

Globalization, Transnationalism and Intersecting Geographies of Power: The Case of
the Consejo Consultivo del Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (CC-IME):
A Preliminary Study in Progress

Jane H. Bayes
California State University, Northridge
jbayes@csun.edu

and

Laura Gonzalez
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
gnzlzlr@sbcglobal.net

Prepared for the Canadian Political Science Association meetings in Montreal,
Quebec, 1-3 June 2010

Globalization, Transnationalism and Intersecting Geographies of Power: The Case of the Consejo Consultivo del Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (CC-IME):

A Preliminary Study in Progress

Jane H. Bayes and Laura Gonzalez

Note:

This is a report concerning an on-going case study of a transnational organization, the Consejo Consultivo del Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior, being conducted by Jane Bayes, a political scientist, and Laura Gonzalez, an anthropologist. Laura Gonzalez was an elected member of the first 2003-2005 cohort of CC-IME advisors and is acting as a participant observer for this joint research endeavor. The CC-IME is a somewhat democratically chosen committee composed of those of Mexican birth or heritage living in the United States and Canada charged with advising the Mexican government concerning its policies towards the Mexican diaspora. The data for this paper come from Laura Gonzalez' experience with CC-IME since 2002 both in Mexico and the United States, from seven in depth interviews with advisors conducted by Jane Bayes in 2006 and 2007, numerous in depth interviews conducted by Laura Gonzalez in her interactions with CC-IME alumnae and current CC-IME advisors since 2002, by our joint attendance at the 25-27 April 2010 CC-IME reunion where together we attended and observed the meeting and contacted and interviewed over 50 of the approximately 150 attendees - some at considerable length. Finally, a major source for this research has been the minutes of all the commission meetings of the CC-IME from 2003 to 2009 and the CC-IME annual reports of 2004 - 2008 (www.ime.mx.gov).

Part I: Introduction

In this era of globalization, capital, goods and labor are increasingly moving across the boundaries of nation states creating new governmental and political consequences that demand attention from nation state governments. In the last 30 years, European nations have engaged in heroic actions to build transnational links into a European Common Market and then a European Union as a solution to the problems that increased flows of commerce, finance and people create. North America has been much slower and more cautious with its transnational arrangements. The North American Free Trade Agreement of 1994 between three asymmetric powers, Canada, Mexico and the United States, was conceived at least in part to counter the economic clout of the European Union, yet is a mere shadow of the political integration represented by the European Union. While many asymmetries exist between the 25 nations of the European Union, currently illustrated in the Greek financial crisis, the economic and population differences between the US, Canada and Mexico are dramatic. In 2008 the GDP of the United States (\$14.26 trillion) was 10 times that of both Canada (\$1.29 trillion) and Mexico (\$1.48 trillion). The US has almost three times the population of Mexico and nine times the population of Canada. The per capita income for Mexico is \$13,500 per

year, for Canada it is \$38,400 per year and for the United States it is \$46,400 per year (CIA World Factbook at www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook). One consequence of this imbalance is that migration flows from Mexico north, a flow that has been growing exponentially since 1850 as shown in **Figures 1a and 1b** (page 4) with only a slight interruption during the 1930s depression and World War II. Currently about 11 percent of all those born in Mexico are currently living in the United States. This is up from 1.4 percent in 1970. The Pew Hispanic Center estimates that the Mexican born population in the United States was in 2008 on the order of 12.7 million (Pew Hispanic Center 2009).

Mexican policy towards the diaspora

From the end of the Bracero Program in 1964 until the 1990s, the attitude of the Mexican government towards Mexican emigrants in the United States was largely one of avoidance. While some Mexican states with large numbers of migrants like Guanajuato and Zacatecas recognized the importance of emigrant remittances and established programs like “Dos por Uno” that matched with state and local money every dollar that a migrant contributed, the Mexican federal government turned something of a blind eye to the Mexican diaspora in the United States. This changed in the 1990s as the increased flow of emigrants and the increased inflow of remittances from the US to Mexico along with a recognition that Mexican politics was taking place in the United States as well as in Mexico caused the Mexican government to respond to demands for help and recognition from relatively well established and wealthy Mexican migrant groups in the United States. Another impetus was the recognition in Mexico that its growing diaspora in the United States is a potential economic and perhaps political resource for Mexico if political alliances and ties are maintained (Ayón 2005; González Gutiérrez 1999; Cano and Délano 2004; Laglagaron 2010).

In 1990 the Mexican government established the Program for Mexican Communities Abroad in the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs (Programa de las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Exterior (PCME) to coordinate Mexican governmental agencies dealing with the Mexican diaspora and to strengthen the ties between Mexico and those of Mexican ancestry living abroad - 98 percent of which was in the United States (González Gutiérrez 1999). Using the 42 Mexican consulates as an organizing base, the Mexican government organized transnational educational projects involving teacher exchange and the development of libraries and literacy programs. They supported home town organizations and their soccer tournaments, cultural events, art contests for children, and health programs. The Mexican government also began to address the corruption of customs officials in airports by instituting a *Paisano Program* to encourage migrants to return to their hometowns. In 1999, the state of Zacatecas instituted an annual “Migrant’s Day” which involved inviting migrants to come back to be honored by the governor and other high officials, holding a special “festival-fair” where different hometowns around Zacatecas displayed their products, their development projects, their food and their music.

They built a huge statue to honor the migrants, their hardships and their sacrifices in the city of Zacatecas (Smith and Bakker 2008, 142).

Figure 1a
Mexican-Born Population in the United States, 1850-2008

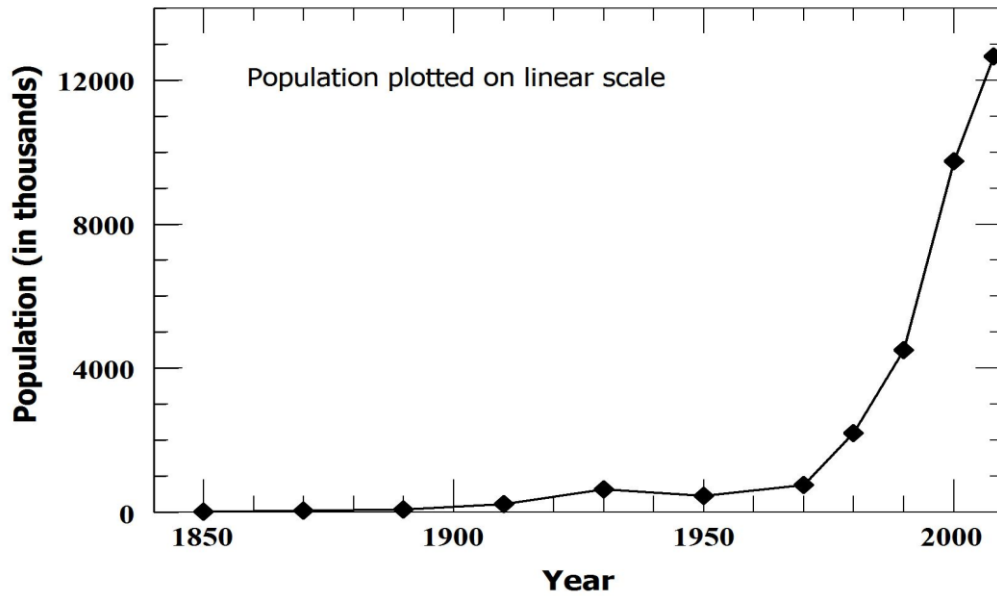
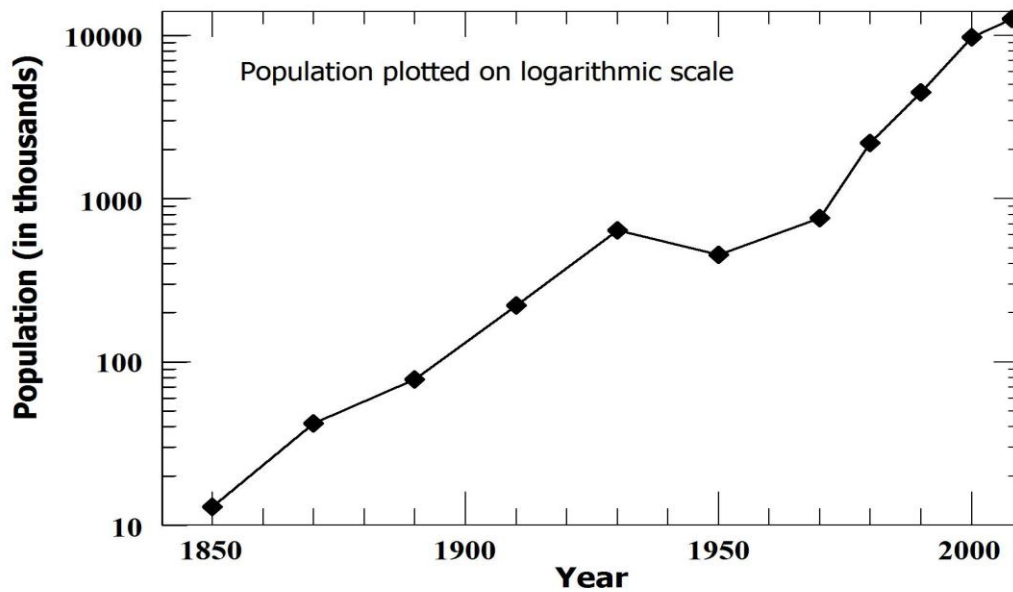


Figure 1b
Mexican-Born Population in the United States, 1850-2008



Source: 1850-1990 - Gibson, Cambell and Kay Jung, "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850-2000," U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Working Paper No. 81, 2006; 1995-2008 - Pew Hispanic Center tabulations from augmented March Current Population Surveys adjusted for undercount. (Pew Hispanic Center 2009)

Figure 1b shows the same data as Figure 1a plotted on a logarithmic scale to show that except for a dip due to the depression and WWII, Mexican born population growth in the US has doubled about every 7 years since 1850.

Perhaps the most interesting and novel idea pursued by the Mexican government to retain the allegiance and support of the Mexican diaspora during this period was to create a dual nationality status for migrants. The Nationality Act of 1989 distinguishes between nationality and citizenship and allows Mexican born citizens to keep their status as Mexican nationals when they become a citizen of another country, such as the United States. The Nationality Act of 1998 distinguished between nationality and citizenship and allowed Mexican-born citizens to keep their status as Mexican nationals when they became the citizen of another country, such as the United States. It stated that a Mexican born citizen who chose to become a citizen of another country would lose his/her political rights but could maintain her/his Mexican nationality thereby having dual nationality. Mexican nationality carried with it the rights to certain social benefits and the right to own property in Mexico. Furthermore, it was another way to retain the ties of Mexican migrants to Mexico. Not only could Mexican born citizens retain their Mexican nationality when they became citizens of another country, but their foreign born children could be Mexican nationals as well (Verhovek 1998).

Part II . The Consejo Consultivo del Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (CC-IME) What is it? How does it work? What are its accomplishments?

The Vision of Carlos González Gutiérrez

In 1999, Carlos González Gutiérrez, a Mexican diplomat in the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs Department and chief architect of Mexico's foreign policy towards its diaspora, listed some of the reasons why Mexico wanted to cultivate good relations with those of Mexican ancestry living abroad. He mentioned that the diaspora is an important market for Mexican exports, that diaspora remittances to Mexico are an important source of foreign currency for Mexico (second only to oil), that Mexico needs to defend the human rights of its nationals when they are abroad and that Mexico needs Mexican Americans to lobby the United States government to make decisions favorable to Mexico. (González Gutiérrez 1999, 5). He also noted as important the fact that Mexican political parties were campaigning in the United States, the explosive growth of Mexican emigration since the 1980s and the passage of the Simpson Rodino Act of 1986 in the United States which granted amnesty and a route to US citizenship for over 2 million undocumented Mexican immigrants. This event made it easier for Mexico to strengthen its ties with its diaspora.

The title of González Gutiérrez' 1999 article, "Fostering Identities: Mexico's Relations with its Diaspora," is telling. González Gutiérrez envisioned "an imagined community" that extends beyond the geographic borders or territory of a nation state; "a transnational collectivity whose members maintain a real or symbolic affinity to their country (González Gutiérrez paragraph 9)." Yet Mexico has less to

work with than do those concerned with Jewish, Cuban or Armenian diasporas. Most Mexican immigrants have chosen to leave Mexico. Rather than being driven out by war or violence, the promise of greater economic security or of fulfilling family expectations has been a key motivator. In many rural Mexican communities, the practice of sending family members north has become culturally institutionalized over several generations. It is a life cycle expectation for men and increasingly for women as well. The Mexican immigrants have no clear collective ideology to unite them and they must also deal with the general animosity or at least ambivalence of Mexicans who have not immigrated towards those who have. Those who migrate are not particularly unified with those who follow in their footsteps unless they share family or hometown bonds. González Gutiérrez reports that Mexican immigrants in 1999 opposed higher levels of undocumented immigration into the United States (González Gutiérrez para. 23). Furthermore, many Mexican immigrants do not have positive views of the Mexican government (they view it as corrupt and/or undemocratic) even though they may have strong feelings of attachment to their culture and their country in general. In the United States, Mexican immigrants are categorized together with other Spanish speaking ethnic groups and labeled "Hispanic," which is another factor that does not particularly promote identification with Mexico.

Yet, other factors do promote community. Labor market needs and proximity to Mexico have concentrated Mexicans and Mexican Americans into certain regions in the United States. Racial discrimination has pushed them into neighborhood barrios where community ties develop and grow. Family and hometown ties are strong and important in maintaining and directing the flows of migrants. The Spanish language, the Catholic Church and networks of employment within the United States further bind immigrants together.

The creation of the Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (IME) and Consejo Consultivo del Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (CC-IME)

The election of Vicente Fox in 2000 brought a dramatic change in Mexican state policy towards its emigrants. During his campaign for President, Fox often came to the United States to give speeches. One of his campaign promises was that he would give Mexican migrants privileged access to the president of Mexico. The first evidence of this new approach began when Fox created the Oficina Presidencial para Mexicanos en el Extranjero (OPME). This office provided emigrants and their descendents with privileged access to the President and encouraged them to participate in the transformation of Mexico, albeit in very neo-liberal ways. The priority issues for the OPME were remittances, the promotion of business centers, the distribution of Mexican products in the United States, and the encouragement of investment, especially in regions of with large numbers of emigrants (IME *Reporte* 2004,7). This new OPME program differed from the earlier Communities Program (PCME) which was administered through the consulate offices in a low key manner. In contrast, the OPME program attracted more visibility, more publicity, and more power with its direct connection to the president, a situation that led to lack of

cooperation and coordination among agencies at all levels in the Mexican government (González Gutiérrez 2003).

Partly in response to the interruption created by 9/11 in what seemed to be a imminent Bush-Fox agreement about instituting a guest worker program to regularize migration from Mexico to the United States, and partly to improve cooperation among the Mexican government's policy making apparatus concerning migrants, in 2003, President Fox created a new structure and a new policy. This bureaucratic reorganization combined the PCME of the 1990s with the OPME of 2000 to create a new governmental hierarchy. At the top is the Consejo Nacional para las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Exterior (CNCME), having a membership of eleven secretariats, each having responsibility for programs directed at Mexicans living in other countries. The President of the Republic heads the National Council which means this effort had priority for Fox. Under the CNCME is the Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (IME). This is the executive arm of the CNCME, responsible for organizing emigrants and their descendents in the United States, soliciting their opinions, and communicating suggestions for new policies to the CNCME. Directly under the IME are the 46 Consuls and their staffs in the United States and Canada (which now number 52). Added to this structure in Mexico is the Consejo Consultivo del Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior or CC-IME consisting of around a hundred community leaders of Mexican origin or descent living in the United States which is the focus of this paper.

The Consejo Consultivo del Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior

The CC-IME is a remarkable and unique transnational organization of community leaders of Mexican origin or descent, organized by the IME in the Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores or Ministry of Foreign Relations and charged with providing the Mexican government with advice and suggestions concerning Mexico's policies towards its diaspora. In the United States, the 46 Mexican Consulates in the United States and Canada were charged with forming an elected body of around 100 advisors from the diaspora in North America to compose the CC-IME. Drawing on their lists of contacts in the Mexican and Mexican American communities in the United States, the Mexican consulates solicited nominations and self nominations to be on the CC-IME. The positions on the CC-IME were proportioned according to the relative size of the diasporic population in the area. (Los Angeles had 11 spots. Dallas had 4, for example) In each consulate's jurisdiction, candidates were elected by those who attended the meetings held by the consulates. In at least some communities (especially Los Angeles), this was a very contentious experience. One interviewee described the politics involved as "ugly." One hundred advisors were selected by these elections. The advisors then chose six individuals to be coordinators and six individuals to be secretaries for commissions on distinct issues: political, legal, health, education, culture, and the border. In addition, ten major Mexican American organizations were asked to send representatives. This process identified well known community leaders from all parts of the United States active in a variety of different fields to come together to advise the Mexican

government. To be eligible for election, a candidate had to be of Mexican origin or Mexican descent and speak Spanish fluently. The stated purpose of this council was to advise the Mexican government about the needs of Mexicans living abroad. The IME, in turn, was to solicit and listen to advice from the CC-IME, to make policies, coordinate Mexican governmental agencies charged with emigrant affairs and implement the policies once decisions had been made. The IME had the support of President Fox in that he gave a radio address to Mexicans living abroad every week and gave this effort priority with regard to funding and attention. Members of the CC-IME were elected for three year terms and were invited to travel with all expenses paid twice a year to Mexico or other places in the United States to advise Mexican governmental officials. Not only did the advisors meet with their commissions on the national level, but they also had state or regional meetings where they met all the leaders in their own states or region and learned about the work and issues that the other commissions were addressing.

The first CC-IME cohort of 2003-2005 consisted of 105 elected or appointed individual advisors, Mexican, Mexican American and Mexican Canadian; 10 representatives from Mexican migrant organizations (such as League for Latin American Citizens, United Farm Workers of America the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund,) 10 special legal advisors and 32 representatives of Mexican state governments. This group in turn elected six of their own to head six commissions on politics, law, education, economics and business, community organization health and culture and the border. Initially, the border was not a commission topic but became one at the insistence of the elected advisors. Of the 105 elected or appointed advisors, 35 were women. Seventy two were born in Mexico and 28 were of Mexican descent born in the United States (González Gutiérrez 2003). When asked about the approximate age of most of the group, respondents reported that most were in their 50s, but some were younger and some were in their 70s. With regard to the character of their civic activity, 35 percent were active in US based Hispanic organizations, 22 percent in other types of US civic associations and 17 percent in US business organizations, while 40 percent were active in Mexican migrant organizations. Very few were involved in Mexican civic or political organizations (See **Figure 2.** (page 9).

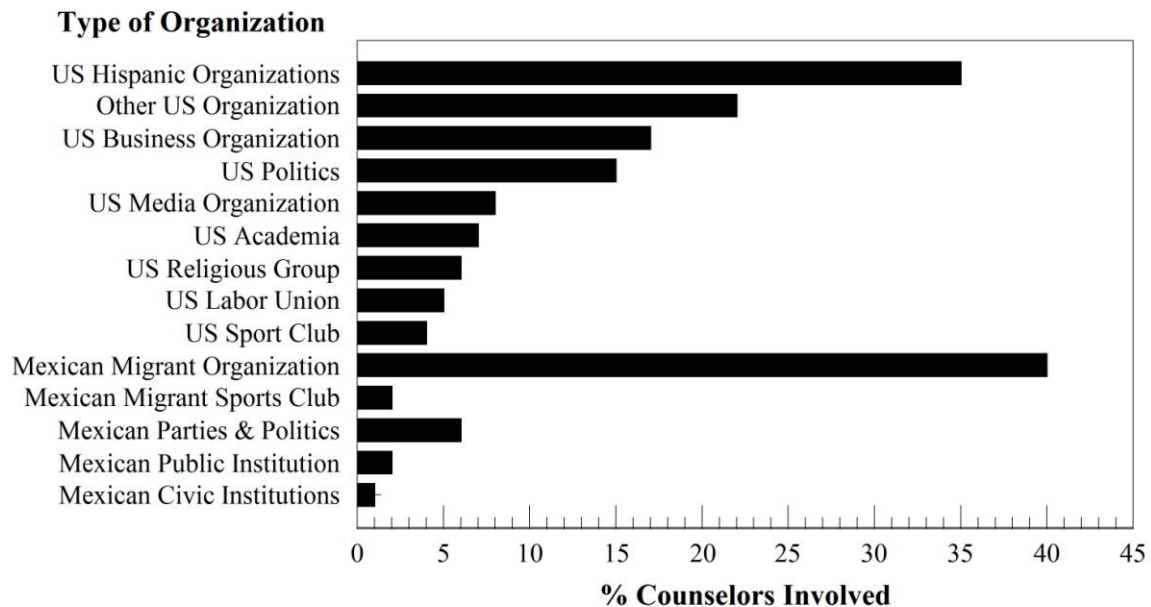
The advisors divided themselves according to their interests among the six commissions. Over 50 placed themselves on the political commission. The education commission had 20 members, the health commission had 15. Law had 9-10, the border, economics and business, and culture commissions had fewer as reported by interviewees. In addition to meeting as issue area commissions at each of their meetings, the advisors also meet in regional groups to get to know one another and to discuss issues specific to their regions.

The first meeting of the CC-IME was in Mexico City in the IME auditorium. One hundred and twenty one people from the United States, many of them emigrants or children of emigrants from Mexico had the rather heady distinction of being invited to give advice to the Mexican government in Mexico City. As noted above, most

advisors were Mexican born while about 30 percent were not. Some spoke grammatically correct Spanish. Many others did not. Some were lawyers, judges,

Figure 2.

Figure 2: Civic Affiliation of CC-EMI Members (2002 - 2005)



Note: Most advisors report belonging to multiple organizations.
 Information compiled by Elvia Zazueta of EMI. N = 100.
 (Bada, Fox and Selee, 2006, 32).

PhDs while others came from a day laborer background. In general, the meetings took place in “Spanglish.” US born advisors of Mexican descent often asked Mexican born advisors to speak for them, especially in giving formal reports. The first meeting was rather chaotic because the group had yet to establish rules of procedure. The group had to decide on By Laws as well as set an agenda. Many were under the mistaken impression that they were there to make decisions for the Mexican government rather than just give advice. Women advisors report that the gender relations at the first meeting were terrible. Men were whistling and making “cat-calls” and other offensive kinds of comments about the women. The reaction of at least one US born woman advisor was one of absolute shock. She reported that she was appalled to find the men she worked with on the US side of the border- where they treated her with respect and as an equal- become completely different in their behavior once they were in Mexico. She described herself as “stunned” by the experience. Mexican-born women advisors who had grown up in Mexico confirmed the “macho” nature of male behavior towards the women in the room but indicated that they were used to it and “knew how to handle it.” One of the Mexican-born women said that younger Mexican men are more accepting of women’s leadership. Some of the women advisors were overly friendly (flirting) with the Mexican born men.

Faced with this situation, one of the Mexican born and educated women advisors who has had considerable exposure to the US women's movement, took it upon herself to demand that the leaders of the CC- IME commissions stop the sexual harassment. The leaders of the commissions (especially the legal commission) together with IME staff reacted by establishing a "code of behavior" for the group. This included prohibitions against sexual harassment as well as other behavioral issues such dress, speech, promptness, drinking, staying until the end of meetings, and attendance – (this is not a vacation). After considerable lobbying, the Code of Behavior was accepted and the behavior of the men reportedly improved. Critical to this was the support of some Mexican born men who had been in the United States for some period of time. One in particular was instrumental in securing a more gender-neutral atmosphere for the CC-IME as he helped support the women who were pushing for a more civil code of conduct. In spite of this atmosphere, the political commission elected as their leader a US born woman lawyer of Mexican descent. The political commission was the largest commission (over 50) and attracted a large number of advisors with political ambitions. One woman advisor noted of the entire group that most were there to work while some (maybe 10 percent) were more interested in enjoying the public attention of being on the CC-IME or in taking advantage of the free trips to Mexico.

While the stated purpose of the National Council and the IME is to serve Mexican migrants in the United States by making recommendations to the Mexican government, the official *Reporte Bidual de Actividades for 2003- 2004* suggests that the expectation of President Fox and the Mexican government was that Mexican migrants can help Mexico as well, especially Mexican banks and Mexican businesses.

The *Reporte Bidual de Actividades 2003-2004* states that President Fox in his capacity as head of the National Council, emphasized the importance of development programs that use migrant remittances and encouraged members of the Council to see that those resources go in greater measure to investment in the localities of origin of the migrants. The *Reporte* also notes that the President of the Republic at the second meeting of the CNCME instructed IME to collaborate closely with the Banco del Ahorro Nacional y Servicios Financieros (BANSEFI). In addition, the National Council sought to open US markets to Mexican exporters, to encourage the participation of migrants in eco-tourism projects in their communities, and to use television to reach migrant communities in the US to facilitate access to credit for Mexican migrants.

The Consejo Consultivo of IME for 2003-2005 made 255 recommendations which were submitted to the Mexican federal government for consideration. Of these, health initiatives, distance education, the three for one program, the vote for Mexicans living abroad, protection for emigrants abroad and remittances were some of the major issues that the CC-IME raised and addressed as noted in the IME *Reporte 2003-2004* and confirmed by interviewees. The IME staff must reply to each of these recommendations or refer it to the appropriate ministry for response. The Mexican government in 2005 in a landmark piece of legislation passed a law making

it legal for Mexicans living abroad to vote in Mexican elections, although the procedures for voting (requiring a voting card, trips to Mexico to register) prevented most Mexicans living abroad from exercising this new right. CC-IME members lobbied the Mexican government in favor of passing this law.

The Consejo Consultivo of IME for 2006-2008 consisted of 100 advisors elected or appointed from the service areas of 50 Mexican consulates in the United States and Canada, 15 advisors elected for “merit and career,” 10 representatives of national Mexican American community organizations plus representatives of Mexican state governments. During this period, the commission structure changed slightly as Health separated from Culture to become a commission on its own and the Education Commission absorbed the Culture topic. The advisors also added a Commission on the Media. The passage of the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 (HR 4437) by the United States House of Representatives in December 2005 was a defining issue for the CC-IME 2006-2008 cohort. HR4437 made unlawful presence and illegal entry into the United States a felony. Immigrant communities and their supporters in the United States raised a national outcry on the radio, in the press and in street demonstrations. Since CC-IME advisors are elected leaders drawn from these groups, many were heavily involved in organizing and leading these anti HR4437 protests. Other themes raised included US-Mexican cooperation concerning organized gangs, the situation of migrant field laborers, the economic contributions of migrants to the North American economy and the celebration of the bicentenary of Mexican independence and the Centenary of the Mexican Revolution and educational development.

The Consejo Consultivo for IME for 2009-2011 consists of 101 advisors elected or chosen from the jurisdictions of the 50 Mexican consulates in the United States and Canada, 15 advisors elected by the 2006-2008 cohort for continuity, and 10 representatives of National Mexican American organizations and representatives from state governments. Although the By Laws specify that no advisors should run for a second term, several advisors in the 2009-2011 cohort have been members of previous cohorts. The overriding issue at the April 2010 reunion of all CC-IME cohorts in Mexico City was the just passed Arizona law that requires all migrants to carry their immigration papers and permits law enforcement to stop and arrest without cause anyone they perceive to be undocumented. This law was condemned by all including the President of Mexico, Felipe Calderón, at the meeting. In addition, the discussion at the 2009 CC-IME reunion recommended that the possibility of adding a new commission on Canada be studied. Among other items, the CC-IME also recommended that Mexican consulates hold a Labor Rights Week and install a Ventanilla de Laboral or Labor Window in each consulate. Several recommendations called for evaluation and review of programs such as Ventanas de Salud and the Becas-IME. In all, the November 2009 meeting made 36 recommendations (www.ime.mx.gov).

Accomplishments of the CC-IME

Health Commission

Over half of the Mexican migrants and their descendents in the United States have no health insurance. The high cost of health care, undocumented legal status and language barriers tend to bar Mexican migrants from the US health system. Yet the population suffers high rates of TB, diabetes, hypertension, and sexually transmitted diseases. Working with the Secretariat of Health (Secretaria de Salud or SSA) in Mexico, the IME and local consulates around the US worked with the CC-IME to establish several important new programs involving health. One is the program "Leave Healthy, Return Healthy." A second involves the repatriation of ill Mexican migrants. A third is the Commission of Border Health that promotes more cooperation between the authorities of Mexico and the US. Two other programs most often mentioned by interviewees as being successful were the Bi-national Health Week (Semana Binacional de Salud or SBS) and the Health Windows (Ventanillas de Salud) in a number of consulates which provide education, information about existing services, and a mobile clinic with free medical services to check for high cholesterol, diabetes, hypertension, pregnancy and HIV. By 2007, it had 32 programs in 17 states and the District of Columbia (Lagagaron 2010,10). The Bi-national Health Week started in 2001 with five counties in California bringing together governmental and non governmental agencies in Mexico and the US including private foundations to provide free medical checkups for migrants during one week in particular locations. By 2004, this program had spread to 20 counties in 17 states of the US (Laglagaron 2010,28-31;www.ime.mx.gov).

Education Commission

Because about a third of Mexican migrants in the US have less than a 9th grade education, about half have not finished high school, and only 7 percent have completed high school, education has been a concern for Mexicans in the United States. The PCME Programa par las Comunidades Mexicanes en el Exterior de la Cancilleria created in 1990 in response to pressure from Mexicans in the United States focused on educational and social programs. Under the auspices of the new initiatives of 2003, however, the Mexican government established Las Plazas Comunitarias e-México for free distance education both for youth and adults at the primary and secondary levels. These Plazas Comunitarias operate as centers of education for migrants with classes, computers, internet access, courses in English and Spanish and educational TV. In 2004, there were officially 116 of these plazas operating in the US, although interviewees reported that this figure is too high as many were not funded adequately. In cooperation with the Colegio de Bachilleres, Mexicans and their descendents in the United States can continue their secondary education in Spanish using distance learning computers at the Plazas Comunitarias. An important component of the educational commission's work was to establish a single credential for Mexican school children so that school records can transfer with the child and records are available in both the Mexican and United States communities in which the child lives or has lived. Another action brought Mexican school superintendents to the United States and also took US superintendents to

Mexico, both with teaching materials and experience to share with one another. The education commission of the CC-IME negotiated with Mexican representatives to encourage Mexico to teach English to children in Mexican schools believing that these children will most likely come to the US when they are older and will be much better off if they know some English. Mexican government officials were not particularly receptive to this idea because they already have to teach Spanish plus ten of the 56 indigenous languages that currently exist in Mexico in Mexican schools. Another program sponsored by the Mexican government and the University of California is IME Becas, a program which began in 2005 and continues to aid non profit educational programs that help Mexicans living abroad at all levels of education, including scholarships to individuals (Laglagaron 2010, 14-28; www.ime.mx.gov).

Business and Development Commission

The business and development commission of the IME- partnership with CC-IME worked to promote the 3x1 program in the US by holding workshops in Chicago and Los Angeles and elsewhere. A major concern was finding secure and inexpensive ways for migrants to send their remittances back home – whether in the 3x1 program or for the support of their families. A major effort involved establishing a “matricular identity card” that would enable an otherwise undocumented migrant to use a bank account. Persuading banks to accept such cards issued by the consulates and persuading and teaching migrants and their families to use the banks rather than paying high fees to transfer companies is another task. Interviewees report that at a workshop held by IME in Mexico on development, community leaders from the United States were gathered to meet representatives from DANEFI, BANCOMER, US BANK and FIFTH THIRD BANK. They were also were brought together with representatives of the building industry in Mexico like CSMEX and CONSRUMEX to talk about how to build houses in Mexico. Tourism is another topic that concerns this group. Recommendations involved making areas like Rosarito into tourist areas. The issue of 3 for 1 programs and advice for development projects continue to be issues of concern for this commission (Laglagaron 2010, 31-33; www.ime.mx.gov).

Political Commission

Most of the members of the CC-IME for 2003-2005 were interested in the political commission as over 50 of the 105 joined this group. During 2004, this group focused on obtaining the vote for Mexicans living abroad, a bill which passed the Mexican legislature in 2005. In 1998, Mexico had passed a law granting Mexican-born individuals who had become US citizens the ability to maintain their Mexican nationality. This meant that they lost their political rights but retained the ability to own land and work in Mexico. The new law allowing Mexican citizens living abroad to vote passed in June 2005 makes it theoretically possible for an estimated 4.2 million Mexican citizens living abroad to vote. However, to vote, a Mexican citizen living abroad must have a voting card – an item possessed by only about 32 percent

of Mexican citizens living in the US. More recent immigrants are more likely to have a Mexican identification card that allows them to vote in Mexico which means that immigrants from states like Veracruz (where migration flows are more recent) are more likely to have a voting card than immigrants from Jalisco or Zacatecas, states with long histories of migratory flows. (Suro 2007). To obtain a Mexican identification card, a Mexican citizen must go to Mexico and spend at least a month. This requirement makes obtaining a voting card an unlikely occurrence except for those who have papers and regularly travel back and forth between Mexico and the United States. Other factors that prevented widespread voting activity in the June 2006 presidential election involve the difficulty of distributing information about how to obtain an absentee ballot to vote and lack of information about the Mexican election.

The ability to run for office in Mexico may be more significant than the ability to vote at this point in time. Many Mexicans living in the United States are more highly educated and more ambitious than those who have not migrated. Some have done very well economically in the United States and have political ambitions. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for the overwhelming interest of the advisors in the political commission of the CC-IME as opposed to other IME commissions among the 2003-2005 CC-IME although in later cohorts, the political commission was not so large. Already, Mexicans in the United States are playing increasingly important roles in Mexican politics. For example, Jesús Martínez-Saldaña, a Chicano/a Studies professor at Fresno State University has been elected to the state legislature in Michoacan. In Los Angeles, four Zacatecas who live in Los Angeles ran for local and state elections in Zacatecas in 2007. The Mexican Congress has decided to give voting representation to migrants for each of the political parties, the PRI, PRD and PAN and each have elected representatives. Andrés Bermúdez, also known as “El Rey del Tomate” because of his success in California agribusiness, pioneered this political route in 2000 when he ran for mayor of Jerez, Zacatecas and won only to have his election declared invalid because of his status as a migrant in the United States. In 2007, El Rey del Tomate was a representative of the PAN party in the Mexican Congress (Smith and Bakker 2008, 129). Another activity of the CC-IME political commission during its 2003-2005 term involved going to Ciudad Juarez to investigate what might be done about the mass killings that have taken the lives of over 400 women in this area. The group came away feeling unable to do anything about the problem from the US side of the border because of the lack of US jurisdiction. In later cohorts, the political commission was concerned with making it easier for Mexicans living abroad to vote and with migration reform in the United States.

Legal Commission

In the first CC-IME cohort, this group consisted of nine or ten people, mostly lawyers and judges. The second and third cohorts had 14 and 10 members respectively. They have focused on establishing labor rights for Mexican workers in the United States. They have discussed and made recommendations on issues such

as how to monitor treatment with regard to civil violations in the United States and recommended training in US labor and civil rights in Mexico for those who come to the United States. A major concern involved how to lobby the United States to allow the legalization of a worker in the United States for five years or more, to increase the number of visas in different categories, and to approve the DREAM Act which would legalize the Mexican born children of migrants who have grown up and gone to school in the United States and who now have become undocumented adults subject to deportation at any time. Another subject of concern has been the administration of the Mexican electoral process for Mexican citizens living in the United States. Topics such as pensions for migrants and immigrant orphans were discussed. Revising the CC-IME By Laws has been a recent issue of concern.

Border Commission

The Border commission has been quite active in working to reduce the pain and suffering of migrants crossing the border by supplying water, clothes and snacks at various locations along the US side of the border. A non-profit group called Angeles de la Frontera or Border Angels started by Enrique Morones in 2001 became a focus for this commission's activities under the first cohort. The Border Angels are a humanitarian organization interested in preventing more deaths on the border. Since 9/11 and the tightening of the border in more accessible places, over 4000 migrants have died trying to cross the dry barren deserts that constitute some of the less well guarded parts of the border. Border Angels does not see itself as encouraging or even condoning illegal immigration but rather sees itself as providing lifesaving humanitarian aid. As a member of the CC-IME, Morones brought his concerns and activities to the EMI. In addition to providing water stations along the border, Border Angels attempt to monitor the activities of the Minutemen, provide publicity and awareness about the situation on the border, and lobby Congress to change border policies. (Border Angels 2007.).

More recently, Operation Streamline has received the attention of the CC-IME Border Commission. Operation Streamline started in December 2005 in Del Rio, Texas by the Department of Homeland Security and has now spread to the Yuma, AZ (December 2006); Laredo, TX (November 2007); Tucson, AZ (January 2008); and Rio Grande Valley, TX (June 2008) sectors of the border. Under this program, all those apprehended crossing the border (with the exception of juveniles, parents with small children, those with humanitarian concerns and those with certain health conditions) are tried for a misdemeanor with a maximum sentence of 6 months in prison. About half are convicted but not sentenced to jail time. If a person is apprehended for a second time, the charge is a felony and the maximum prison time is 2 years, although the median prison sentence is 6 months. In addition to the human trauma that this program represents for migrants, the program has had an additional consequence of completely tying up the local and federal courts in the region to the point that some have been holding what have been accused of being unconstitutional mass trials. (Kerwin and McCabe 2010).

Building Networks

A major purpose of the IME was to build and strengthen ties between Mexicans and those of Mexican descent living abroad with various Mexican governmental agencies at all levels – federal, state, and local. Another purpose was to build and strengthen the ties among the leaders of the Mexican diasporian communities in the United States and Canada. Interviewees unanimously agreed that this latter objective had been achieved. Some were quite enthusiastic about this aspect of the CC-IME experience. Although the first and second cohorts of advisors have been replaced by a new group, many of the first and second groups continue to be in contact and to interact. The advisors are not supposed to make political statements as members of CC-IME. However, many have used the CC-IME experience and contacts to form their own organizations. For example, some of those associated with the health commission in the first cohort started a non-profit organization and filed for 501C tax exempt status. In still another development, a member of the first cohort has made contact with the American Jewish Committee to run workshops for CC-IME members –current and past- to learn how to organize and lobby. In cooperation with the Jewish Anti Defamation League (ADL), CC-IME members have formed an Anti-Discrimination Group to fight anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican prejudice – in particular a campaign to reduce the use of the word “illegal” in the media (Laglagaron 2010, 18). The extent of these spin-off activities is not known and requires further investigation.

The IME facilitates the maintenance of this network of contacts with an informative webpage(www.ime.mx.gov) containing among other things, a full list of the names of all advisors and contact information. They also provide a newsletter, LAZOS, which reports on the meetings of advisors and their activities as well as the activities of IME. Interviewees confirm the value of this resource and of the CC-IME experience because over the three year term, advisors meet with their commission and their regional groups in face to face meetings and form friendships and acquaintances in various parts of North America. Many commissions have monthly conference calls and regional meetings independently. In addition, almost all advisors are elected or chosen because of their prior community activities and contributions to the immigrant community. They each have their own contacts and networks in their own communities and can bring those resources to bear when addressing a problem.

PART III: The Significance of CC-IME: Geographies of Power

CC-IME is a fascinating transnational social experiment that is significant on a number of levels as a response to globalization and large migration flows between asymmetric national economies. Inspired by Pessar and Mahon’s concept of “geographies of power,” applied somewhat differently (Pessar and Mahon 2003), the remainder of this paper will experimentally sketch out and briefly discuss CC-IME’s significance with regard to different “geographies of power”- that is, from the Mexican point of view, from the United States point of view, from the point of view

of transnational cooperation as well as from an “intersectionality” perspective (including language, gender, race and class), from the point of view of transnationalism, citizenship and identity formation, and from the point of view of political agency and leadership development. “Geographies of power” refers to the power hierarchies, organizational, linguistic, national, symbolic, gendered and class based that intersect in the operation of CC-IME.

The Mexican point of view

The continuing exponential growth of the Mexican diaspora (doubling about every 7 years), the proximity of Mexico to the United States, and the weakness in Mexico’s economy relative to the United States, a weakness reflected in weak growth in gross national product and lower wages in Mexico today compared with ten years ago (Uchitelle 2007) means that the political organization created by the IME with its CC-IME advisors and its attempts to organize and build ties and identity between Mexico and its diasporian communities has different implications for Mexico than it does for the United States. As explained by Mexican diplomat, Carlos González Gutiérrez in 1999, not only does the United States exercise overwhelming economic power over Mexico but the power from the Mexican diaspora in terms of political influence over the voting choices of their families still in Mexico has been slowly bleeding into Mexican politics. Even before Mexicans living abroad had the right to vote, Mexican politicians from all three parties, the PAN, PRI and PRD, made frequent visits to Los Angeles, Dallas, and other Mexican-American communities in the United States to campaign, knowing that the opinions of those who were sending remittances back home (usually men) had an important influence on their voting relatives in Mexico. Networked migration and relatively cheap and regular telephone calls connect many migrant communities in the United States closely with those in Mexico. Because of the status of “making it in the United States” and the significant difference in standard of living, relatively wealthy US migrants can run for office in Mexico rather easily. Andrés Bermúdez, El Rey del Tomate, with a reported annual income of about \$300,000 in 1999 was wealthy enough to be able to provide patronage – jobs, gifts, etc – to win a mayor’s election in Jerez, Zacatecas and to go on to hold a seat in the Mexican parliament (Smith and Bakker 2008). Several other migrants to the United States have returned to hold office in Mexico at the local and state levels and even federal levels as the political parties reserve a migrant seat on their party lists. While some of these migrants may run for office in Mexico expecting to change and democratize the clientele party politics of Mexico, the prospects for this are quite slim (Smith and Bakker 2008).

Remittances from United States migrants are another important source of power flowing from the United States to Mexico that defines the Mexican point of view. The recession in the United States has hurt remissions to Mexico. From a peak in 2006 of \$26 billion remittances to Mexico dropped to \$25 billion in 2007 according to Mexico's Central Bank. Remittances are Mexico's second-biggest source of hard currency, behind oil but ahead of tourism and manufactured goods (Millman 2009). The flow of remittances depends on the maintenance of migrants’ identity with

Mexico, with their hometown or home state, and with their families who remain there. As explained by Carlos González Gutiérrez, these are precisely the identity bonds that the Mexican government seeks to foster and maintain. The worry for Mexico is not only the decline in remittances but whether migrants' emotional and family bonds will last beyond the first generation of migrants.

A counteracting geography of power that flows from Mexico to its diaspora is through IME's and CC-IME's consulate health and education programs as well as the many other services that the Mexican consulates in the United States and Canada provide to Mexican immigrants.

From the United States local, state, and federal government's point of view

The US Census Bureau projects that by 2050, the non-hispanic white population will decline from 66 percent of the US population in 2008 to 46 percent in 2050. Meanwhile, the Hispanic percentage of the population is expected to double from 15 percent in 2008 to 30 percent in 2010. By 2023, more than half of United States children will be minorities. By 2050, 39 percent of all the children will be Hispanic – up from 22 percent in 2008 (US Census Bureau 2008.)

Another problem pointed out by Carlos González Gutiérrez in 1999 is that the Hispanic population (most of which is Mexican) is in danger of becoming an underclass in the United States. With the passage of generations, the percentage of Mexican origin families living in poverty decreases. Second generation Mexican Americans earn higher incomes than do those who are first generation immigrants. However, the levels of education for third generation Mexican Americans are slightly lower than those of the second generation (Gelhard and Carter 1997). In Dallas Texas and in Los Angeles, California, the high school dropout rate is higher for Hispanics than it is for other minorities. This is not only a problem for Hispanics but for the United States as a whole especially as ever greater percentages of the population are Hispanic. A 2006 study by Jeanne Batalova of the Migration Policy Institute found that 60.2 percent of Mexican immigrants over 25 did not have the equivalent of a high school degree compared to 32 percent of other foreign born adults in the United States. Only 5 percent of Mexican immigrant adults had a BA or higher degree compared to 26.7 percent of all other foreign born adults in the United States (Batalova 2008).

United States governments at all levels are faced with 1) the demands of United States business for cheap labor, 2) the demands of immigrants, their supporters and the human rights community for some routinized and legal route to US citizenship or legal status for migrants and 3) the nativist reactions of those fearful of the continued influx of Mexican immigrants as a challenge to “the American way of life,” They are all calling for “immigration reform” but have dramatically different ideas concerning what that reform should be. Local governments, schools, health facilities, and service organizations in areas of high immigrant concentration are the

most likely to be aware of and in the position to respond to the immediate needs of migrants.

While some argue that this situation weakens the power geography of the United States, others argue that without Hispanic immigrants, the United States would have a declining population and a declining and aging workforce, as does much of Europe. On this view, Mexican immigration strengthens the power position of the United States.

From the point of view of transnational policy cooperation

The work of CC-IME and of IME has been particularly important in developing new geographies of power with regard to transnational cooperation between local schools and educators in Mexico and the United States. The teacher exchanges and curriculum coordination for migrant students have required transnational cooperation and creative innovation for teachers and school administrators on both sides of the border. This is not a hierarchy of power, but rather the creation of a new transnational capability (a power to act, to solve a problem, rather than a power flow from A to B meaning that A causes B to act as A directs.)

From the viewpoint of gender

A remarkable aspect of the CC-IME is that each cohort has had an unusual number of women. The first cohort had 35 women out of a total of 103 (34 percent). In the second cohort 2006-2008, 42 of 115 (37 percent) were women and in the third cohort 56 of 147 (38 percent) are women. This is more than are in most elected legislative bodies in either Mexico or the United States. Mexico's lower house has 27.6 percent women, while its upper house has 19.5 percent women.

(Interparliamentary Union 2010). State legislatures in the United States hover around 24 percent women. The US House and Senate have 17 percent women (CAWP 2010). Why CC-IME has a relatively large percentage of women is not clear. Some interviewees said that the elections in their consulate area divided the positions available equally between men and women. If there were to be two advisors elected, one had to be a woman and one a man. Other respondents said that this kind of rule did not describe the election procedures in their consulate area. When the advisors themselves elect the commission chairs, males prevail, although in the first cohort, the chair of the very large political commission was a woman. In the second cohort, the chair of the education commission was a woman. In the third cohort, the chair of the health commission is a woman. In looking at the programs for the CC-IME meetings, one if not two women are typically on every panel. IME itself has had women in high positions. Currently the Secretary of Foreign Relations is a woman, Patricia Espinosa Cantellano. Women are well represented among the staff who run the IME meetings in different parts of Mexico. In spite of these observations, most of the top leadership of CC-IME is male. The tone of the meetings with regard to gender is very different from that of the first meeting of the first cohort of 2003-2005 in that inappropriate sexual behavior was not in evidence in the 2010 meeting in Mexico City. Interviewees when asked about

sexual harassment or sex discrimination on the part of their male colleagues in the 2009-2001 cohort reported that there was none. Occasional comments in the minutes of the commissions and in interviews suggest that some women are working to increase the number of women in the CC-IME and to get them into leadership positions. One woman who was helping a young female advisor draft a particularly sensitive document said that it was “important to mentor the young women or otherwise they will never get into higher positions.”

These preliminary findings about the gender geography of CC-IME are different from the gender relationships that have been reported in the literature concerning other Mexican migrant organizations. Luin Goldring (2001) and others (Smith and Bakker 2007) have shown that Mexican home town associations are strongly male dominated. Goldring argues that Mexican state governments favor men and that this is why some Mexican women choose to be politically active within institutions in the United States rather than in transnational projects which tend to be in cooperation with various levels of Mexican state governments. This is also reflected in the difference between men and women’s interest in long term settlement. Men favor returning to Mexico where their status is higher than it can be in the United States. Women, in contrast, prefer staying in the United States (Goldring 2001).

The Mexican government has signed the United Nations Convention to Prevent All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Under this convention, Mexico agrees to be audited by an independent international CEDAW committee at regular intervals. Whether this effort is bearing fruit in the Secretariat of Foreign Relations and consequently is reflected in CC-IME is unclear.

From point of view of class and race -

While our investigations are incomplete with regard to class and race among CC-IME advisors, the very selection process whereby CC-IME advisors are elected or chosen by those in their immigrant communities suggests that these advisors are likely to be among those who have been economically and educationally successful in the United States. To be in CC-IME they have to have the time to attend meetings. Advisors have to have been active in their communities to be known. Those with resources to spend on migrant projects or hometown projects will have a distinct advantage over poverty ridden farmworkers or day laborers, although many in CC-IME have such labor as a part of their life histories. As education levels rise in both Mexico and the United States and as more middle class Mexicans migrate to fill middle class jobs in the United States, the expectation would be that CC-IME advisors may increasingly look less like the average Mexican or Mexican American in the United States. In the second and third cohorts, CC-IME added 15 more slots for advisors who are chosen by the CC-IME cohort because of their “merit and their careers” in the United States. These individuals tend to be notable for their accomplishments and not necessarily reflective of the voices of the poor or the indigenous.

From the point of view of language and nation of birth

A basic requirement for election to CC-IME is fluency in Spanish. This privileges those born and raised in Mexico. Children of Mexican heritage born and raised in the United States may be fluent in Spanish, but they may not speak “good” Spanish. All meetings of CC-IME are supposed to be conducted in Spanish. This is a source of some difficulty and discussion within CC-IME. Those who regard their Spanish as being poor may be reluctant to speak in public meetings and ask “native” speakers to speak for them or apologize first and then speak in English. Outside speakers who speak only English are sometimes invited to give talks. Since most members of CC-IME are bilingual and operate easily in both languages, this practice is often easier than finding a translator, much to the discomfort of some CC-IME advisors. In the first cohort, some discussions were in “Spanglish.” This was not observed in the 2010 meeting. Some CC-IME advisors are most comfortable speaking Spanish and have limited English, while still others believe that if English is to be spoken, a translator must be provided not only to service those who do not understand English as well but for symbolic reasons.

The language tension reflects the different constituencies and purposes of CC-IME. Those arguing for Spanish fluency as a requirement and for Spanish only meetings hold that advisors cannot advise Mexican governmental agencies or officials if they do not understand or speak Spanish fluently. How can they know what is going on? Furthermore, language is a marker of national identity. The other constituency of CC-IME is the Mexican living in the United States or Canada and the children of Mexicans in the United States and Canada. As Carlos González Gutiérrez notes, second generation children of Mexican migrants do not necessarily learn or retain the Spanish language. Those in the Media Commission concerned with promoting CC-IME and its work in the Mexican American and Mexican Canadian communities have been debating whether their public relations and outreach efforts should be in English or Spanish.

From the point of view of agency

Elsewhere we have argued that globalization can open up spaces for women to exercise agency (Bayes and Kelly 2001; Gonzalez and Bayes 2008). In those arenas where established geographies of power or accepted power hierarchies are disrupted, as they often are in transnational interactions, traditional power constraints may be weakened and challenged, creating opportunities for political agency that might not be possible or likely without the disruption. This can be a space for creative and imaginative formulations. It can also be a place for conflict over what were accepted and unquestioned power relationships. CC-IME as a transnational organization brings together at least two cultures, two different political traditions, at least two different types of gender relations, at least two different traditions and sets of assumptions with regard to class and race. CC-IME advisors are confronted with a multiplicity of choices in these various terrains of power. Will the disruption reinforce their existing identities, loyalties, and ideas about class, race or gender relations? To what extent does the CC-IME experience

open new opportunities for agency, new ways of understanding, new spaces for creativity, and for positive power in the sense of being able to act?

We are continuing to collect and analyze data to address these questions. One interviewee observed that a split exists within CC-IME between those who were born and raised in Mexico and those who were born in the United States in that the Mexican born advisors are more informed and express much more interest in Mexican politics than do US or Canadian born advisors who are less familiar with the Mexican political system, the Mexican political parties and Mexican current events. The identity and agency of the Mexican born advisors in CC-IME may be more directed towards the Mexican government – perhaps using CC-IME as a platform to advance their chances of running for political office in Mexico, or towards advising and monitoring the Mexican government and CC-IME programs, perhaps with an eye to changing them. As many report, many migrants do not fully trust Mexican officials or the clientelist politics that continue to characterize much of Mexican political activity (Laglagaron 2010). Others, more likely to be born in the United States and Canada, take more interest in immigrant politics in the United States and Canada and are more likely to exercise agency by engaging in the United States or Canada rather than in Mexico.

Interviewee responses support the idea that they have not only been motivated to take initiative and exercise leadership in the education and health initiatives of the IME by pioneering and establishing the Ventanas de Salud in various parts of the country, by taking leadership in helping to establish and fund the Plazas de Comunitarias, by initiating and running workshops sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, by working with schools to integrate curricula for children that move back and forth between Mexico and the United States, by developing and maintaining instant technological networks that keep not only CC-IME advisors (both current and past) informed about events of interest, but also link the CC-IME people to vast arrays of other electronic networks in the United States concerned with immigration issues. Those with special talents and connections in the media and public relations have created special logos to market the transnational identity that CC-IME seeks to foster in the diaspora. Those on the border commission exercise agency by choosing to meet at different places on the border to be observers and to monitor.

Still other female interviewees when asked what they have gotten out of the CC-IME experience mention how much they have learned from CC-IME activities. They mention having learned how to focus on sources of agreement rather than sources of disagreement with others. They learned that they need to do their homework before meetings. They are particularly appreciative of the nationwide personal contacts and friendships that the CC-IME experience has fostered. Of course, not all CC-IME advisors choose to be active or try to generate change. Several women advisors were quick to point out that it is the women who do all the work but they are also aware that some women do little or no work. A male interviewee when asked if he concurred with the view that women did all the hard work, replied that

“Everyone who is here is overstretched in their community already and taking on more tasks is difficult.” Others were less diplomatic and suggested that a small percentage (maybe 10 percent) of the advisors (both male and female) do not do any work and are members of CC-IME for the free trips to meetings held in different places in Mexico.

Part IV. Conclusion

The picture that emerges from this partial and ongoing evaluation of CC-IME as a transnational organization is that it is a somewhat unique social experiment founded by the Mexican government to both protect and take advantage of its large and growing diasporian population in the United States and Canada. Because large migration flows are and promise to continue to be the future of the global economy especially if global warming changes weather and agricultural patterns, the Mexican experiment deserves to be studied, compared, evaluated and perhaps copied by other countries with diasporian populations. At the April 2010 CC-IME reunion in Mexico City, Mexico invited representatives from the Brazilian and Ecuadorian state departments to observe in case they might choose to replicate the program. While these efforts are valuable for states to perform, the CC-IME social experiment is also important, interesting and theoretically important from the point of view of the participants, how they, as transnationals with ties in two countries, negotiate their dual identities, their loyalties, their energies, their creativity. What happens to a transnational person’s political or social consciousness when she or he is exposed to multiple and intersecting geographies of power that are often contradictory, conflictive and disjunctive? Is this liberating or oppressive? What kind of models of citizenship can emerge? For whom and why? What happens to groups of such people? Preliminary conclusions suggest that there is no one answer to these questions. Some such as Samuel Huntington (2004) suggest that dual citizenship, bilingualism, conflicting loyalties, conflicting cultures and multiple and competing geographies of power are conditions created by Mexican immigration to the United States which should be shunned with fear and loathing. What seems clear from the CC-IME experience is that for some CC-IME advisors, the transnational experience of problem solving in the face of conflicting norms and intersecting geographies of power can be energizing, liberating, exciting and creative. It has the potential to expand horizons, connect people, build political and civic skills, educate, improve self esteem and generate webs of group affiliations that unite and construct rather than divide and destroy.

References:

- Ayón, David. 2005. “Mexican policy and Émigré communities in the U.S.” paper presented at the Conference on Mexican Migrant Civic and Political Participation. Woodrow Wilson Center, 4-5 November.
- Bada, Xochitl, Jonathan Fox and Andrew Selee. eds. 2006. *Invisible No More*. Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center.
- Batalova, Jeanne. 2008. “Mexican Immigrants in the United States.” Migration Policy Institute. Accessed at <http://www.migrationinformation.org/usfocus/display.cfm?id=679> on 6 May 2010.

- Bayes, Jane H. and Rita Mae Kelly 2001. "Political Spaces, Gender, and NAFTA." in eds. Rita Mae Kelly, Jane H. Bayes, Mary E. Hawkesworth and Brigitte Young. *Gender, Globalization, and Democratization*. Boulder, CO: Rowman and Littlefield. 149-169.
- Border Angels. 2007. webpage at <http://www.borderangels.org/mission.html>.
- Cano, Gustavo and Alexandra Délano. 2004. "The Institute of Mexicans Abroad: The Day After... After 156 Years." *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Hilton Chicago and the Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, IL, Sep 02,*
- CAWP Center for the American Woman and Politics 2010 at www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/index.php. Accessed 4 May 2010.
- Goldring, Luin. 2001. "The Gender and Geography of Citizenship in Mexico-US Transnational Spaces." *Identities*. 7,4;501-537.
- Gelbard, Alene H. and Marion Carter. 1997. "Characteristics of the Mexican-Origin Population in the United States," in Instituto Nacional de Migración, *The Contribution of the Mexican Immigrants to the Society of the United States of America*. Mexico City: 42-43.
- González Gutiérrez, Carlos. 2003. "La diplomacia de México ante su diáspora." En Rafael Fernández de Castro, ed. *En la Frontera del Imperio*. Mexico: Ariel.165-175.
- _____. 1999. "Fostering Identities: Mexico's Relations with its Diaspora." *The Journal of American History*. 86.3.
- Gonzalez, Laura and Jane H. Bayes. 2008. "New Transnational Opportunities and Challenges for Women's Leadership: The Consejo Consultivo del Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (CC-IME). *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. Fall.
- Huntington, Samuel. 2004. *Who Are We? Challenges to America's National identity*. Simon and Shuster.
- IME Reporte de Actividades 2003-2004. Mexico City:Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior. At www.ime.mx.gov. accessed 17 February 2007.
- IME Reporte de Actividades 2005-2006 at www.ime.mx.gov accessed 25 April 2010.

- IME Reporte de Actividades 2007-2008 at www.ime.mx.gov accessed 25 April 2010.
- Interparliamentary Union accessed at www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm 1 May 2010.
- Kerwin, Donald and Kristen McCabe. 2010. "Arrested on Entry: Operation Streamline and the Prosecution of Immigration Crimes." Migration Policy Institute: April. Accessed at <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=780> 5 May 2010.
- Laglagaron, Lauren. 2010. "Protection through Integration: The Mexican Government's Efforts to Aid Migrants in the United States." Migration Policy Institute. January.
- Millman, Joel. 2009. "Remittances to Mexico Fall more than Forecast." *Wall Street Journal* 28 January.
- Pessar, Patricia R. and Sarah J. Mahon. 2003. "Transnational Migration: Bringing Gender In." *International Migration Review*, 37,3; 812-846.
- Pew Hispanic Center. 2009. "Mexican Immigrants in the United States, 2008." April 15. Accessed at pewhispanic.org/factsheets/factsheet.php?FactsheetID=47.
- Smith, Michael Peter and Matt Bakker. 2008. *Citizenship Across Borders: The Political Transnationalism of El Migrante*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press
- Suro, Roberto . 2007. "Survey of Mexican Migrants, Part Two : Attitudes about Voting in Mexican Elections and Ties to Mexico." Pew Hispanic Center. <http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=42> accessed 15 April 2010)
- U.S. Census Bureau 2008. "An Older and More Diverse Nation by Midcentury" 14 August 2008 at <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/012496.html>
- Uchitelle, Louis. 2007. "Nafta should have stopped illegal migration, Right?" *New York Times* February 18.
- Verhovek, Sam Howe. 1998. "Torn Between Nations, Mexican-Americans Can Have Both." *New York Times*. April 14. Final. A .1