know; don't remember (5%)

11. About the required documentation for you to vote. Did you have your voting credential with photograph before or had you to process one for this election?

- Yes, I had it with me here (93%)
- I had to process it (2%)
- Yes, but in Mexico (3%)

12. About your proof of address. Did you have the proof of address or did you have to process it?

- Yes, I had it (90%)
- I had to process it (8%)
- Don't know, don't remember 2%)

13. About sending your application by certified post (registered). Are the Post Offices accessible and easily found?

- Yes, they are accessible (80%)
- No, they are not and they are not easily recognized (6%)
- Yes, they are accessible but not easily recognized (5%)
- Yes, they are easily recognized but not accessible (4%)
- Don't know, depends (3%)

14. What did you think about the cost of sending the application by registered post: Accessible, not very accessible, or expensive?

- Accessible (43%)
- Not very accessible (21%)
- Expensive (29%)
- Don't know. Don't remember (5%)

15. Did you receive any notification from the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) about problems with your application because your documentation was incomplete?

- No (67%)
- Yes (31%)
- Don't know; don't remember (1%)

16. If you received a notification. What was the problem?

- Sending application by ordinary post (16%)
- A signature was missing on the copy of the voting credential (3%)
- Proof of address was not valid/ not accepted (2%)
- Proof of address was missing (1%)
- A copy of the voting credential was missing (1%)
- Application was not signed (1%)

- Other (7%)

17. If you received a notification. After the notification, could you reinstate your application or not?

- Not (21%)
- Yes (10%)

18. Did you receive your Electoral Postal Package (PEP) with all the necessary to be able to cast a vote from where you reside? (Only the ones that could reinstate their application)

- Yes (8%)
- No (2%)

19. Did you send your vote by post to Mexico? (Only the ones that could reinstate their application)

- Yes (9%)
- No (1%)

20. If you could not reinstate your application. Why were you not successful at reinstating your application?

- The deadline had passed (10%)
- Other (2%)

21. If you could not reinstate your application. Why did you not try to reinstate it?

- Lack of time (7%)
- Other (2%)

22. Did you receive any notification from the IFE saying that you could not be registered to vote?

- No (72%)
- Yes (22%)

23. If you received a notification. What was the problem?

- Ordinary post (9%)
- My details were wrong (1%)
- The application was received after the deadline (4%)
- Other (5%)

24. Were you requested to change some details in the application?

- No (15%)
- Yes (6%)

25. If you were requested to correct your details. After that, were you able to register?

- No (5%)
- Yes (1%)

26. The IFE sent a package called PEP (Electoral Postal Package) that included a ballot and other materials and about that we will ask you a few questions. Did you receive the PEP at your home address or did you pick it up at a Post Office?

- At home address (49%)
- From a Post Office (25%)
- I did not receive the PEP (20%)
- Other (1%)

27. If you received the PEP, When did you receive it?

- Before 1 June (32%)
- Between 2 and 7 June (5%)
- Between 8 and 22 June (4%)
- After 23 June (3%)
- Don't know; don't remember (30%)

28. The time you had to check the contents of the package, to reflect your vote and to send it, was it enough?, enough but a bit tight?, or not enough? (the ones that received the PEP)

- It was enough (62%)
- Not enough (2%)
- Enough, but a bit tight (9%)

29. To find out whether the PEP arrived complete, select the material that had the package that you received.

- Ballot (419)
- Envelop to send it to Mexico (422)
- Instructions on how to vote abroad (420)
- International response coupons or stamps for postage (375)
- Booklet and CDs or DVDs with information about political parties and candidates (413)
- CDs or DVDs with candidates' videos or audios (407)
- Commemorative bracelet (346)

30. Was the PEP's booklet with instructions on how to vote clear? (only the ones that received the PEP)

- Yes (68%)
- Some things, others not (4%)
- Not (1%)

31. Was the information about the parties and candidates clear? (only the ones that received the PEP)

- Yes (58%)
- No (3%)
- Some things, others not (11%)
- No, I did not receive any information about political parties and candidates (1%)
- Don't know; don't remember (1%)

32. Do you think that the information about political parties and candidates was enough or not? (only the ones that received the PEP)

- Yes (38%)
- No (18%)
- Some things, others not (16%)
- Don't know. Don't remember (1%)

33. To what extent did the information contained in the booklets, CDs or DVDs influence you vote? (only the ones that received the PEP)

- It did not influence it (38%)
- Influenced it, but not much (24%)
- Influenced it very much (24%)

34. At the moment in which you crossed the ballot, were you alone or accompanied? (only the ones that received the PEP)

- Alone (62%)
- Accompanied (9% -- Family 8%, Friends 1%)

35. Was the prepay that the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) gave you enough to be able to post the vote? (only the ones that received the PEP)

- Yes (61%)
- Not enough, but in the end I could send it (9%)
- Don't know, depends (2%)

36. In the case of the coupons. Did you have any problem for their use or exchange?

- Didn't have any problem (25%)
- Had problems in their use and exchange (2%)
- Had problems only in their use (1%)
- Had problems only in their exchange (1%)

37. Were you asked for any sort of payment? (only the ones that received the PEP)

- No (54%)
- Yes (12%)
- Don't know; don't remember (3%)

38. Did you try to communicate with the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) at some stage in the process?

- Yes (28%)
- No (61%)
- Yes, but it was not possible (8%)

39. By what means did you try to communicate? (only those that did try to communicate)

- Telephone (15%)
- E-mail (6%)

- Website (www.MxVote06.org) (6%)
- Other (1%)

40. Why did you try to communicate?

- Clarifications about the process (9%)
- Doubts about the registry (4%)
- Doubts about some stage in the process (3%)
- Doubts about posting the vote (2%)
- Information about voting credentials (where and how to obtain it) (1%)

41. How adequate was the response according to what you requested?

(only those that tried to communicate)

- Not very adequate (10%)
- Very adequate (13%)
- Adequate, but not much (5%)

42. To what extent did the response received clarified your doubt? (only those that tried to communicate)

- Clarified completely my doubt (12%)
- Clarified my doubt but not completely (5%)
- Did not clarify my doubt (7%)

43. Talking about the awareness campaign of the vote abroad, please tell me, where did you see or listen publicity related?

- Television (78%)
- Print media (39%)
- Radio (32%)
- Embassy/ Consulate (19%)
- Establishments (7%)
- Football stadiums (2%)
- Other (7%)
- Didn't see any ad (12%)

44. About the publicity material that you saw or listened to, please tell me, what was it that those messages tried to tell you?

- Deliver the news that I could vote abroad (81%)
- Explain what I had to do in order to vote abroad (37%)
- Explain where you could get more information (33%)
- Other (1%)

45. How much did these messages motivate you to participate in order to vote from abroad?

- They motivated me a lot (42%)
- They motivated me, but not much (35%)
- They did not motivate me (8%)
- Don't know. Don't remember (2%)

46. Did you ever visit the webpage (www.MxVote06.org)? Could you get information about all the stages in the process or not?

- Yes (61%)
- No (36%)

47. Was the webpage useful or not? (only those that visited the page)

- Yes (48%)
- No (7%)
- Sometimes, others not (12%)

48. How many times did you visit it? (only those that visited the page)

- Between 1 and 3 times (42%)
- Between 4 and 7 (15%)
- More than 7 times (6%)

49. Did you ever call the free number IFETEL (1-86-MxVote06) to clarify any doubts about the process?

- Yes (29%)
- No (63%)

50. Was this number useful or not? (only those that called)

- Yes (17%)
- No (9%)
- Sometimes, others not (6%)

51. How many times did you call approximately? (only those that called)

- Between 1 and 3 times (22%)
- Between 4 and 7 times (5%)
- More than 7 times (2%)

52. When you called, were the instructions easy or complicated? (only those that called)

- Easy (18%)
- Complicated (5%)
- Not easy, not complicated (6%)

53. On average, how many times have you called Mexico in the last month?

- Between 1 and 4 times (28%)
- Between 5 and 10 (29%)
- More than 10 (36%)
- Have not called (4%)

54. On average, how many times have you sent money to Mexico in the last three months?

- Between 1 and 4 times (31%)
- Between 5 and 10 (11%)
- More than 10 (6%)
- Have not sent (49%)

55. How many times have you been to the consulate in the last year?

- Between 1 and 3 times (45%)
- Between 4 and 8 (5%)
- More than 8 (2%)
- Have not been at all (45%)

56. Do you belong to any organisation of Mexicans here where you reside?

- Yes (19%)
- No (78%)

57. Do you read any newspaper or magazine to be aware about what is happening in Mexico or not?

- Yes (88%)
- No (10%)

58. You, personally, how interested are you in Mexican politics?

- Very interested (82%)
- Interested, but not much (16%)

59. As far as you know or from the comments that you have heard, what do you think were the main problems that led other Mexicans to decide not to vote from abroad? Choose one, what do you think is the most important.

- Not having a voting credential (32%)
- They found out late or did not find out (20%)
- Complicated process (15%)
- They did not want to give their details for fear to the '*migra*' (border police) (13%)
- They simply did not want to vote (13%)
- Don't know, depends (5%)

60. In your opinion, what was the most complicated process to vote from abroad?

- Have or obtain a voting credential (28%)
- Having to send the application by registered vote (24%)
- Meet the requirements (12%)
- Get an application (8%)
- Pay for the postage (5%)
- Send the vote (2%)
- Fill in the application (2%)
- Don't know, depends (5%)
- Other (10%)
- No answer (7%)

61. Which one of the following options do you think is a better way to vote from abroad and keep the vote secret? Choose one, the one you think it is the best.

- Internet vote (34%)
- Ballot box in consulates (34%)
- Postal vote (26%)
- Telephone vote (1%)
- Other (3%)

62. What benefit do you feel in having participated in the presidential election from abroad?

- I feel part of my country (45%)
- I carry out a civic duty (39%)
- I don't feel any benefit (5%)
- I feel I support my loved ones (4%)
- None of the above (3%)

63. Changing the topic. In general terms, what did you think about the electoral and promotional material? Useful or not very useful?

- Useful (62%)
- Not very useful (28%)
- Don't know, depends (6%)

64. Nice or ugly?

- Nice (61%)
- Ugly (11%)
- Don't know, depends (22%)

65. Adequate or inadequate?

- Adequate (68%)
- Inadequate (14%)
- Don't know, depends (11%)

66. Enough or not enough?

- Enough (62%)
- Not enough (24%)
- Don't know, depends (8%)

67. Was it as it was expected?

- More of what it was expected (58%)
- Less of what it was expected (20%)
- Don't know, depends (16%)

68. From the Mexicans that you know that voted from abroad and from what you know or have heard. How important was it for them to vote in the presidential election in Mexico this year?

- Very important (60%)
- Important, but not much (20%)
- Not important (4%)
- Don't know, depends (13%)

69. And for you, personally, how important was it that you could vote for the presidential election in Mexico from abroad?

- Very important (90%)
- Important, but not much (3%)
- Not important (1%)
- Don't know, depends (2%)

70. In which country were you born?

- Mexico (96%)
- US (1%)
- Other (2%)

71. In which country do you reside?

- US (64%)
- Spain (10.2%)
- Canada (4.3%)
- France (3.3%)
- Germany (3%)
- United Kingdom (2.8%)
- Italy (2.2%)
- Sweden (1%)
- Switzerland (1%)
- Netherlands (0.8%)
- Australia (0.5%)
- Chile (0.5%)
- Costa Rica (0.5%)
- Others

72. How long have you been living outside Mexico?

- Between 1 and 5 years (45%)
- Between 6 and 10 (31%)
- More than 10 (20%)
- Less than 1 year (2%)

73. Have you acquired the nationality of the country where you reside?

- Yes (14%)
- No (72%)
- In process (11%)

74. Where do you work or what do you do? (see chapter 5)

75. How many years did you study? (see chapter 5)

Annex 6. Zacatecan migrant legislator Manuel de la Cruz, activities at the state legislature between 2004 and 2006

Table 1.

Policy-making activities of the migrant deputy Manuel de la Cruz between 2004 and 2006 in the legislature of the state of Zacatecas			
Product	Content	Date	Status
Legal initiative	That proclaims December, the 18th as the day of the Zacatecan Migrant Worker	07-Dec-04	In Commission
	To add the requirements to those candidates that aspire to represent migrants	31-May 05	In Commission
	To allow Zacatecans abroad to vote for governor, deputies and municipal presidents	24-Aug-05	Approved in general
	To allow citizens to supervise, guard and execute public work	25-Apr-05	In Commission
Points of agreement	To request resources to the federal government for the '3X1' programme for migrants	30-Sep-04	Approved in general and in particular
	To support former 'braceros' that request the payment of their savings	26-Oct-04	Approved in general and in particular
	In support, as the state's legislative power, for the vote of Mexicans abroad	14-Apr-05	Approved in general and in particular
	To allow the issuance of voting credentials to the highest number possible of Mexican migrants settled in the US	10-May 05	Approved in general and in particular
	In support to former 'braceros' without documentation	09-Jun-05	Approved in general
	To propose that the state's legislative shows solidarity with Central American migrants that transit through Zacatecas	26-Jul-05	Approved in general and in particular
	To request the Ministry of Tax and Revenue that publishes rules of operation that define the payment to former 'braceros'	16-Aug-05	Approved in general and in particular
	To request the Federal Executive to carry out the legal and diplomatic processes with the US government, so that the organization 'Centre of Agricultural Workers: Bracero Project' gives back the documents to those former Zacatecan 'braceros', from whom those documents were removed illegally	29-Nov-05	Approved in general and in particular

	To request the Federal Executive to carry out a judicial investigation for the murder of Guillermo Martinez Rodriguez, which took place in December, the 31rst 2005 between the border of Mexico and the US	11-Jan-06	Approved in general
	To exhort the Ministry of Tax and Revenue to re-assign resources through the Ministry of Social Development for the '3X1' programme for migrants in the state of Zacatecas	22-Feb-06	Approved in general and in particular
Exhortative	To request the Ministry of Tax and Revenue and the Ministry of Government (SEGOB) to extend the deadline for registry to 'braceros' until the 31rst of May 2006. In addition, to request the Commission of Population, Frontiers and Migratory Issues in the Federal Congress to carry out a reform to Article 6 of the Law that creates the trust fund for former 'braceros', so that those, which can prove with their registration (in SEGOB) or otherwise show their original contract, could be added as beneficiaries	06-Jun-06	Approved in general and in particular
	To support the veto to the SB1-160 proposal in the state of California	07-Oct-04	Sent to the state of California
	To carry out Decree 204, which advised that the phrase 'the Zacatecan Migrant' was found on the walls of the state's legislature	01-Dec-04	Approved and executed
	To the government of the state of Zacatecas, so that its police forces do not commit any abuses against those that have cars that came from abroad	11-Jul-05	Approved and sent to the state's executive
	To municipal, state and federal dependences to give support to the ' <i>paisano</i> ' programme	13-Dec-05	Approved and sent to three levels of government
	To municipal, state and federal dependencies in order to train their personnel and police forces with the aim of protecting the integrity of ' <i>paisanos</i> ' and their families on their way back to Mexico	26-Jun-06	Approved and sent to the three levels of government
	Against the deviant actions of vigilantes against Latinos	26-Apr-05	Sent to the Federal Executive
Pronouncement	To meet in the monument of 'the migrant', where government and society can express our support of immigrants in the US	06-Apr-06	Published in the main media channels

In representation of the Zacatecan society to the Latino Movement in the US for a comprehensive reform for the benefit of millions of undocumented immigrants

18-Apr-06

Compilation
of four
documents
written by
experts on the
topic