Transnationalism, the State, and the Extraterritorial Citizen

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During the past three decades growing numbers of Mexican transnational migrants have consolidated complex systems of social networks spanning the U.S.-Mexican border. Initially attracted by jobs and opportunities not available in their communities of origin, the migrants have developed regularized practices that support border crossings and allow them to live in bi-national households, forge transnational linkages, and reproduce cross-border social relationships. What implications do these transnational connections have for the related processes of transnational network formation and identity construction? How has this question been approached in the transnationalism literature? With what effects?

Much of the literature on transnational migration is grounded in economic sociology. It has tended to approach this question by focusing on the macro-economic driving forces of global migration\(^1\) or the micro-economic practices of “immigrant entrepreneurs” represented as common people whose entrepreneurial practices create “transnational communities” engaged in resistance to the hegemonic logic of global capitalism.\(^2\) Reacting against the largely economic logic underlying this approach, anthropologists and cultural studies scholars working in the field of transnationalism have contributed to our understanding of how everyday practices of ordinary people produce cultural meanings that sustain transnational networks and make possible enduring trans-local ties.\(^3\)

Transnational scholars have generally acknowledged that transnational processes are unavoidably “anchored in” while also transcending the institutional and geographical boundaries of the nation-state.\(^4\) Others have offered evidence of the role of the state in efforts to reincorporate transnational migrants into state-centered efforts to construct a “deterриториализed” nationhood.\(^5\) Yet these scholars have not made politics the central focus of their analysis of transnational practices and processes. The emphasis has been on economic logic vs. cultural meaning as driving forces in trans-migration and on the interplay of culture and economy in the making of transnational subjects. Despite some
recent efforts to quantify transnational political practices,\(^6\) political transnationalism is still a largely underdeveloped dimension of transnational studies.

This study brings politics directly into the foreground. It shows that political space is an unavoidable meeting ground where pluri-local economic and cultural relations across national borders are social constructed. Put differently, in any particular time and place, macro-economic conditions and micro-level cultural practices are necessarily mediated by “meso-level” political institutions, agencies, understandings, and practices.\(^7\)

Starting from this political optic on transnationalism, the story I am about to tell is one in which officials of the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), the relatively conservative political party that has dominated the regional state of Guanajuato, Mexico under Vicente Fox and his successor Governor Romero Hicks, have sough to reconstitute Guanajuatense transmigrants as clients and funders of new state economic and social policy initiatives, as political subjects with “dual loyalty” but limited political autonomy. I will show that the trans-local character of global migration networks has created unique opportunities for PAN elites to try to reconfigure the meanings of “nation,” “region,” and “citizen” in order to co-opt extraterritorial migrant groups into local and regional development projects designed by the state but financed by the migrants. Yet, the PAN’s effort is now actively contested by migrant “home-town” leaders whose views of extraterritorial citizenship, translocal community, and party loyalty differ sharply from those of party elites and who have begun to view the state initiatives as diverting their energies from true civil society and local development initiatives.

This article will reveal the character and consequences of the deployment of particular discourses, policies, and practices that constitute a partisan political project that seeks to reincorporate transnational migrants into the Panista regional state. The first three sections of the article focus on the changing representation by the state of “the migrant,” --i.e., -- the elevation, indeed, the glorification of the migrant in Guanajuatense public discourse. This transformation of the migrant from an “outsider” disdainfully labeled a pocho\(^8\) to an extra-territorial “insider” entitled to citizen rights has been used to construct an ongoing but increasingly uncertain collaboration between the state and its migrant diaspora. The questions addressed in these sections are: What specific projects has the Panista state initiated to recapture the loyalties and tap into the resources of the
migrants, to engage their material and social capital? How does the state seek to involve transnational migrants in projects that it sponsors? What social constructions of “migrant,” “community,” and “citizenship,” (or more precisely, “dual citizenship”) inform this discourse? How are these social constructions symbolized, understood, and enacted in the policy making discourses of the state? With what effects? In the latter sections of the article I turn to the issue of the agency of the migrants as extraterritorial citizens. The questions addressed here are: How have these initiatives been received by the transmigrants? What consequences are emerging on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border from this new politics of transnational migrant re-incorporation? Who are the winners and losers in the politics of extraterritorial citizenship?

Celebratory readings of recent political changes in Mexico have suggested that we are witnessing the authentic birth of Mexican democracy because of changes in party competition and the replacement of the national hierarchy by a reformist PAN leadership under Vicente Fox. Enthusiastic accounts of the emergence of extraterritorial citizenship by transnational migrants have likewise depicted these developments as signs of a new democratic opening “from below.” Sometimes these two celebratory narratives are even combined, as in Vicente Fox’s own frequent efforts to portray the political reincorporation of Mexico’s transnational migrant population as a key dimension of the rebirth of a vital Mexican civil society. But perhaps this enthusiasm is premature. These changes at the top and from below are real enough but they do not necessarily entail a wholesale transformation of Mexican political culture.

Such political changes are necessarily mediated by actors and institutions of the state and civil society “from in-between” whose practices may be affected by changes from above and below but who also can be expected to embody longstanding understandings of how politics is normally practiced. For seventy years the Mexican state was viewed in the prevailing political culture largely as a mechanism for incorporating new clientele groups into state controlled projects by exchanging various forms of patronage for partisan political support. At the regional level in many parts of Mexico PRI cadres still control political office and maintain influence in many state and non-state institutions whose decisions effect everyday state and local political life. Moreover, research on the past track record of the PAN in those states where that party has held governmental power for
several years suggests that it may be premature to expect the PAN to act as a force for democratization of Mexican civil society.\textsuperscript{12} Perhaps, indeed, the clientelist pattern of political incorporation has staying power, even in those parties that have advanced a successful electoral challenge to the PRI. We thus need to ask how much is new in the extraterritorial politics of PAN and how much has a familiar clientelist ring?

**Research Design**

This case study is based on qualitative fieldwork and documentary analysis conducted in California and in Mexico from July 2000 until the present time. The study employs a qualitative-historical case study methodology. The research methods combine participant observation, elite interviewing, transnational ethnography,\textsuperscript{13} and historically contextualized political economic and documentary analysis. The aim is to investigate the emergence of a political offensive at the regional level linking PAN politicians from Guanajuato and a group of Mexican transmigrants who came to Napa, California from the village of El Timbinal, Guanajuato in the 1980's but have maintained ties to and promoted community development projects in their community of origin. To provide a context for this study, documentary data were gathered on the historical emergence of public policies in Mexico and Guanajuato designed to reorient migrants’ loyalties and identities so that they willingly contribute to a variety of state-centered development projects, including the programs discussed in this paper. Officials interviewed in Guanajuato provided some of these documentary materials. Others derived from other Mexican sources including the National Institute of Geography, Statistics and Information (INEGI), the Guanajuato International Trade Commission (COFOCE), and the archival resources of the Center for North American Studies (CISAN) of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).

The qualitative field interviews in California and Mexico were jointly conducted in three stages by myself and Postgraduate Research Assistant Gustavo Galindo. A series of ethnographic interviews were conducted in Napa, California with key transnational migrant investors who live and work in Napa but maintain economic and social ties to El Timbinal, their community of origin. Second, in March 2001 we visited a transmigrant-financed maquiladora in El Timbinal and interviewed the male manager of the factory, a
small group of female factory workers, and other community residents. The data obtained in the third stage of our fieldwork is central to the present paper. During our trip to Mexico we went to the state capital, Guanajuato, Guanajuato, to conduct elite interviews with key Guanajuato state planners and politicians responsible for creating and implementing migrant oriented programs in the state such as the “Casa Guanajuato” Clubs and the “Mi Comunidad” maquiladora program discussed below. The respondents interviewed by this procedure are appointed or elected public officials affiliated with the PAN party. These officials were asked to explain the full range of existing programs that target the migrant community from Guanajuato, to detail the formation of the programs, and to characterize other joint ventures that they are pursuing with transmigrants in other local communities in their state. Officials also were asked to characterize the role of Mexican federal, state and municipal governments in implementing these types of transnational public policies.

**Policy Antecedents: Reconstructing “The Migrant”**

Although current efforts to constitute an extra-territorial Mexican nation date back only two decades, the historical antecedents of the Mexican state’s efforts to maintain a relationship with its diaspora in the United States are much older. From the very outset of the U.S. annexation of parts of Mexico in 1848 until well into the twentieth century the Mexican state sought to maintain a relationship with its migrant population abroad through the activities of its consulates, by intermittent efforts to deploy revolutionary nationalist discourses to encourage migrant’s continuing allegiance to their patria, and by developing formal channels to encourage migrants to transfer resources and eventually return to Mexico. As Guarnizo has shown, since the 1980’s the collage of ad hoc policies and practices used to instill nationalism and secure remittances from Mexican migrants in earlier decades has become institutionalized by various state agencies. These agencies have pursued a coherent framework for action, one best characterized as a transnationalization of the PRI’s traditional corporatist strategy. No longer driven by revolutionary nationalist impulses, this strategy is being shaped by emerging political and economic elite sectors that accept many of the key premises of neo-liberal ideology and
have developed policies toward the Mexican diaspora in order to favorably reposition Mexico in the emergent international political economy and vis a vis the United States.\textsuperscript{14}

By the late 1980’s a change in the Mexican government’s attitude toward “the migrant” was clearly discernible. Through a series of policy and program initiatives “the migrant,” once regarded as a Chicano or even a pocho lost to the fatherland and entitled to no Mexican citizen rights (or at best, as a potential source of pressure on the U.S. government to improve US-Mexican relations) is now actively promoted as a benefit to the nation and an “extra-territorial citizen”.\textsuperscript{15} The migrant’s reintegration into the fatherland is actively inscribed in the discourses and practices of the main political parties and in their public policies. The migrant in these discourses is uniformly gendered as a male and generally represented in class terms as a peasant. The male migrant has been recast as a quintessentially heroic figure – a courageous border-crosser with deep cultural roots at “home” – where home can be taken to mean the nation, the region of origin (e.g., “the Guanajuatense” homeland) or the local village of origin. Most often, as we shall see, all three geographical scales are depicted by Mexican political elites as concentric sites of cultural embeddedness which localize while simultaneously transnationalizing the meaning of citizen loyalty and political obligation. The male migrant is of course, also viewed by state-centered actors as an important source of capital -- both physical and social -- a vital source of remittances, business investment, community development initiatives, and political leadership roles.

The first Mexican politician to establish closer links with Mexican migrants in California was Genaro Borrego Estrada the PRI Governor of Zacatecas from 1986 to 1992. Borrego regularly visited members of Zacatecan migrant associations in Los Angeles and other Southern California cities and formalized the “Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos Unidos,” in 1988. He also established the “2 for 1” program of matching funds to promote migrant investments in infrastructure programs in Zacatecas and encouraged the participation of Zacatecan migrants in social development projects that benefited their communities of origin. He sought to channel migrants’ financial resources into public-private and private-private partnerships in manufacturing and services.\textsuperscript{16}

In the early 1990’s the PRI dominated Mexican federal government, aware of Borrego’s initiative, reacting in part to political inroads made among Mexican migrant
organizations in U.S. cities by the 1988 leftist Presidential candidate Cuauhtémoc Cardenas, and seeking political support for Mexico’s entrance into the neo-liberal NAFTA trade agreement, initiated two important migrant-centered programs. The most far-reaching of these is El Programa para las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Exterior (PCME) or “Program for Mexican Communities Abroad,” instituted by President Carlos Salinas de Gortari in 1991. The PCME program was also created in part as a corporatist response to demands voiced by different leaders of migrant associations in the United States.17 The program run by a division of the Mexican Foreign Affairs Ministry promotes the formation of migrant associations by state of origin and develops collaborative social and economic projects in Mexico with groups of transnational migrants. PCME organizes meetings of Mexican state and municipal authorities and industrial leaders with groups of Mexican migrants in the United States).18 To promote a sense of “Mexicanness” across borders, the program distributes historical information and diffuses transculturally the work of painters, poets, writers and musicians whose work is viewed as strengthening Mexican national identity.19 The PCME program has been a key element in the PRI party’s efforts to politically construct an extra-territorialized sense of national belonging among the Mexican diaspora living in the United States.

The PCME tried to build and reinforce a national identity among transnational migrants, many of who have stronger local or regional identities and who often hold the PRI party responsible for their need to leave Mexico in the first place. For these reasons, even under the administration of PRI it became clear to PRI political elites that the only effective way to build enduring bridges to migrants was to tap into the migrants’ sedentary historical memories of their communities and regions of origin. Therefore, during the second half of the 1990’s the PRI dominated national government began to deploy a regionalist approach. The federal state, still dominated by the PRI, decentralized the policy system for state sponsored outreach to migrants. It authorized the establishment of State Offices for Attention to Natives (OFAOS) to achieve many of the objectives of the PCME initiative. Presently twenty-three active OFAOS offices are run by the main sending states of Mexico. Each stresses its own unique regional connections to its paisanos living abroad. Regionalism has thus become a key socio-cultural and political structuring element of the Mexican state’s transnational practices and discourses.
The principal objectives of the OFAOS include: (a) promoting a closer relationship between state institutions and the states’ native migrants abroad; (b) forming and consolidating migrant organizations abroad; (c) providing an institutional framework for the involvement of migrants and their organizations in the development of their states and communities of origin; (d) improving the image of migrants in their respective sending states and disseminating the culture and history of the respective states among the migrant communities; (e) assisting migrants to obtain the permits and licenses necessary to realize infrastructure projects in their native communities; (f) offering assistance to relatives of migrants who depend on remittances but have not been receiving them; and (g) providing general support to the activities of the PCME.\(^2\)

In addition to grassroots pressures, several contextual factors help explain the creation of these far reaching state policy efforts to establish a transnational Mexican nation and promote local and regional identity formation. The Mexican population abroad has expanded to the point that the estimated 22 million Mexican-origin residents of the United States now approximate one fifth of all Mexicans living in North America. The potential for organizing this pool of transnational Mexican migrants as a political force has no been lost on any of the major Mexican political parties. The importance of economic remittances to local, regional and national economies in Mexico is likewise obvious to Mexican political elites and migrants alike. The possibility for turning more of the currently estimated $8 to $10 billion annual remittances from household reproduction to community economic development and productive investment is a hallmark of these policy initiatives. Complaints voiced on both sides of the border by human rights organizations have also provided an opening for political actors in Mexico to build support among migrants for policies at least nominally targeted to improving their political rights.

How has the Mexican state’s offensive to reincorporate Mexico’s transnational migrants living in U.S. localities played out in Guanajuato? How has the PAN dominated state government of Guanajuato responded to the PRI’s decentralization of authority to develop migrant programs? What are the key features of the policies and programs first developed under Guanajuato’s then Governor Vicente Fox to reincorporate
Guanajuatense migrants into state-centered development initiatives? What are the political and economic objectives of these efforts to court the migrants? Have Guanajuatense migrants been attracted by the state’s efforts to embrace them? If so why and with what effects?

**Constructing the Transnational Guanajuatense Political Subject**

Each year 32,500 migrants from Guanajuato travel north to the United States, making it the second largest state in México in sending population. By various counts Guanajuato has generated between 670,000 (official) and 2 million (estimated by the political elites I interviewed) transnational migrants that are current residents of the United States. Over 90 per cent of these are men.\(^2\)\(^1\) Texas and California are the migrants’ main destinations, though in recent years substantial numbers of Guanajuatenses have also gone to Illinois, Georgia, North Carolina, and other Southeastern and Central U.S. states. One in four households in Guanajuato have at least one member with migrant experience in the United States. In localities with a population of less than 15,000, one out of three households experienced migration from 1993-1996. In 2000, officially estimated remittances sent to Guanajuato amounted to $ 650 million (U.S.), ranking it third among Mexico’s 32 states\(^2\)\(^2\) This money has flowed into Guanajuato through five types of remittances: 1) transfers made by permanent migrants; 2) transfers and investments made by temporary migrants; 3) remittances sent by descendants of migrants abroad; 4) financial resources and goods sent by migrants returning home, and 5) income received from abroad by people that were permanent or temporary migrants in the past.

In the mid-1990’s, in the face of this migration history, the state of Guanajuato, under the leadership of its then Governor Vicente Fox, introduced a series of interrelated programs intended to command the loyalty of its migrant community. These programs were repackaged and consolidated under the administration of Fox’s successor Romero Hicks and his State Secretary (Secretario) Juan Manuel Oliva Ramirez. This consolidation was detailed in a sweeping policy document prepared by the state agency Consejo Estatal de Poblacion de Guanajuato (COESPO) in 2001.\(^2\)\(^3\) The policy report supplied by Secretario Oliva, summarizes the philosophy of migrant reincorporation underlying state’s policy initiatives and seeks to spell out and justify its logic. In the
following section the COESPO report will be subjected to close critical scrutiny, following a research procedure that anthropologist Arturo Escobar has elsewhere termed “institutional ethnography.”

**Deconstructing the COESPO Report.** Key assumptions underlying the COESPO report reflect a patriarchal social construction of both migration and transnationalism. Five programmatic targets of the political project of linking the regional state and the migrant population are identified. These are the migrant, the migrant’s wife, the migrant’s children, the migrant’s family, and the migrant’s community. This gendered division of labor reflects the state’s view of the migrant as a male subject. It also reflects the demographic data on male migration from Guanajuato mentioned above. The male migrant is conceptualized in the COESPO Report primarily as a “remittances provider.” As such, the migrant is said to require the establishment of a set of conditions that will insure a steady flow of remittances to the family he has left behind. Consistent with a neo-liberal modernization agenda of promoting “productive” vs. “unproductive” financial flows, the COESPO report declares that public policies must: (a) promote inexpensive remittances services to reduce unproductive losses due to high transaction costs; (b) establish a framework encouraging the migrant to save and invest to insure an eventual “dignified return” to his community of origin; and (c) channel the migrant’s investment dollars into various micro-enterprises in his native community.

The migrant’s wife, as a policy target, is represented as a potential bearer of human capital useful to the future economic development of the state. She is said to need training and work experiences geared to the development of entrepreneurial skills. To this end the COESPO Report states that governmental institutions should target appropriate training, labor, and educational policies to the wives of migrants. As potential “entrepreneurial women” migrant’s wives are envisaged as needing access to micro-credits, technical training, and assistance in marketing and commercialization of products. The migrant’s wife is further depicted as a kind of irrational “other” who needs help in “remittance management” through state policies designed to promote her intellectual capacities to manage the family’s resources. She is viewed as needing to be modernized by encouraging her to invest, save, and optimize remittances rather than consume them. Finally, health related institutions are to disseminate both general health
information and specific birth control methods to migrants’ wives. It is clear from the all-
embracing character of these interventions into everyday life that the realization of the
neo-liberal goal of creating “entrepreneurial women” entails a significant set of public
policy interventions by the state. Far from withering away, the regional state of
Guanajuato is assuming a central role in the reconstitution of the transnational family.

According to the COESPO Report, the migrant’s children and his extended family are
likewise brought under the umbrella of targeted state policies. The document details
existing policies and new policy proposals whose central objectives are to upgrade
children’s human capital while at the same time reinforcing or even expanding the
family’s social capital by “recreating” extended family obligations. This policy goal of
reconstructing traditional extended family structure would, at least implicitly, extend the
normative claims that less immediate members of extended families who remain behind
in local communities in Guanajuato could make upon transnational “remittance
providers.” How, specifically, is this kind of “family policy” to be accomplished? The
COESPO Report emphasizes educational programs and family-centered public policy
initiatives that promote specific kinds of family, social, and cultural values. The
document argues that the migrant’s family requires “better integration” and that
governmental institutions must therefore develop policies to promote the integration of
the transnational migrant family through its restructuring as a viable extended family unit.
It advocates the identification of “new family models,” which would raise the migrant’s
consciousness of the values of “family identity” while addressing processes of
“transculturization” now affecting transnational families.

Specific policies aimed at consolidating transnational families discussed in the Report
include: (a) a “voluntary insurance” scheme to be paid for by the migrant in support of his
transnational family; (b) the institutionalization of trust funds enabling the migrant to
devote a portion of his current resources to his extended family’s future social security;
(c) educational programs such as access to scholarships financed by a combination of
migrant’s remittances and public funds; and (d) policies designed to control school
dropouts and thereby increase the state’s overall pool of human capital. If the migrant’s
family were to be reorganized as a site of “small family enterprises” it would also receive
assistance from several governmental organizations that encourage entrepreneurship.
In sum, under the legitimating rhetoric of a public-private partnership for family restructuring the policies summarized in the COESPO Report would channel substantial portions of the resources of migrant “remittance providers” either directly, or by influencing the choices of the migrant’s wife as “remittance manager,” into state designed and run social and educational policies. The role of the state in this framework has not been reduced but redefined or even increased in the range of its impacts on everyday family life. Ironically, therefore, while arguments about “the Nanny State” may no longer be part of the national political discourse in many advanced capitalist welfare states, the issue has been reframed in Guanajuato, Mexico by the Panista regional state under the rubric of transnational family restructuring.

This same logic of “partnership” designed by the regional state but financed largely by migrant contributions is carried to the community level in the COESPO Report in the form of infrastructure development policies that require a rechanneling of the migrant’s resources into community development schemes in their communities of origin. As detailed in the COESPO overview several “opportunities” exist for migrants to support infrastructure development in their communities of origin, particularly in the areas of transportation and communication infrastructure such as new or remodeled roads and telephone systems. Also deemed appropriate areas for “2 for 1” cost sharing projects are electrification, pipelines for water service and sewage disposal, and new housing development projects. In effect, the long-standing assumption that it is the state’s role to provide the infrastructure investment on which the economic development of a region depends is here recast as the transnational citizen’s “opportunity” or even duty to share in this role.

**Implementing the Policy Vision**

In May 1994 the Dirección General de Atención a Comunidades Guanajuatenses en el Extranjero (DACGE) was created as the lead agency to implement the policy rationale subsequently spelled out in the COESPO Report. Between 1994 and 1999 the DACGE, acting as Guanajuato’s OFAOS, created five program initiatives designed to re-incorporate Guanajuatense migrants into the life worlds of their communities of origin. These are: (1) the “Casa Guanajuato” program, which promotes the creation of home-
town associations under the auspices of a home-state institutional umbrella; (2) the “Mi Comunidad” maquiladora program; (3) the “2 for 1” community development program; (4) the “Attention to Migrants and their Families” program; and (5) the program for mass communication with the migrants. The remainder of this paper will focus on the implementation “Casa Guanajuato” and “Mi Comunidad” initiatives and their relationship to the other state sponsored migrant programs in seeking to constitute an extraterritorial Guanajuatense political subject.

THE CLUBS OF CASA GUANAJUATO. The “Casa Guanajuato” program creates non-profit, hometown-centered “clubs” in the U.S. to pursue social, cultural, economic, and educational activities designed to build a strong sense of “Guanajuatense community” among migrants from Guanajuato living in the United States. From the regional state’s perspective the Casa Guanajuato clubs have four main objectives: to promote “roots-forming” activities among Guanajuatense migrants; to establish a close working relationship between the migrants and the state government; to serve as a channel of communication between the state and its migrants; and to grow –i.e., to increase the number of clubs in various cities in those U.S. states where Guanajuatense migrants are concentrated. As of March 2001 the state had organized 39 Casa Guanajuato Clubs. The clubs are located in 11 cities in Texas, including Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio; seven California cities, including San Jose and Napa; three cities in Illinois, including Chicago; three Florida cities; two cities in Colorado, including Denver; Tulsa, and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; as well as: Omaha, Nebraska; Eugene, Oregon; Granger, Washington; Salt Lake City, Utah; Atlanta, Georgia; Nashville, Tennessee; Springdale, Arkansas; Louisville, Kentucky; and Charlotte, North Carolina. Panista officials state that this program will be expanded to create 100 Clubs under the current PAN administration of Vicente Fox’s successor Governor Romero Hicks.

Given the transnational character of these programs it is not surprising that the recently departed General Director of DACGE, Lupita Zamora, spent 80 % of her time in the U.S., operating from a field office in Dallas, Texas while traveling to various localities in the USA where Casas Guanajuato have been set up. Ramón Flóres, the Executive Director of the DACGE, responsible for administrative and political
coordination within Mexico of the state’s migrant programs told us that of the 70 different programs organized by DACGE under the five program categories, the Casa Guanajuato program was the most politically important. Flóres described the state’s interest in creating the Casas Guanajuato with remarkable candor, if little modesty:

**Flóres:** “Casas Guanajuato is where we have been monitoring and assessing the location and networks of the migrants. …What we can’t yet do is go to the U.S. looking for Guanajuatense migrants because it is just too expensive and overwhelming. But in this case they are already networked into the Casa Guanajuato and this is one of the main objectives of this program where we can capitalize on existing arrangements and contacts between the Guanajuatense migrants. … There are 23 of these offices in all the states and we are still the number one, the best. …A few years ago we were asking for all the governments to take care of immigrants and nobody paid attention to what we were saying. But once they realized that migrants are an incredible political force [conceptualized by Flóres as 20 million potential voters capable of electing a President] they started to take care of these people. Now everybody wants to help people who live in the states. …Everybody acknowledges that we are the best and better consolidated…two years ago most of the states in Mexico were trying to open offices in the states like Casa Guanajuato.”

Just how does this program, touted by its Director as a model for constituting the transnational Mexican nation, work? What is it political logic? What are its political practices? To gain a sense of the cultural and political dynamics of the Casa Guanajuato connection my research assistant and I engaged in participant-observation research in February 2001 at two day “Reunion” of the Casa Guanajuato Clubs of Northern California held in San Jose, California. The “Reunion” was held in a rented facility for community organizations and activities with a large convention hall. The event was co-organized by DACGE and the leaders of the region’s migrant clubs. Various high level political elites from Guanajuato participated actively in the formal and informal activities we observed, including an induction ceremony for the presidents of the Northern California Clubs. The first day of the meetings was restricted to migrant leaders and state officials. It was devoted largely to a kind of lobbying session in which the presidents of
the migrant clubs expressed the needs of their communities of origin and of the migrant population in general to the state authorities, including the Secretario to the Governor of Guanajuato, the General Director and the Executive Director of DACGE, and the Secretario to the President of the Municipality (county) of Yuriria, from which many of the Northern California migrants had come.

The second day of the “reunion” was a festive and symbolically rich “convivio” attended by approximately 200 migrants and their families. Music was provided by a “rondalla” or folk band from Salinas, California. While adults enjoyed food and beer, their children played games for prizes and were entertained by clowns. These informal celebrations preceded a remarkable round of symbolic rituals designed to honor the migrants and raise their awareness of their Gaunajuatense and Mexican roots. A giant Mexican Flag was unfurled. A local performer sang the Mexican national anthem. The audience stood, saluted the flag, and joined in the singing. The U.S. national anthem was then sung. Next, Guanajuato’s State Secretary [i.e., the Secretario to the Governor] Juan Manuel Oliva, gave a welcoming speech. Key governmental figures from Guanajuato, the Mexican consulate, and the Casa Guanajuato leaders were introduced to the audience. Other notables were introduced to the audience from their seats. Much to my surprise, this category included my research assistant and me. Following the introductions, the five selected presidents of new Casa Guanajuato Clubs in Northern California were called forward from the line of notables standing in front of the stage. Each was presented with a certificate and a Guanajuato banner symbolizing their new status. Each leader, in turn, was asked to raise his hand and pledge his support to Guanajuato and its state sponsored projects for community betterment of their hometowns. The Casa Guanajuato Club president from San Jose, who had been named regional president, then spoke. He called upon the Guanajuato government officials present to raise their hands (as he and his fellow club presidents had done) and pledge to work with honesty to fulfill their promises to the migrants in California and in Guanajuato.

The highlight of the afternoon was the unveiling of a scale model of a statue in honor of the migrant that was planned for placement in the town squares of various cities in Guanajuato. The monument depicted a male figure with no eyes, because when the migrant leaves he cannot see where he is going. The figure had no mouth or ears, because
the migrant doesn’t understand the language of the land he has come to. The figure was naked because, when the migrant left, he had nothing to take with him. Yet the figure was supported from behind by a smaller female figure to remind the migrants of their wives, parents, and children. Both figures are emerging from a tree with large roots sunk deep in the soil. A small Mexican flag was added to the model during its unveiling to remind the migrants present of the nation that, in, the words of the Secretario, sadly saw them depart but has never forgotten them. After unveiling the statue, the Secretario announced that it would be constructed very soon in five municipalities in Guanajuato and invited the Casa Guanajuato Clubs to propose a place for its construction “here in California, wherever you think would be appropriate – a plaza, a street, a park, etc.”

It is important to be aware of the nested character of the migrant programs developed by the Guanajuatense political elites. The Casas Guanajuato are the key points of communication between the state and the migrant groups. Casa Guanajuato is the core program through which the state seeks to incorporate migrant leaders into the other dimensions of its relatively sweeping policy agenda described earlier in this paper. When Guanajuatense political elites and state policymakers attend meetings of Casas Guanajuato in various U.S. cities, discursive practices move in two directions. On the one hand, the political elites listen to “pressures from below” expressed as “community needs” of the villages of origin as perceived by the migrant leaders. For example, in response to my question “Do you get frequent visits from Guanajuato authorities?” Chavela, a female investor in the El Timbinal maquiladora discussed below replied:

“Yes, for example Lupita Zamora visited us about six months ago and we expect to see her again around March or April. She is very busy and travels wherever there is a Casa Guanajuato Club. Usually when she or others come Angel [i.e., Angel Calderon, the migrant leader of the Casa Guanajuato in Napa] calls all of us so that we get together for a meeting. And we pass her our requests. I am sure she is tired of listening to our claims, but we do it to help others there. We have insisted on the water so that everyone in the town will have piped water service. Also the school, to have more classrooms for the children. We have asked her for the road to be paved, so that we can get in and out of Timbinal faster. Another request will be to have a good clinic, with all the medicines and equipment. Those
are mainly the things we talk about at the meetings. Also she asks us about our needs here and we tell her what we need.”

At the same time, the Guanajuatense political elites use these occasions to sell their preferred policy initiatives “from above” to the migrant members of the Casas Guanajuato in order to enlist them into their preferred corporatist projects. Consider an example of this second face of power drawn from “Programa Mi Comunidad,” a documentary video used by the state to promote its maquiladora program:

“Q.: How did you know about the Programa Mi Comunidad and why did you decide to become an investor?

Investor: “When I lived in Chicago, in 1997, I used to belong to an association called Casa Guanajuato. It was here that authorities from the State of Guanajuato came and presented us with a business plan for creating maquiladoras. We analyzed the proposition and decided to invest. So this is really a joint venture between migrant workers and locals. It is a great example of working together and making this dream come true.”

In short, the Casa Guanajuato clubs have been used by the Guanajuatense political elites as a vehicle to reconfigure migrants “social locations” by reshaping their dreams and relocating their identities. The other policy initiatives promoted by the Panista political elites have been advanced through the discursive space created by the institutionalization of Casas Guanajuato as the principal point of connection between the Guanajuatense migrants and the state.

THE “MI COMUNIDAD” PROGRAM. The “Mi Comunidad” Program was initiated by the Guanajuato state government in 1997 to channel the flow of dollars back to migrants’ communities of origin in the form of productive investment rather than household reproduction. The program was initially planned and implemented during Vicente Fox’s term as Governor of Guanajuato. DACGE Executive Director Ramón Flóres now administers it. “Mi Comunidad” taps into the economic resources of Guanajuatense transnational migrants by inviting them to invest in textile “maquiladoras” in their places of origin. The state policy makers have stated that they hope this program will economically develop the poorest municipalities in Guanajuato in the short run. They claim that their long-range goal is to reduce the immigration rate to the United States.
Currently there are 8 maquiladoras in operation in Guanajuato. Six others are in process of being constructed. The program has thus far created jobs for 339 people.\textsuperscript{29} By 1999-2000 the program had attracted $2.2 million in industrial investment by migrants in Guanajuato’s municipalities and rural villages.\textsuperscript{30}

The migrants provide all of the capital investment for the maquiladoras. The state coordinates a series of legal, managerial, and technical services provided by three principal sources: 1) the state government itself; 2) state financed educational organizations such as the Centro Interuniversitario del Conocimiento (CIC) which provides training and certifications for technical personnel, machine operators and managers; and 3) the staff of DACGE which provides technical consultation on legal, accounting, financial and marketing activities as well as a loan to match the migrants’ initial investment. As succinctly described by Executive Director Flóres: “the migrants are the capitalists and we are the enablers.”\textsuperscript{31}

In the Napa-El Timbinal “partnership,” the migrant leader Angel Calderon initially persuaded two dozen Guanajuatense migrants living in Napa, California to invest in the textile maquila in their native village. El Timbinal is a small village in the southwestern part of Guanajuato, with fewer than 300 inhabitants. The maquiladora partnership forms one of several trans-local connections linking El Timbinal and the 250 migrants from El Timbinal now living and working in Napa. The capital for the firm was entirely provided by the migrant investors. Political and administrative authorities and educational and training institutions financed by the state government supervised the factory’s construction, provided management and worker training, and facilitated commercial activities such as the negotiation of transnational production contracts. The state also provided start up financial support in the form of a $50,000 loan and symbolic political support in the form of a formal inauguration ceremony for the maquiladora in 1999 led by then Governor Vicente Fox. This was the first time in its history that the semi-desert agricultural community was accorded such a high status visit.

According to Executive Director Flóres, the statewide plan for the maquiladora scheme is to have each factory start small with local production for regional markets then have the factories in Guanajuato collaborate with each other to fulfill large global textile contracts. The long-range goal is to have each maquiladora move up the commodity chain
of global production by developing its own unique products for global export. In Flóres’ words:

“The first phase is to work with local companies. Actually these local companies subcontract companies in the state…In the middle term we want to give the maquila direct links to American companies –80% maquila and 20% our own product. In the long term we want to create our own products –20% maquila and 80% our own products, which is what constitutes the real profits…. Our own 8 maquilas are organized in such a way that they will be integrated into a big company. So when Levis comes to us and tells us 50 machines is nothing we need 200, so, if we are talking 8 maquilas we can join resources. We want to make more efficient maquiladoras in order to secure quality with clients like J.C. Penny and [then] create our own fashion center.”

The idea of Guanajuato as a center of fashion design and production, a kind of Mexican version of Middle Italy was very much part of the initial planning vision of the Fox administration in Guanajuato. Thus, in a speech at the inauguration of the maquiladora in Guanajuato, the director of the state financed Centro Inter-Universitario del Conocimiento (CIC) Jose Munoz, alluding to the lure of Levis 501 jeans as a global commodity, made the following rhetorical prediction:

In this program we, the planners, have a dream that in the future Guanajuato will present the world with its own design brands, with its own fashions that will make us different from the rest. We dream to have a line of jeans, the “1810’s,” that have to do with our independence movement, or a more fashionable line of clothing “Yuriria,” the name of a woman. We dream like this, but at the same time we are rushing to accomplish these dreams…In a few months, and we have the Governor’s authorization, we will create the University of Textiles, with the courses specialized in design, marketing and commercialization.”

Two years after this speech, with Vicente Fox in Los Pinos, and another PAN governor, Romero Hicks, in power, we asked Executive Director Flóres to comment on the materialization of this dream. The following exchange took place:

MPS: Is the fashion center in the works yet?
**Flóres:** Not yet.

**MPS:** There is a university here. Is there a textile and fashion department there?

**Flóres:** No, but there is some thinking about that…. Actually, El Timbinal is working on its own product. They have achieved quality in order to compete in international markets.

**MPS:** What product do they make?

**Flóres:** They make baby sets.

**G. Galindo:** When the maquila of Timbinal was inaugurated the director of CIC talked about a Textile University that could be ready in months.

**Flóres:** Actually it’s not the same guy. There is a new Director now [laughs]. I don’t know if they are going to continue the same plans. His name is Roberto Contreras Zarate, I haven’t met him yet.”

The development of Guanajuato as a center of fashion design and production is thus, at best, still in the “thinking” stages. According to Flóres, the component maquiladoras that have moved from regional subcontracting to global contracting have begun to develop their own products. The maquila in El Timbinal, for example, has developed a prototype for a boxed set of baby clothing which the state planners say they hope to promote and market in the near future. While this may eventually materialize, a recent policy evaluation study by a Mexican social scientist from the University of Zacatecas has criticized the Mi Comunidad Program, for, among other things, its unfulfilled marketing plans.

Moreover, when we visited the maquila, all of the women on the sewing machines were sewing bright red and blue adult sized “Spiderman” costumes, under a transnational contract from “Target,” the U.S. based department store chain. When asked how he gets contracts for the maquiladora in El Timbinal, Salvador, the factory manager, explained: “My contract comes from the U.S., from a broker from Chicago I know from my earlier maquiladora jobs. We call him “spiderman.” He further elaborated: “Everything comes from abroad: the fabrics, the patterns are already cut from the U.S. We just assemble it here and send it back.” Timed for marketing in the United States several months prior to the release of the Spiderman film in mid-2002, adult Spiderman costumes were selling at a store I visited in Los Angeles in March 2002 for $44.00 each. When I mentioned the
store price to the migrant leader Angel Calderon in a recent follow-up interview he said: “We got $1.50 each for the costumes.” Therefore, despite the grandiose promises of the planners and politicians of the regional state of Guanajuato, the migrant owned textile factory in El Timbinal is still very much a subcontracting maquila situated at the low end of the commodity chain of global textile production. As we shall see below, this has made it highly vulnerable to fluctuations in global demand.

THE “2 FOR 1” COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. The “2 for 1” Program was initiated with the goal of infrastructure and community development in the poorest communities in Guanajuato. Its objective is to attract the resources of the migrants by a shared funding arrangement in which, for every peso “invested” in their communities of origin by Guanajuatense transnational “paisanos” the state provides two pesos. Municipalities, the state, and the federal government are included in these public-private projects. Juan Manuel Olivas, the Secretario to the current governor of Guanajuato pointed out that some of the municipalities in his state offer a match of as much as “4 for 1” to create public infrastructure such as sewage disposal, electric power, and new schools. The implementation of this program at the grassroots level in El Timbinal involves the migrants in the local politics of the Municipality of Yuriria where they must compete with scores of other villages for matching funding arrangements.

MEDIA COMMUNICATION WITH THE MIGRANT. The state government of Guanajuato finances several mass media instruments designed to create a favorable image of itself, shape the cultural identity of the Guanajuatense migrant, and create appealing images of “home.” A variety of television programs, radio broadcasts, informational brochures, newspaper sections and stories and a cultural magazine are all part of the Panista regional state’s political offensive to socially construct a transnational Guanajuatense subject and channel his creative energy and resources into state-centered development schemes. The television program “Me voy pa’l Norte” is a weekly TV show that focuses on rural communities in Guanajuato and the migration phenomenon on both sides of the border. It is made and televised in Guanajuato on Channel 4 and in Dallas, Texas on Channel 44.
The TV program is distributed more broadly in the U.S. via the Latino TV networks Teleamerica and Univision.

The state sponsored radio program “Caminos de Guanajuato” features themes of general interest to Guanajuatense “paisanos” living in the USA. Its programming stresses the traditions and culture of Guanajuato while also featuring human-interest stories of men and women represented as constructing the “new Guanajuato.” The program originates in Santa Rosa, California and is broadcast in areas of the USA with high concentrations of Guanajuatense migrants such as Santa Rosa, Napa, and Fresno, California; Chicago, Illinois; Houston and Dallas, Texas; Atlanta, Georgia, and Denver, Colorado. A third vehicle for building a strong sense of Guanajuatense identity among transnational migrants from Guanajuato is the cultural affairs magazine Pa’l Norte distributed free to 20,000 Guanajuatense “paisanos,” in the U.S. cities where Guanajuatense migrants are located. Pa’l Norte is produced by DACGE and its Board of Directors includes high state officials. It is edited and printed in the state’s print shops.

Pa’l Norte’s feature “The Migrant’s Page” has been created in collaboration with the newspaper Correo, which circulates statewide in Guanajuato and on the World Wide Web in the United States. Correo provides migrants and their families with information about changes in laws affecting the migration phenomenon, stories of migrants experiences, and advice and addresses of Guanajuatense state agencies that may help migrants and their families in cases of emergency.“The Migrant Page” also invites migrants to write to the editors with their stories and concerns, under the slogan: “Write to us and don’t forget this is your space.” Interestingly, as we shall see, this symbolic gesture, a departure from the otherwise one way flow of communication between the regional state and its migrants has proven to be a slogan that the migrants have taken at face value. It is through the internet version of the newspaper Correo, and its Migrant’s Page, that I first learned of a growing rift between the state and its migrant diaspora, as the migrants have used “their space” to voice objections to the implementation of the Casa Guanajuato program under the direction of it new leader Secretario Juan Manuel Oliva. What circumstances have led up to this rift?
The View from the Statehouse

One of the more intriguing findings of this research is that the political elites of Guanajuato may be taking their social construction of the migrant as a heroic figure too literally – seeing the migrant as a unitary subject, a kind of friendly cash cow – a limitless source of physical capital investment and social capital for community development and social policy projects, yet a relatively acquiescent citizen, a predictable fountain of future electoral support. Secretario Juan Manuel Oliva Ramirez expressed this view of the migrant when interviewed in his office in Guanajuato, Guanajuato in March 2001. Secretario Oliva is a person of significant political influence both in Guanajuato and nationally. In addition to his position with the Governor, an appointed post in Mexico equivalent to a minister of state, the Secretario was recently elected as federal Senator from Guanajuato in the upper house of the Mexican Congress. Before his election the Secretario was President of the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) in Guanajuato from 1993-1999, a position he used to help secure the Presidential nomination of his friend and fellow Guanajuatense, Vicente Fox. He is widely regarded as a likely PAN candidate for Governor of Guanajuato, once Fox’s successor, Romero Hicks, finishes his current term.

When asked to reflect on his conception of dual citizenship, Secretario Oliva expressed the following view:

Secretario: “... I think that is a situation the migrant needs to understand and to develop a double gratitude in order to contribute the best of what his country has to offer, his principles, values, traditions, and incorporate them to the second nation that has opened its doors with welcome arms so that he can enrich his second homeland…. I believe that the Mexican people and culture have a lot to contribute to the U.S. culture, with skills, attitudes on how to approach life, our joyful way of doing things. I believe that this kind of dual loyalty is possible and would be good for overcoming the obstacle of the “indefinition” of the Mexican, the Guanajuatense. I mean that this would force us to say what are our principles, our culture, vocation, and visions. My circumstantial vocation is
aimed at strengthening and contributing to the development of the Northamerican fatherland.”

At the same time, the PAN leader views the Guanajuatense migrant as a kind of transnational taxpayer, a key source of state revenues. The migrant’s “double gratitude” is viewed as a necessary motivating force for obtaining the funds needed by the Panista state to finance its preferred economic and social policies. Institutional restructuring is being put in place to re-channel the flow of migrant remittances into state policy initiatives. Secretario Olivas describes the restructuring as follows:

**Secretario:** “There are some government institutions that will have very specific roles. For example, we are trying to get COESPO [i.e., Consejo Estatal de Poblacion Guanajuato, the state agency that issued the COESPO report] to be in charge of administering and designing all the matrixes of surveys, studies, and statistics that will be conducted for all municipalities…. Second, we are going to develop common strategies to deal with state/national problems specific to immigrants. For example, we are proposing that in terms of social security, migrant families qualify for “voluntary insurance.” It would then be the task of the municipality, the state, and the national government to determine how those resources that come to Guanajuato directly through the migrant be directed to establish a voluntary insurance for the families of migrants either in communities or health clinics. … [W] e are also looking into ways to address the needs of the wives of migrants through organizations such as the Instituto de la Mujer at a state level and Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (DIF) which is a municipal agency that deals with the women’s role in the development of the family…. That way we would …look at aspects such as health, education, and housing remittances…. [T]here is the issue of transferring some of the remittances, which account for around $650 Million that immigrants send to Guanajuato.”

**The Agency of the Extraterritorial Migrant Diaspora**

How does this image of the male Guanajuatense migrant as an acquiescent citizen and provider of “voluntary” state managed remittances stack up against our ethnographic
findings on the practices of the migrants themselves? Angel Calderon is the recognized leader of the Timbinalenses in Napa. He was inducted as President of the Casa Guanajuato Club in Napa, at the ceremony described earlier in this paper. The migrant respondents we interviewed were promised strict anonymity except for Angel, who encouraged us to use his real name in our study. Angel has become a highly visible public figure featured in U.S. and Mexican press accounts of the Napa-El Timbinal connection. He has even been invited by President Vicente Fox to stay at the presidential residence, Los Pinos, because of his key role in the process of creating the El Timbinal transnational public-private partnership. Angel has been a far more active citizen of his native village and of political life in Napa than the state’s model of “double gratitude” would anticipate or than U.S. assimilationists who see transnational citizenship as necessarily diminishing active participation in U.S. citizenship would predict.

During the past fifteen years Angel Calderon and his network of transmigrant investors from Napa have not limited their trans-local ties to El Timbinal to the economic sphere. Indeed, many of the community development projects that Guanajuato now subsidizes elsewhere through its “2 for 1” program were initiated on a voluntary basis in El Timbinal by Angel and his fellow migrants nearly a decade before the state created its “2 for 1” infrastructure development policy. The Napa-El Timbinal migrant network has contributed nearly $50,000 to renovate El Timbinal’s church and town plaza and build a kindergarten there. The cast iron benches inscribed with each migrant’s name that grace the renovated town plaza symbolize the migrants’ local status as benefactors to their home village. The migrants regard these benches as “something that gives us pride.”

Thanks to the migrants the village now has a reliable potable water supply for part of the village. The water project was financed by a combination of transmigrant contributions and a $5,000 gift from Sutter Home, a Napa Valley winery where some of the investors and many other migrants from El Timbinal have worked during the past two decades. This arrangement too was achieved by the transnational migrant network as a self-organized project prior to the group’s partnership with the PAN state government.

Despite the transmigrants’ self-initiated community development projects, El Timbinal still has many infrastructure needs, particularly in the area of schools, road construction, and improved water supply. Angel and the other members of the Casa Guanajuato in
Napa have been actively pressing the local state to address these needs. Yet, the local state must consider these demands against the needs and demands of over 100 other small communities that comprise the Municipality of Yuriria, of which Timbinal is a part. In contrast, the neighboring Municipality of Santiago Maravatio, has only twelve localities and can thus address their needs on a monthly basis. Therefore, as Angel explained, in Yuriria, “in order to get what you need the people have to put a lot of pressure on the government authorities, otherwise you would get nothing. It is a first come, first served basis.”

Since the major Napa contributors to earlier community improvement projects in El Timbinal have become capital investors, the money they once had available for community improvement was channeled into financing the maquila and paying back loans from the state. The maquiladora, which opened in 1999, only began to turn a profit for several months in 2001. To attract supporters for projects eligible for funding under the state’s “2 for 1” program, Angel was forced to draw on a wider circle of Timbinalenses in Napa and elsewhere in California than he needed to before the maquila project was undertaken. Yet his time to do so was constrained by his new responsibilities as a micro-capitalist. Despite Angel’s impressive ideas, energy, and leadership skills, after he was drawn into the structural leadership role of in the state’s maquiladora initiative, he had to delay his deeper interest in improving educational opportunities in El Timbinal. This contradiction is well illustrated in the following ethnographic exchanges:

**MPS:** When did you start collecting money and thinking about helping your native town?

**Angel Calderon:** “Approximately in 1987, someone called me and said they needed money to fix our church at Timbinal, so that time I collected about $7,000, and I took the money down in December of that year and we painted the church ourselves. Then we needed a school; we needed classrooms, so I collected money again. I think another seven thousand, that was back in 1987. So in November or December of 1990, we constructed two classrooms, for our kindergarten children. Back then we were around 60; today we are around 250 [migrants from El Timbinal working in Napa]. I really wanted to work in helping with education, because ignorance is the biggest enemy we have. …
The next project was music, so I hired a teacher, and we gathered around twenty-five youngsters who started learning music in Timbinal. Then the next thing was water for the town. It is very dry there and about four months of the year we are completely dry. The women have to walk about three miles to get the water, bringing it [back] in clay or ceramic containers. I collected about $23,000 for that project. And we also started to see some politicians and people from the government asking for help, so that by 1995 we inaugurated the water system, and now we have water the whole year…Then we started another project of fixing the plaza, so I collected money again, I sent around $30,000 and we fixed the plaza.

Later I had in mind to construct a high school, because after "secundaria" (ninth grade) the guys have nothing to do, so they come to the US immediately. I talked to some people here, who like to plant and work in the wineries, but I wanted the young people to learn mechanics, welding, things that will help them to come here or any where and make money. So I went to the government of Guanajuato, they said they didn't have any program like that but they had the Maquiladora plan. So a person from the government came to Timbinal and presented the business plan. We took it and so far we have invested over $200,000, between twenty three persons."

Interestingly, despite the claim by the government to Angel that it lacked a program to upgrade migrants’ skills, I learned from my subsequent interview with Secretario Oliva that the Panista administration does indeed have a program to promote the upgrading of the skills of likely migrants prior to their migration to the United States. The policy is aimed at boosting the migrants’ earning power in the U.S. and hence the size of their remittances. The implications of this move are discussed further below. However, at the time of my interview with Angel about the community development projects of his network, Angel was not aware of the state’s skill upgrading policy and appears to have been steered away from that policy and toward the Mi Comunidad program. Thus, my ethnographic conversation with Angel continued as follows:

MPS: Let me see if I have the timing straight here. You were already engaged in these projects with other people from Timbinal, mostly what we called
“community development” to make Timbinal a better place. You approached the government to partner with you on things you wanted to do and they said we don't have that project, but here is what we have. So that was something they already had on the books ready to go. Since then have you gotten involved in any other projects, besides the "Mi Comunidad" Program?"

Angel: I am just working on this one right now. There have been lots of changes in the past two years. If this manager doesn’t work out we will have to change him. We are going to make the last payment for the credit in January [2001] so every six months I collect money again….

MPS: What are your future plans?

Angel: The school, that is my next project, I want to construct six classrooms and inaugurate it in two years. If people don't agree to this project I will construct two classrooms myself. I hope that when the government sees the classrooms they will furnish it and provide the equipment and staff to teach.”

Angel pointed out that it would not be a problem to start construction, since he had already raised $2,000 and the current PAN municipal government of Yuriria had offered to triple whatever amount the migrants donated for the construction and equipment. But before going ahead, Angel argued, there were several political issues to address. He wanted to clarify to some Timbinalenses in El Timbinal and in the U.S., before undertaking this project with the current PAN administration in Yuriria, that he was not doing this for power, money, partisanship, or any other “dubious reason.” He wanted to represent his voluntary efforts as just a desire to help and would like any kind of partisan gossip to stop.

This concern suggests a second limitation of the political and economic development initiatives of the PAN party in Guanajuato. In seeking to attract financial support from the migrants to subsidize infrastructure development Panista state policy planners in Guanajuato have downplayed the political difficulties entailed in programs that require the collaboration of municipal officials who represent the other main Mexican political parties, that have their own agendas, priorities and networks. It is likely that this barrier of partisan interest and political structuration is the main reason that Secretario Oliva told me that the state had worked “through our Guanajuatense contacts overseas” to get
Municipal officials to set up offices to address migrant concerns rather than simply dealing directly with the local officials, many of whom represented other parties and their clientelist networks. At the “street level” of politics, where the migrants must act to get things done, this contradiction of a collaborative intergovernmental policy response in a world where partisanship, patronage, and clientelism continue to matter is vividly apparent. Consider the following excerpts from two of my interviews with Angel Calderon.

**MPS**: When you deal with the local administration, what is it like, good or bad? Tell us about that.

**Angel**: It depends, I remember this person from the local government to whom I showed the project for the school, he said fine I’ll help you with the material. But we were waiting and waiting and the material never came. Later in another project he helped us a lot with materials and money. The current Municipal President is difficult to deal with. He only wants to do it his way, just because he wants to. I think he doesn’t even know how to read, but he has a lot of money and was able to finance his political campaign. …He goes with whatever the political situation is.

**MPS**: What’s your sense of how people are reacting to the things you have done?

**Angel**: It’s funny. I have good friends but also big enemies. Everything was fine until they saw me with Vicente Fox. But I haven’t seen him more than six times…

**MPS**: Thinking about El Timbinal, there have been some changes that you promoted, but how do the people that are not part of the migration process feel about that? Is there a division in the community?

**Angel**: In the beginning, I think everyone was my friend. But in the 1980’s I was helping people to cross the border and I was making some good friends. So we put together some money for the renovation of the church. Later for the water I collected a little more than $ 20,000. And there was a Mayor in Yuriria that was working together with us. He was from the PRI. In those years there were elections and the PAN won. Then people in the community started
saying that I was from the PRI and when they saw me with Vicente Fox, at the
inauguration of the maquiladora… they couldn’t figure out what kind of party
loyalty I had, and some of the community members didn’t like that. I told them
that I am not a politician and only care to do works for our community. Since
then it was hard to have everyone working together.”49

Angel Calderon’s skepticism about partisan politics reflects his frustration with the
continuing significance of the taken–for-granted clientelist political culture of Mexico, a
persistence that penetrates the dynamics of the trans-local and transnational politics in
which he is engaged. Despite his skepticism, Angel remains an actively concerned about
the future of his native community. On the first day of the “reunion” in San Jose, in
February, 2001 we observed him negotiating actively with the Secretario to the current
PAN municipal president of Yuriria over the location of the first paved road connecting
El Timbinal to a nearby village. Angel wanted a nine-mile road connecting El Timbinal
directly to the county seat, rather than the three-mile road the municipality was prepared
to build to connect El Timbinal indirectly to the municipal center. He said then that he
was able to persuade the local political authorities that if they must build only the three-
mile road they should at least extend it to El Timbinal’s central plaza rather than ending it
at the edge of town. In a subsequent interview he stated that as of April 20, 2002,
although the migrants had put up their money for the more limited road project, the state
still had not delivered on its promise of 2 for 1 matching funds. This example of
translocal politics played out in the context of pre-existing networks of patron-client
relations illustrates just how difficult it has been for the migrant leader to even fight for
the crumbs of the regional state’s vaunted “2 for 1” program.

In recent years, Angel Calderon has become actively networked into in the power-
knowledge venues of local political life in Napa, California as well as El Timbinal,
Guanajuato. He and his migrant network have assumed an activist role on both sides of
the trans-local space that now constitutes their transnational experience. This
involvement has been multidimensional. Initially, Angel’s connections with
Guanajuatense state officials forged during his maquila efforts during the Fox
administration in Guanajuato proved useful in giving him and his fellow Timbinalensess
an access to Napa political circles they did not previously possess. Using his
transnational connections Angel coordinated a series of transnational cultural events including an exhibition of Guanajuato art treasures at the Napa Valley Museum in early 2000, accompanied by associated performances by musicians from Guanajuato, and visits by prominent Guanajuatense political and cultural elites including the state’s new governor. These events also included the participation of Napa politicians and community leaders and received extensive favorable local press coverage. The visits and events simultaneously promoted pride in Guanajuato and gave Angel and his fellow hometown activists legitimacy in Napa that they had previously lacked.50

Angel and his migrant network have begun to take full advantage of their newly acquired access and legitimacy. Consider, for example, the following interview exchange concerning local electoral politics in Napa:

**MPS:** How do you envision the fact that the Hispanic population has grown 106% from 1990 to 2000 here in Napa? These are numbers but they may become votes if people get naturalized or become citizens. Are you aware of this situation?

**Angel:** Yes, we have been participating in the political life of Napa in the last two years. At least I know several Mexican-Mexican or Mexican-American guys in top positions -- for example in Napa College, in the Chamber of Commerce, in newspapers, in the Court. I know some people, Guillén and Cerrosi, Manuel Trejo, Olguín, Mary Salcedo, John García. They are occupying city [council] seats, running for mayor, and working for the County of Napa. We are organizing something these days to push Jose Guillén. He is a good person. He was working at the Superior Court. Some years ago there was no one with a Hispanic last name running for public positions. Today, or in the last elections, these Hispanic politicians were in every Mexican reunion. They even showed up at private parties. Also they invited me to their political meetings and asked for my support. And they invite us to both Republican and Democratic meetings. Last year we had a big reunion in Santa Rosa and all of the candidates were there, shaking hands and making themselves noticeable. This year, after the elections, we were joking that none of them came to our meeting.51
In 2000 Angel Calderon left his job as a Chef to become the manager of a migrant labor camp, the Calistoga Farmworker Center, run by the California Human Development Corporation (CHDC), a community-based human service organization devoted to improving the social and economic opportunities of low income Latinos in 13 California counties. Not surprisingly, since joining the CHDC staff Angel has been one of a small group of staff members chosen to participate in the organization’s annual Jane Ruiz Leadership Training Seminar. In the most recent round of elections in Napa, Angel worked hard both individually and through his migrant network in a broad based campaign to pass a local ballot initiative which would allow for the rezoning of farm land in Napa County provided by a Napa Valley winery upon which new county financed migrant farm worker housing would be built. The ballot initiative successfully passed with 70% support from Napa County voters. In short, Angel Calderon’s citizen participation in Napa and California is beginning to parallel his extraterritorial citizenship in El Timbinal and Guanajuato. As already suggested, he and his network have been far more active citizens of their native village and of political life in Napa than the Mexican regional state’s model of “double gratitude” would anticipate or than U.S. assimilationists and nationalists would predict.

The question of whether the transnational migrant network I have studied, or the other trans-local groups participating in the Casa Guanajuato Clubs, are likely to expand their emergent political involvement beyond local politics in U.S. cities to the state and national levels of U.S. politics is an intriguing one. There is little direct evidence that the Casa Guanajuato clubs organized by the state of Guanajuato in the last four years are moving beyond local electoral politics to assume a wider interest group role in U.S. politics. Yet there is evidence in the literature on the practices of migrant associations from other Mexican states that have existed considerably longer than the Casas Guanajuato suggesting that this political evolution is a distinct possibility for such associations. For example, in their study of the political empowerment of 170 well established Mexican hometown association in Los Angeles, Zabin and Rabadan report substantial involvement by the associations in the statewide campaign in California against proposition 187.
The clubs’ activities ranged from making substantial financial donations, to using the media to influence public opinion, to participating in the largest street demonstration in Los Angeles since the Vietnam war.\textsuperscript{52} Although these authors found that the activities of the clubs they studied were still largely focused on the Mexican sphere, they report that some clubs and their leaders and members pursued a more activist agenda in U.S. politics including political campaigning, local office holding, opposition to Proposition 209, the statewide ballot initiative that limited state and local government affirmative action programs, and forming political relations with national and state Latino organizations such as the Mexican American Bar Association, the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, and California Rural Legal Assistance.\textsuperscript{53} Another study by Mexican sociologist Miguel Moctezuma shows that activist members of the federation of hometown associations from the State of Zacatecas have become extensively involved in a variety of interest group activities on the U.S. side of the border including: campaign activism in local, state, and national electoral politics in Illinois and California; assuming a leadership role in the Laborer’s International Union of North America; forming an alliance with the AFL-CIO on the issue of providing driver’s licences to undocumented California migrant residents who have declared their intention to become U.S. citizens; organizing various sister-city arrangements; and providing a communication channel between California Governor Gray Davis and Zacatecas Governor Ricardo Monreal.\textsuperscript{54}

CONCLUSION

What has been the play of political agency in the multifaceted Napa-El Timbinal connection we have just examined? What implications does this case study have for the future of Mexican migrant extraterritorial citizenship? The efforts of the Panista regional state to constitute a transnational Guanajuatense political subject has clearly sought to capitalize upon the transnational migrants’ already existing regional pride and trans-local networks and practices. Before the state identified Napa as a promising site for a Casa Guanajuato Club, the Napa migrants from El Timbinal had already pursued several
successful self-organized trans-local\textsuperscript{55} projects for the community development of their hometown of El Timbinal. Because their community and regional pride is quite strong, the Timbinalense migrants were initially willing to engage in policy collaboration with the Guanajuato government. Over the course of four years they invested $200,000 in the “Mi Comunidad” maquiladora program. They also formed a Casa Guanajuato Club to institutionalize their previously informal social network for community betterment in their village of origin.

Politically, however, the migrant investors never embraced the partisan and clientelist logic underlying the PAN’s policy initiatives. The members of the migrant network we interviewed have made sacrifices to promote community development in El Timbinal. They favor dual citizenship and deem themselves as capable as those who remain in Mexico (if not more so) of full participation in the Mexican political system from municipal to presidential politics. Yet, as activist extraterritorial citizens the trans-migrants remain suspicious of Mexican political parties as institutions. Thus, their initial collaboration in Panista policy initiatives has not translated into political loyalty to the PAN.

Indeed, the intensity of their skepticism concerning partisan clientelist politics became vividly apparent in a recent crisis of confidence in the Casas Guanajuato program that erupted in December, 2001. The leaders of several Casas Guanajuato clubs, including Angel Calderon, expressed public dissatisfaction with the states’ role in the Casas Guanajuato initiative and suggested that they would no longer collaborate with the state. The issues involved in this grassroots rebellion include: (a) the departure of Lupita Zamora, who was viewed by the migrants as a responsive head of the Casas Guanajuato program; (b) allegations that Secretario Oliva had hijacked the state’s migrant programs, using the programs’ resources to promote his own future political ambitions in a pre-campaign to become Guanajuato’s next governor; and (c) claims that the state had not delivered on its commitments to the “Mi Comunidad” and “2 for 1” infrastructure development programs.

When interviewed about his break with the state in March and April 2002, Angel Calderon expressed deep distrust of Mexican politicians in general and of Secretario Oliva in particular. In Angel’s view Lupita Zamora was fired because she tried to gain
control of the funding for Casa Guanajuato from the Secretario who was diverting money from the organization into his gubernatorial pre-campaign. The state not only fired her, according to Angel, it lied about her departure, putting out a cover story that “she went to work in another state,” while casting aspersions on her fiscal integrity. He once though that Governor Hicks was “a good guy” but now sees him as politically weak. He sees a “complete lack of political leadership at the state level in Guanajuato.”

Furthermore, Angel explained that the mayor of the local state of Yuriria had failed to deliver on its promise to provide road improvements for El Timbinal and to meet with migrants and El Timbinal residents to discuss community needs. In Angel’s words: “I invited him to Timbinal because we were supposed to have a meeting...He says ‘OK, we will be there.’ They never show; they never show.”

Angel regards the Secretario and Governor Hicks as even more unresponsive. In contrast to his earlier direct access to Vicente Fox, under Hicks and Oliva, “Mr. Governor never answers anything: e-mails, faxes, telephone calls. They never answer anything.”

Perhaps most significantly Angel Calderon holds the current regional state responsible for his reluctant decision to close down the Maquiladora in December of 2001, the same month that he broke with the Panista regional state. He explained that under Fox, as the maquila was being built he was promised and received technical and business support, which was needed because “when we opened this plant...the people [in Timbinal] are campesinos, they are not industrialists, they don’t know nothing about it, they don’t have that mentality. And we are not investors either, we are paisanos.... And last year we were making profits, not too much, but we were making profits last year. And everything was fine, until September 11th. ...We were running the maquila through this company, it’s called Confecciones Tula, this company has a big contract with business people in the United States.... So right after September 11th, this company, I understand that this company closed. ...And like them many, many in Irapuato, in Guanajuato, closed down and we are part of them. And I know we were working slow, but we were working. At least we kept that 20. From 20 to sometimes we were working with 15 people, but sometimes we have 30 people. We kept them working for 3 years. But this time we closed in December.”
In the face of these many disappointments Angel remains resilient. He hopes to market the maquilas “own product,” the baby sets, in the U.S. through merchandising contacts he has made with the assistance of the Mexican consulate in San Francisco. If this works out he may try to re-open the factory on an as-needed basis to fill the orders he is able to obtain. He will remain active in the Casa Guanajuato organization trans-locally and promote the betterment of his hometown by working on upgrading the local school. He explained that, in any case, the “Casa Guanajuato” in Napa was actually always just his informal migrant network that kept connected and still makes collective decisions informally as they always have been. They only joined together “formally” for organizational meetings, when visited by officials of the Guanajuato government.

Meanwhile, on the state’s part, Ramón Flóres was recently dispatched to Napa in a currently unsuccessful effort to mend fences with Angel and bring him back into the fold. As of this writing, Angel says that he will steer clear of collaboration with the state even if there is a change in leadership at the top. He sees the need for wider changes in political life that encourage performance on the part of politicians and the emergence of leaders who teach people how “to be ambitious, or to be a dreamer, or to be the best.”

Whatever the longer-term outcomes of the current crisis of confidence in the Casas Guanajuato initiative, several vexing contradictions can be seen to characterize the PAN’s now disrupted political offensive. Politically, there is a contradiction between the social construction of dual citizenship as “dual gratitude,” which implies malleable political subjects, and the actual practices of the state which enabled Timbinalense migrants to become a local business class and legitimated their bargaining with state and local officials over state infrastructure investment in El Timbinal. Vicente Fox added considerably to Angel Calderon’s political and social status by choosing him as a kind of “poster boy” for migrant reincorporation by touting his maquiladora and community development initiatives and inviting him to appear with him on U.S. television and to sleep over in Mexico City at Los Pinos. This is heady stuff indeed, a set moves more likely to produce a sense of political efficacy and empowerment than to promote mere “dual loyalty.” Indeed, this enhanced sense of efficacy now appears to extend to both sides of the transnational border as Angel and his network increase their political
involvement in local ethnic politics in California while continuing to practice trans-territorial citizenship.

There is a further contradiction between the economic and status logics underlying the state’s migrant initiatives. A stated economic goal of the “Mi Comunidad” program is to create employment in sending villages that will make future migration less necessary. This elides the fact that all of the workers in the El Timbinal maquiladora are women while 90 per cent of the states’s migrants are men. More importantly, the patriarchal symbolic politics used by the state to promote Casa Guanajuato Clubs inscribes the male migrant as worthy of heroic status, as the dominant figure in heroic statues to be placed in Guanajuato’s town squares. Psychologically, by enhancing the social status of the migrant, this political ritual is likely to encourage more male migration from Guanajuato to the United States rather than less. This case study suggests that it is also likely to help produce less grateful and more demanding extraterritorial citizens.

The programs developed by Guanajuato’s political elites depend heavily on migrant remittances. As already noted, the state of Guanajuato has even developed policies to upgrade the skills of potential migrants before they migrate. For example, according to the now besieged Secretario Oliva: “[T]he Dolores Hidalgo Technological University of the North [in Guanajuato] has been teaching English to their students. Migration to the US in this region has not diminished. On the contrary, migration has been constant with the difference that these students that migrate with English skills have been able to find better job opportunities. So migration has been an important factor in the economic and professional realization of people in Guanajuato.” 62 In light of this policy of upgrading the skills of migrants before they migrate, the Panista regional state’s other stated policy goal of decreasing migration seems to be merely a rhetorical gesture used to legitimate a political offensive that otherwise takes for granted the structural political-economic roots and enduring character of U.S.-Mexican migration and builds this very logic into its remittance seeking public policies.

If the Panista regional state also fails to use the redirected remittances to live up to its infrastructure development promises, because of the continuing significance of clientelism in Mexican state and municipal politics, as is the case in El Timbinal, the state’s overall political offensive itself is likely to fail. The state’s extraterritorial citizens
seem increasingly capable of sorting out promise from performance and acting on that basis.

Part of the problem of changing the Mexican political culture stems from the fact that for over 70 years there has never been much carry over of policy commitments or even personnel from administration to administration --as one cadre of political elites completely replaces another every six years, even if they are in the same political party. This patronage- oriented practice seems to be continuing in my case study, as the Panista administration of Hicks and Oliva replace experienced administrators from the Fox administration and reorient programs like Casa Guanajuato to serve different political ends.

This case study of the transnational politics of extraterritorial citizenship is one of many state-migrant political relationships currently being negotiated and contested as part of the transnationalization of the Mexican political system. Given the scale of migrant remittances and the potential voting power of the migrants, it is hardly surprising that all three major Mexican political parties now seek to forge links with transnational migrants by playing upon their residual regional attachments and capitalizing upon their translocal connections. Twenty-three Mexican states currently promote programs similar to the Casas Guanajuato initiative. The changing political dynamics of this case study and other research on the politics of migrant home-town and home state associations suggest a very wide range of agency driving these transnational migrant associations, ranging from highly state-centered to autonomous and even oppositional.63

Despite the claims of many globalization theorists, this case study has shown that the state has not withered away as a disappearing relic of the end of modernity. Instead, we have seen that politically constructed state policies at the regional and local levels differentially but ubiquitously mediate the flows of transnational migration, cultural production, and political practice flowing across borders. State policies, legitimating discourses, and institutional practices such as those examined in this study, are key elements through which transnational citizenship is being constituted as migrant networks both accommodate to and resist state-centered actors in diasporic projects pursued at various geographical scales. As migrants become involved in the institutional politics of
the state they are not merely passive objects of state power or capitalist logics but active agents in the social construction of the practices of transnational citizenship.

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LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Migrant investors:
Angel Calderón, migrant labor camp manager and leader of Napa-Timbinal transnational network (November 14, 2000; May 9 and June 6, 2001; March 28, April 20, and June 25,2002); Chavela, restaurant manager and transnational migrant investor. (January 24, 2001); Martin, heavy equipment welder and transnational migrant investor (May 26, 2001); Salvador, welding specialist and transnational migrant investor (May 26, 2001); Serafín, winery worker and transnational migrant investor (May 26, 2001); Medardo, landscape business owner and migrant investor. (May 26, 2001).

Guanajuato Political Elites and Policy Makers:
J.M. Olivas Ramirez, Secretary of State of Guanajuato and PAN Senator(Interviewed in February 2001 in San Jose CA and March 2001 in Guanajuato); Ramón Flóres, Executive Director of the “Mi Comunidad” Program (Interviewed on March 20 and 22 in Guanajuato and March 21 en route to El Timbinal); Assistant to Director of “Mi Comunidad” Program (March 21-22, 2001, Guanajuato); Lupita Zamora General Director of DACGE and Director of the Casa Guanajuato Program (Interviewed in
February 2001 in San Jose CA); Assistant Director of the Distribution Network for the Centro Interuniversitario del Conocimiento (CIC) a job training and certification educational institution that initially trained maquiladora workers and managers (March 22, 2001, Guanajuato); CIC staff assistant for training programs (March 22, 2001).

Field Interviews in El Timbinal:
Salvador, Plant Manager, maquiladora factory; Josephine, maquiladora production worker;
Teresa, maquiladora production worker; Jose, general store owner, El Timbinal;
Alejandra, Head of El Timbinal Womens’ Medical Clinic (All interviewed on March 21, 2001)

Other Interviews:
Genaro Borrego Estrada, former PRI governor of the State of Zacatecas, (Interviewed by Remedios Gómez Arnau- CISAN, January 26, 2001, México D.F); President of “Casa Guanajuato” San Jose branch (“Casa Guanajuato” Reunion, San Jose, CA, Feb. 4, 2001); Mexican Consul to San Jose (“Casa Guanajuato” Reunion, San Jose CA, Feb. 4, 2001); Sandra L. Nichols, Researcher, Department of Geography, University of California, Berkeley. (October 17, 2000, Berkeley, CA)
NOTES


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11 Wayne Cornelius, Todd Eisenstadt, and Jane Hindley, eds., *Subnational Politics and Democratization in Mexico* (La Jolla, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1999).


Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, “The Rise of Transnational Social Formations: Mexican and Dominican State Responses to Transnational Migration,” *Political Power and Social Theory*, Vol. 12 (1998): 60; For a careful synopsis of these historical antecedents see this same article: 57-63.

For an elaboration of this concept see David Fitzgerald, *Negotiating Extra-territorial Citizenship: Mexican Migration and the Transnational Politics of Community* (La Jolla, CA: Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, 2000).


21 Consejo Nacional de Poblacion (CONAPO Report, 1998).


27 Interview with Chavela, restaurant manager and transnational migrant investor, January 24, 2001.


32 Ibid.


38 Ibid.

39 Interview with migrant leader Angel Caldedron, April 20, 2002.

40 Interview with Secretario J. M. Oliva Ramirez, March 22, 2001, emphasis added.

41 Ibid., emphasis added.


44 Interview with migrant leader Angel Calderon, May 9, 2001.


46 Ibid.


48 Interview with Angel Calderon, November 14, 2000.
49 Interview with Angel Calderon, May 9, 2001.

50 Sandra, Nichols, “Mexican Immigration and Transnational Networks in Napa, California,” Paper presented at Workshop on Immigration and the Changing Face of Rural California, University of California, Davis, October 5-6, 2000.

51 Interview with Angel Calderon, May 9, 2001.


53 Ibid., 29-30.


57 Interview with Angel Calderon, April 20, 2002.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.