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## MIGRATION AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE: THE CASES OF SOUTHERN MEXICAN STATES AND THEIR EMIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*Summary:* This paper illustrates institutional approaches of emigrant states toward emigrants abroad, and how these approaches can change over time. These can range from absolute exclusion and non-communication, over fractional collaboration in specific matters, to even permanent institutional inclusion, for instance, through representation of migrants in home parliaments or governments. The approach for institutional incorporation can not only take place on the national, but also on the subnational level. This is the case in Mexico, a federal state in which many member states conduct their own emigrant policy, partially in accord with federal efforts, and partially independently or contrary to the national attempt to address the emigrant community abroad. To highlight these different approaches, I would like to take a look at the Southern Mexican states of Oaxaca and Chiapas. Although these states show similar political and social structures, and hold relatively large emigrant populations in the United States of America, the institutional approaches toward their emigrants changed in two different ways: while the institutional opening in Oaxaca goes back to various initiatives by the Oaxacan migrant community in the United States of America, the policy change in Chiapas toward more inclusion of the emigrant community was actively promoted by the government of Chiapas.

*Keywords:* migration, institutional change, Mexico (Oaxaca and Chiapas), United States of America

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the rising involvement of migrants and their organizations in international relations and their commitment for the development in home countries, they became specifically important for the governments in their countries of origin. More and more emigration states try to reach out to their emigrant communities and build new institutions to include migrants in home state affairs. Oftentimes, this process can be observed as a development from exclusion to more inclusion.<sup>1</sup> Home states established institutions and introduced specific programs to communicate and collaborate with emigrants. This happened in large emigrant states including Turkey,<sup>2</sup> China,<sup>3</sup> India,<sup>4</sup> Colombia,<sup>5</sup> as well as smaller emigrant states like Ecuador<sup>6</sup> or Georgia.<sup>7</sup> Colombia, for instance, established even a seat in the home parliament for migrant representation, while Ecuador implemented even six seats for migrant representatives in home country legislature.<sup>8</sup> Georgia established a ministry for diaspora affairs to win migrants abroad for remigration to Georgia. Other countries, in turn, such as the Dominican Republic, established absentee ballots for emigrants abroad.<sup>9</sup>

The state of Mexico also established institutions and programs to address a diaspora of more than twelve million people in the United States, one of the largest emigrant communities worldwide. However, this was not always the case. While the Mexican emigrant community in the United States was insulted as 'traitors' by Mexican governments for many decades, state officials of the late 1980s and 1990s started to realize political and economic influences of emigrants in their Mexican home communities, and therefore, changed their attitudes towards migrants living abroad,<sup>10</sup> and try to regulate the commitment of migrants in the state's own interests and intentions.<sup>11</sup> For this purpose, the Mexican government founded first the

- 1 A process of attempts to include emigrants abroad into national affairs of the home state was also labeled as 'long-distance nationalism' by Benedict Anderson (Anderson, B., *Long-Distance Nationalism: World Capitalism and the Rise of Identity Politics*, The Wertheim Lecture, Centre for Asian Studies, Amsterdam, 1992).
- 2 Østergaard-Nielsen, E., *The Politics of Migrants' Transnational Political Practices*, *International Migration Review*, vol. 37, no. 3, 2003, pp. 760–786.
- 3 Ding, S., *Digital Diaspora and National Image Building: A New Perspective on Chinese Diaspora Study of China's Rise*, *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 80, no. 4, 2007, pp. 627–648.
- 4 Naujoks, D., *Migration, Citizenship, and Development – Diasporic Membership Policies and Overseas Indians in the United States*, University Press, Oxford, 2013.
- 5 Smith, H., Stares, P. (eds.), *Diaspora in Conflict: Peace-Makers or Peace-Wreckers?*, United Nations Press, Tokyo, 2007.
- 6 Bauböck, R., *Towards a Political Theory of Migrant Transnationalism*, *International Migration Review*, vol. 37, no. 3, 2003, pp. 700–723.
- 7 SMGDI (State Ministry on Diaspora Issues of Georgia), 2015, *Georgian Diasporas*, URL=<http://www.diaspora.gov.ge>. Accessed 16 October 2015.
- 8 Bauböck, *op. cit.* note 6.
- 9 Levitt, P., *Transnational Villagers*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2001. In contrast, the process of more inclusion and political participation by emigrants in home affairs can also be initiated by the diaspora itself (Hunger, U., M. Candan, and S. Krannich, *Long-Distance Nationalism. Eine Fallstudie zu Online-Aktivitäten von Kurden in Deutschland*, Salzborn, S. (ed.), Staat und Nation. Die Theorien der Nationalismusforschung in der Diskussion, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011, pp. 225–238).
- 10 The Mexican president Vicente Fox even called Mexicans abroad 'heroes', because of their contributions to the development in Mexico (Durand, J., *From Traitors to Heroes: 100 Years of Mexican Migration Policies*, Migration Policy Institute, 2004, URL=<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/traitors-heroes-100-years-mexican-migration-policies>. Accessed 17 October 2015).
- 11 One of the highlights in the state-diaspora relationship marked the introduction of dual nationality for Mexican migrants in 1998, which involved more national rights, such as voting rights. The Mexican government wanted to win new votes, bind

'Programa para las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Exterior' (PCME) in 1990, which became later the 'Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior' (IME) in 2003 as a platform of a better coordinated communication and collaboration with migrant communities. In this sense, it works closely with other Mexican institutions, especially with the 50 Mexican consulates in the United States to offer migrant services, such as issuing 'matricula consulares' (a legal document to identify undocumented migrants),<sup>12</sup> to conduct the 'programa paisano' to stimulate remigration of Mexicans to their hometowns,<sup>13</sup> to coordinate health, business, or education programs, including teacher exchange and literacy programs, or the support of cultural and sports events of HTAs (hometown associations)<sup>14</sup> in US cities. Furthermore, it collaborates closely with the development institution 'Secretaria de Desarrollo Social' (SEDESOL) to support underdeveloped communities of origin in Mexico. This includes also the well-known development programs '3x1' and '1x1'.<sup>15</sup> These programs provide opportunities for institutional participation of migrants in Mexico, and migrant organizations (especially HTAs) can serve as institutional bridges here. Because through these organizations, migrants are able to propose community projects in their hometowns, negotiate them with public authorities in Mexico, and realize them in the framework of state programs, such as road pavements, restauration of public buildings, and installation of water systems. In addition, they are also able to articulate political demands through these institutional channels.<sup>16</sup>

The institutional approach of a state toward the emigrant community can not only take place on the national, but also on the subnational level. This is particularly obvious in the case of Mexico. The participation of migrants in governmental programs differ from Mexican state to state, which depends also on the different approaches of home states toward their migrant communities as well as, in the opposite way, the different attitudes of migrant com-

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migrants to national affairs, and to stimulate their developmental commitments in the long-run (Fitzgerald, D., *A Nation of Emigrants: How Mexico Manages Its Migration*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2009).

- 12 Massey, D.; Rugh, J.; Pren, K., *The Geography of Undocumented Mexican Migration*, Mexican Studies – Estudios Mexicanos, vol. 26, no. 1, 2010, pp. 129–52.
- 13 Bayes, J.; Gonzalez, L., *Globalization, Transnationalism, and Intersecting Geographies of Power: The Case of the Consejo Consultivo del Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (CC-IME): A Study in Progress*, Politics and Policy, vol. 39, no. 1, 2011, pp. 11–44.
- 14 HTAs (hometown associations) are migrant organizations founded by migrants originally from the same hometown (Fox, J., and X. Bada, *Migrant Organization and Hometown Impacts in Rural Mexico*, Journal of Agrarian Change, vol. 8, no. 2–3, 2008, pp. 435–61).
- 15 The '3x1' program is intended to develop local infrastructure by adding to each collectively remitted Dollar by migrant organizations (mostly through hometown associations) three state Dollars (each by the federal, state, and municipality level), and the '1x1' program to support local businesses by adding one Dollar by the federal government to each collectively remitted Dollar.
- 16 In general, migrant organizations can play a crucial role as intermediators between the diaspora and the home state, because they mostly know the needs of migrants, form the basic institutional framework of the diaspora, and are able to channel and articulate the interests of migrants towards the home state (Thränhardt, D., *Migrantenorganisationen. Engagement, Transnationalität und Integration*, Schultze, G. and D. Thränhardt (eds.), Migrantenorganisationen. Engagement, Transnationalität und Integration, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bonn, 2013, pp. 5–20.; Portes, A. and P. Fernandez-Kelly (eds.), *The State and the Grassroots: Immigrant Transnational Organizations in Four Continents*, Berghahn Books, London, 2015). These interests can range from direct participation in the policy making process in home communities and development efforts to the realization of cultural and business activities in home communities (Faist, T.; Fauser, M.; Reisenauer, E., *Transnational Migration*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2013). To realize these attempts, migrant organizations are able to accept state approaches for collaboration and support, and take active participation in state migrant programs and projects. For detailed research on the relationship between migrant organizations and the state of origin see Portes, A.; Escobar, C.; Walton Radford A., *Immigrant Transnational Organizations and Development: A Comparative Study*, International Migration Review, vol. 41, no. 1, 2007, pp. 242–281; Fox, J., Bada, X., *Migrant Organization and Hometown Impacts in Rural Mexico*, Journal of Agrarian Change, vol. 8, no. 2–3, 2008, pp. 435–61; and Pries, L., *Die Transnationalisierung der sozialen Welt*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2008.

munities toward their state governments. For instance, the state of Jalisco accepted many demands by its migrant community to integrate them into state policies,<sup>17</sup> while the states of Zacatecas<sup>18</sup> and Guanajuato<sup>19</sup> were highly active in building migrant organizations to establish a permanent institutional counterpart of collaboration in the United States. Mexican states implemented their own state agencies and institutes that offer additional migrant programs, services, and financial aid. These do primarily communicate and collaborate with migrant state-based federations which are organized by migrants from the same Mexican state of origin, and therefore, mark the umbrella organizations of HTAs from the same states, such as the Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos or the Federación de Clubes Jaliscienses de California.<sup>20</sup> To illustrate different approaches of institutional collaboration between Mexican states and their emigrant communities abroad, and to highlight that these can change over time, I would like to take a look at the two most Southern Mexican states of Oaxaca and Chiapas. These two states show similar social and political structures in home communities with an above-average amount of indigenous people,<sup>21</sup> and they hold relatively large emigrant populations, but, in contrast, feature fundamentally different organizational landscapes in the United States, and practice different relations between emigrant communities and their home state.

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- 17 The Zacatecas state was the first Mexican state that instituted a development program in 1995, called the '2x1' program, which became a model for the federal '3x1' program in 2001 (Zamora, R. G., *Migración Internacional y Remesas Colectivas en Zacatecas. El Programa Tres por Uno: Impactos y Desafíos*, Foreign Affairs en Español, vol. 5, no. 3, 2005, pp. 57–76), and that introduced the annual 'migrant's day' to honor 'commendable migrants' for their hometown commitments (Smith, M. P., M. Bakker, *Citizenship Across Borders: The Political Transnationalism of el Migrante*, Cornell, Ithaca, 2008, p. 142).
- 18 Goldring, L., *The Mexican State and Transmigrant Organizations: Negotiating the Boundaries of Membership and Participation*, Latin American Research Review, vol. 37, no. 3, 2002, pp. 55–99.
- 19 Smith, R., *Migrant Membership as an Instituted Process: Transnationalization, the State and the Extra-Territorial Conduct of Mexican Politics*, International Migration Review, vol. 37, no. 2, 2003, pp. 297–343.
- 20 Critics see some of these migrant organizations from classic emigration states as an extended arm of the home state government, which can differ from state to state. This can lead to a dependence of Mexican migrant organizations on their home state, because of the institutional entanglement between migrant leaders and home state institutions, particularly regarding common collective actions and involvement in home country affairs (Waldinger, R., E. Popkin, and H. A. Magana, *Conflict and Contestation in the Cross-Border Community: Hometown Associations Reassessed*, Ethnic and Racial Studies, vol. 31, no. 5, 2008, pp. 843–70; Iskander, N., *Partners in Organizing: Engagement between Migrants and the State in the Production of Mexican Hometown Associations*, Portes, A. and P. Fernandez-Kelly (eds.), *The State and the Grassroots: Immigrant Transnational Organizations in Four Continents*, Berghahn Books, London, 2015, pp. 111–138).
- 21 Indigenous people can be defined as Mexican inhabitants who have a pre-Columbian and Spanish heritage, and commonly speak a pre-Columbian language. Oaxaca with an indigenous population of more than 50 percent, and Chiapas with an indigenous population of more than one third, are besides Yucatán the Mexican states with the highest amounts of indigenous people (CDI [Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas], *Cédulas de Información Básica de los Pueblos Indígenas de México*, 2010, URL=[http://www.cdi.gob.mx/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1327:cedulas-de-informacion-basica-de-los-pueblos-indigenas-de-mexico-&catid=38&Itemid=54](http://www.cdi.gob.mx/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1327:cedulas-de-informacion-basica-de-los-pueblos-indigenas-de-mexico-&catid=38&Itemid=54), Accessed 17 October 2015).

## 2. THE APPROACH CHANGES OF SOUTHERN MEXICAN STATES TOWARD THEIR EMIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA<sup>22</sup>

### 2.1. THE CASE OF OAXACA

It is estimated that between 200,000 to 300,000 Oaxacan migrants live in the United States.<sup>23</sup> They developed migrant communities largely from below and independently from state authorities as a grass-roots movement in close transnational civic links with home communities that are autonomous indigenous entities in most cases. In this process, Oaxacan migrant communities benefit from a relatively long history of migration since the Bracero program in the 1950s, large amounts of indigenous migrant waves in the 1990s, and a predominantly concentration in urban and rural centers of California where migrant leaders could accumulate financial and social resources to shape their communities. The by far largest Oaxacan migrant community in Los Angeles – that represents with presumably more than 70,000 members by far the largest Oaxacan migrant community in the United States<sup>24</sup> – can be characterized as a cohesive and self-structured indigenous community held by more than 100 HTAs that coordinate translocal participation in communities of origin, and larger issue-based migrant organizations that deal with broader socio-cultural (Organización Regional de Oaxaca and Federación Oaxaqueña de Clubes y Organizaciones Indígenas en California), political (Frente Indígena de Organizaciones Binacionales), economic (Asociación Oaxaqueña de Negocios), or educational (Instituto Oaxaca) issues in Los Angeles as well as in Oaxaca (see table 1).<sup>25</sup> Most of their members are indigenous migrants who commonly distance themselves from the Mexican government, because of the ethnic discrimination, political exclusion, and economic marginalization they experienced in Oaxaca.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The following findings are based on empirical research conducted in the frame of my dissertation with the title 'Rebuilding Indigenous Citizenship in Transnational Spaces. The Case of Oaxaqueños in Los Angeles' from October 2011 to May 2013.

<sup>23</sup> It is difficult to estimate how many Oaxacan migrants exactly live in the United States, because most of them hold an illegal status, and therefore, are not recorded in reliable public statistics.

<sup>24</sup> Kissam, E., *Personal Communication. Rough Population Estimates – Indigenous People in Los Angeles County*, Los Angeles, 2012.

<sup>25</sup> For more information about transnational networks and activities of these organizations see Krannich, S., *Transnational Organization, Belonging, and Citizenship of Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States: The Case of Oaxaqueños in Los Angeles*, Working Paper Series, no. 123, COMCAD – Center on Migration, Citizenship and Development, Bielefeld, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Most of their members belong to the two largest Oaxacan indigenous groups of Zapotecos and Mixtecos that have their origins in rural regions in Oaxaca.

Table 1: Larger State-based Oaxacan Migrant Organizations in Los Angeles

Name	Type	Year of creation	Ethnic component	Main objectives
Organización Regional de Oaxaca (ORO)	Oaxacan state-based cultural organization	1988	Zapotec and Mixtec	culture/politics/development
Frente Indígena de Organizaciones Binacionales (FIOB)	political association	1991	Mixtec, Zapotec, Triqui, Purépecha, and non-indigenous	politics/education/development
Federación Oaxaqueña de Clubes y Organizaciones Indígenas en California (FOCOICA)	Oaxacan state-based federation	2001	Zapotec	development/culture/politics
Ministerio de la Virgen de Juquila (MVJ)	religious migrant organization	2004	Zapotec, Mixtec and mestizo Mexican	religion/culture/politics
Asociación Oaxaqueña de Negocios (AON)	entrepreneurial association	2005	Zapotec and mestizo Mexican	business/culture/education
Instituto Oaxaca (InstOax)	educational organization	2007	Zapotec and non-Mexican	education/culture/development

Source: Table created by the author.

### Local Governance Structures and Institutions in Oaxaca

Despite the numerous Oaxacan migrants in the United States and their extensive transnational efforts in Oaxaca, including relatively large amounts of remittances that almost doubled from 787 million US Dollars in 2003 to almost 1,430 million US Dollars in 2011 (see chart 1 below), the Oaxacan government did only marginally attempt to include them into home state affairs before the policy change. Moreover, their few offered state programs for migrants were barely accepted by migrants, mainly because of their skepticism toward the PRI government that socially marginalized indigenous people. Therefore, transnational participation in home communities of Oaxacan migrants is foremost realized through a civil society based on alternative indigenous local governance structures and institutions called ‘usos y costumbres.’ Active community members, who call themselves ‘ciudadanos’ or ‘comuneros’, have to participate in local political or economic decision-making processes as a part of their indigenous traditions to keep their full community member status. They are appointed by communal assemblies or committees in hometowns, which are elected by community members back home, to fulfill their obligations in developing or maintaining the community. Either they are appointed to participate in active community work by helping, for instance, to pave town roads or renovate public buildings (called ‘cargos’), or in leadership positions by monitoring political processes or conducting workshops and school projects (‘tequios’).<sup>27</sup> For that purpose, appointed members have to remigrate to their home community for one or two years. If they do not follow their appointments they can receive a sanction in the form of a fine or the deprivation of their property in the home community. However, most community members participate voluntarily in the usos y costumbres in their home communities, because they perceive participation in the home community as an essential part of their transnational indigenous identity

27 For more details on the practices of ‘usos y costumbres’ in indigenous communities see Kearney, M., F. Besserer, *Oaxacan Municipal Governance in Transnational Context*, Fox, J., Gaspar Rivera-Salgado (eds.), *Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States*, University of California Press, San Diego, 2004, pp. 449–466; and Fox, J., G. Rivera-Salgado (eds.), *Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States*, University of California Press, San Diego, 2004.

and membership, and if they are not able to conduct their required work they are allowed to pay another community member to take over the work in the home community.

In this sense, the transnationalized ‘usos y costumbres’ presents a serious alternative to the governmental ‘3x1’ program to develop underdeveloped indigenous communities in Oaxaca, especially because indigenous leaders can decide by themselves which projects should be realized without achieving state requirements that are perceived as very bureaucratic and time-consuming. Furthermore, leaders of HTAs that actually participated once in the ‘3x1’ program complained about cases of corruption of state officials. Although the implementation of ‘usos y costumbres’ can differ from indigenous community to community, it has some democratic deficits, which are foremost the exclusion of female members and the dominant status of older male members who hold additional rights in advising local projects. Nevertheless, also younger community members in Los Angeles regard traditional forms of indigenous political and economic participation as an essential tool of sustaining links between the diaspora and communities of origin that differ fundamentally from practices of mestizo HTAs from other states. In general, these local governances constitute alternatives civic structures to missing state institutions in Oaxaca.

### **Participation of Oaxacan Migrant Organizations and Institutional Change on the State Level in Oaxaca**

In addition to HTAs, larger Oaxacan migrant organizations were actively involved in institutional change in Oaxaca. The starting point for this political change in Oaxaca was the so-called ‘APPO’ movement in 2006.<sup>28</sup> The political organization FIOB supported actively the ‘APPO’ uprisings in Oaxaca de Juárez in 2006, which campaigned for more human rights protection in Oaxaca and the resignation of the PRI government under Governor Ulises Ruiz. Because Oaxacan migrants did not have many democratic opportunities to participate in political institutions on the state level – an exception is the state parliament election every six years, in which migrants are allowed to vote – Oaxacan migrant leaders perceived the support of the ‘APPO’ movement as a possible contribution to governmental policy changes in Oaxaca. FIOB established an additional office, called the ‘APPO-LA’ (a branch of ‘APPO’ in Los Angeles) to coordinate demonstrations in front of the Mexican consulate, publish press releases, and organize meetings with Mexican government officials in Los Angeles to discuss the political situation in Oaxaca and to claim policy changes. Some FIOB members even took over ‘APPO’ leadership positions in Oaxaca.

Although the close alliance of Oaxacan migrant organizations with actors of the civil society in Oaxaca against the government could not cause its retirement, the active campaigning of the Oaxacan migrant community for the opposition candidate Gabino Cué in the state

28 The ‘APPO’ (Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca) was a movement sustained by different groups of labor unions, teachers, students, indigenous people, and local farmers who primarily demonstrated against the Oaxacan government, and called for more rights and democratic participation in Oaxaca. During the uprisings several dozen people were killed by the police, army, or paramilitary (Adler, M., *Collective Identity Formation and Collective Action Framing in a Mexican “Movement of Movements”*, *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements*, 4 (1), 2012, pp. 287–315).

election for governorship contributed to an end of the 80 years long PRI ruling<sup>29</sup> in Oaxaca in 2010. Oaxacan migrant organizations, united in the campaign movement called 'Red de Apoyo a Cué',<sup>30</sup> negotiated some demands in several meetings with Cué in Los Angeles as a consideration for their electoral support. Until 2014, some of these demands were realized by the new Cué government. These include the establishment of a state office, called 'Centro Oaxaca,' in Los Angeles to provide services directly on-site to the Oaxacan community, reorganization of the governmental diaspora institute IOAM (Instituto Oaxaqueño de Atención al Migrante) that is more adjusted to the needs of migrants through specific programs and projects, and the engagement of the experienced indigenous migrant leader, Rufino Dominguez, as IOAM director.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, some claims of the migrant community are not realized yet, including the establishment of a 'diputado migrante' (migrant representative) who should defend the interests of the migrant community in the Oaxaca state parliament. Although the Oaxacan migrant community is still skeptical toward state actions, they are at least more institutionally included in political decision-making processes on the state level through the IOAM and the Centro Oaxaca since 2012.<sup>32</sup> These institutional changes over the last five years mark a new and more inclusive approach of the Oaxacan government towards its emigrant community in the United States, which was primarily initiated by the migrant community.

## 2.2. THE CASE OF CHIAPAS

Similar as Oaxaca, the state of Chiapas fulfilled also a policy change from an exclusive to an inclusive approach toward its migrants abroad. However, in contrast to Oaxaca, the process for that change was mainly initiated by the government of Chiapas, and not by the migrant community. Although Chiapanecos migrated predominantly in the last 20 years, it is estimated that there live already more than 200,000 of them in the United States.<sup>33</sup> Most of them are undocumented migrants who settled all across the United States.<sup>34</sup> Because of its relatively young history of migration, the government of Chiapas reached out to its diaspora not before the early 2000s when it introduced the migrant program 'Unidad de Atención a Mi-

29 The PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) was also the long-lasting governing party on the federal level in Mexico until 2000.

30 The Oaxacan migrant community supported Cué by establishing an election office in Los Angeles, organizing campaign rallies, conducting phone calls to voters in California as well as Oaxaca, and publishing support articles in local media in Los Angeles as well as Oaxaca.

31 Rufino Dominguez was a migrant leader for more than 20 years in California, and the binational coordinator of the political migrant organization FIOB.

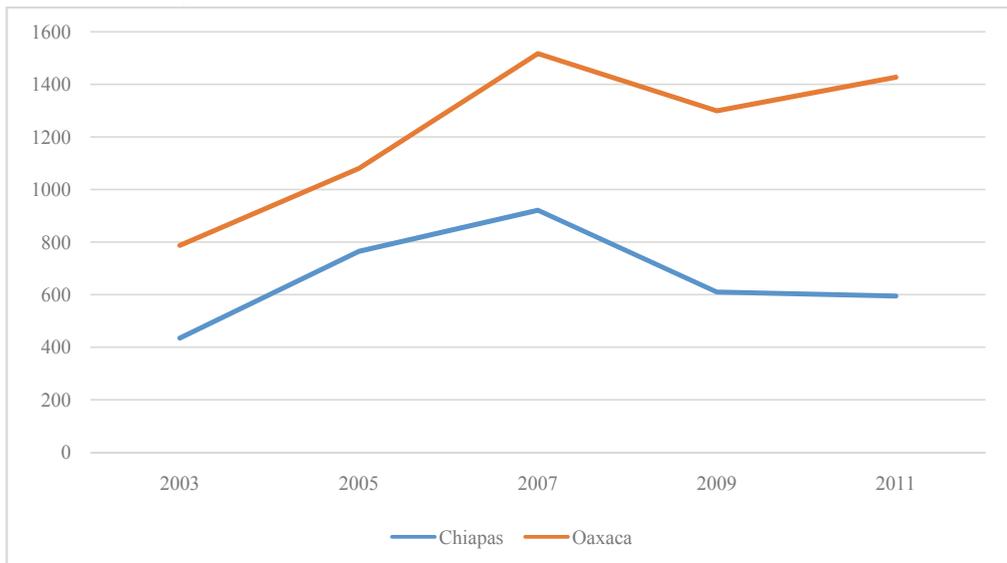
32 Nevertheless, leaders of the Oaxacan migrant community are still anxious to keep their independent grass-roots character based on 'usos y costumbres' that is also reflected in numerous transregional social and political programs conducted through migrant organizations. For instance, FIOB founded an independent microcredit network in indigenous communities of origin that enables local farmers or small-scale enterprises to obtain a credit for investment. Furthermore, they conduct political workshops in these communities, such as the 'Talleres de Descolonización' (decolonization workshops), or empowerment and leadership workshops called MIEL ('Mujeres Indígenas en Liderazgo'), in which community leaders educate the youth and women about their rights, and teach them how to negotiate their interests with state authorities.

33 DCE (Dirección de Chiapanecos en el Exterior), *Atención a Chiapanecos en el Exterior*, powerpoint presentation at internal DCE meeting, 2011.

34 In contrast to Oaxacan migrants, Chiapanecan migrants do not concentrate predominantly in California, but settled the United States, also in new immigration states, such as Georgia, Utah, New Mexico, and South Carolina.

grantes' (UAM) to stimulate their participation in social projects in communities of origin.<sup>35</sup> This program was also introduced because of the rising importance of Chiapanecan migrants in their home communities in Chiapas. This is also reflected in the numbers of remittances that increased from about 435 million US Dollars in 2003 to almost 950 million US Dollars in 2005, and decreasing to 595 million US Dollars in 2011.<sup>36</sup> Compared to Oaxaca, the numbers of remittances in Chiapas are lower, but grew faster in the same period of time (see chart 1).

Chart 1: Comparison of Remittance Flows in the States of Chiapas and Oaxaca from 2003 to 2011 (in million US Dollar)



Source: Chart created by the author, based on data by Banco de México (2013)

However, the attempts of the Chiapas state were of little success in reaching migrant communities in the beginning, mainly due to mistrust of the largest part of Chiapanecan migrants toward Mexican state institutions, because of its policy against indigenous people in Chiapas, as well as the lack of organization and leadership in the diaspora, which is necessary to provide and to dis-tribute services among migrants.

35 Córdova, R., *Emigración Internacional en Chiapas: Del Tránsito de Migrantes a la Pérdida Poblacional*, Fernández de Castro, R.; Zamora, R.; Rangel, R.; Freyer, A. (eds.), *Las Políticas Migratorias en los Estados de México. Una Evaluación*, Cámara de Diputados, Mexico D. F., 2007, pp. 75–94.

36 Banco de México, *Ingresos por Remesas Familiares, Distribución por Entidad Federativa*, 2013 URL=<http://www.banxico.org.mx>. Accessed 12 October 2015.

## Institutional Change through Structuring Migrant Communities from Above by the State of Chiapas

The Chiapas government of Juan Sabines (2006–2012) tried again to establish a good relationship with its migrant community in the United States, and was more successful than the previous government. Through the implementation of a new strategy that differs fundamentally to the state policies of former governments in Chiapas – and Oaxaca as well as other Mexican – governments: a state-directed structuring of the diaspora from above to establish migrant organizations as cooperation partners. Due to the fact that the few Chiapanecan migrant organizations, that already existed during that time, did not contact the government of Chiapas, the government by itself began actively to approach migrant organizations and even to promote the foundation of new ones. The government took profound initiatives to support the organization of migrants and to build new institutions for collaboration between the state and migrants. Sabines established the migrant office called 'Dirección de Chiapanecos en el Exterior' (DCE) to spot and to contact Chiapanecan migrant communities in the United States. Additionally, his government founded with the support of migrant leaders gradually state-based migrant federations in Utah, New York City, Los Angeles, and Tampa, united these organizations in an US-wide umbrella migrant organization called 'Confederación de Chiapanecos en Estados Unidos' in 2011, and introduced them into state and federal migrant programs primarily conducted through the federal institutions of IME and SEDESOL, such as the '3x1' program. Through this diaspora construction from above, the government of Chiapas intends to enlarge the migrant community, and to construct an identification among Chiapanecan migrants with their home state to build an essential cooperation partner in foreign affairs, and a solvent development motor in numerous underdeveloped indigenous communities in Chiapas.<sup>37</sup>

From the beginning of its outreach, the Chiapanecan government could built on the cooperation of migrant leaders, whereat they did not represent the entire communities, but rather a few active members. The first contacts were made with the Chiapanecan migrant community in Salt Lake City, Utah – primarily mestizo migrants who came in the last decades as converted Mormons from Chiapas to the 'Mormon capital of the world' – that already organized for a few years in HTAs and other smaller migrant organizations, and established smaller offices and public meeting centers. Here, Governor Sabines and local migrant leaders adopted the idea of establishing a state contact office in every larger migrant community in the United States. In a snowball method, migrant leaders helped to find Chiapanecan migrant leaders in other US cities, and to motivate them to found migrant organizations with the support of the state of Chiapas. Soon, the government of Chiapas opened offices and community meeting places called 'Casa Chiapas' in Los Angeles and Tampa. The government funds these offices by taking care of equipment and monthly rent. The facilities of these offices are used by community members to organize community events, provide workshops and language classes – such as English and Spanish language classes for Mayan migrants in 'Casa Chiapas' in Tampa, Florida – but also for providing and transferring state services for migrants and coordinating development projects in the frame of the '3x1' program. The state services do also include remigra-

37 Personal interview with the official representative of the DCE at a meeting of the DCE and representatives of Chiapanecan migrant organizations in Los Angeles, 2011.

tion and student exchange programs, which are linked to state scholarships in cooperation with Chiapas' largest university, the Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas, in Tuxtla Gutiérrez. Furthermore, the government holds regularly conferences in different towns in Chiapas that enable migrant delegates to meet with local authorities in home communities to discuss social and political situations on-site.<sup>38</sup>

### Political Inclusion of Chiapanecan Migrants in Home State Affairs

These regular exchanges between the Chiapas state and migrant leaders do in fact inform the migrant community about politics in the home state, but mostly they do not get directly involved in public policies. Different than indigenous Oaxacan migrants, Chiapanecos do not have a distinct 'usos y costumbres' system that institutionally links their migrant communities with communities of origin. In negotiations with state representatives, migrant leaders usually are not able to enforce their concerns and requests to get involved in the political agenda of the government. For example, migrants expressed their resentments about the critical socio-economic situation in some indigenous communities, especially in Zapatista communities, and that they need more concessions by the government. Such critical incitements are not introduced in state policy-making processes.

Nonetheless, with the introduction of a 'diputada migrante' (migrant representative) in the state parliament of Chiapas for the legislative period 2012 to 2018, Chiapanecan migrants were able to vote directly for their representative for the first time. This new institutional link provides some additional opportunities of participation in state politics. However, it is still too early to assess how much the 'diputada migrante' – a former Chiapanecan migrant leader from Utah – will be able to bring the interests and concerns of the diaspora into the policy-making process in Chiapas.

The '3x1' program allows additional opportunities to participate in political affairs in the communities of origin, because migrants can introduce and co-decide in a voting process which hometown improvements should be realized. In most Chiapanecan hometowns, the initiative for projects come either from town officials or the migrant community itself, while they get together and discuss the proposals. But in the end, the state and federal governmental institutions make the final decision which projects become realized. Although the Chiapas state is still one of the states that realizes relatively few projects in the frame of the '3x1' program – especially in comparison to the classic emigration states of Zacatecas and Jalisco – such projects increased at least from almost zero in 2006 to over 80 projects in a total value of about five million US Dollar until 2012.<sup>39</sup> These are predominantly projects in needy indigenous communities, such as a hospital project in San Cristóbal de las Casas, where the Zapatistas started their uprising in 1994, or class room improvements in a school in a smaller Tzotzil community, called Nichnamtic, in central Chiapas.

38 Personal interviews and observations at meetings between representatives of the state of Chiapas and representatives of Chiapanecan migrant organizations in Los Angeles and Tampa, 2012.

39 SEDESOL (Secretaría de Desarrollo Social), *Proyectos de las Organizaciones Migrantes en el Marco de la Programa 3x1*, internal document, 2013.

The active top-down structuring of Chiapanecan migrant communities by the state of Chiapas allows migrants to access financial and material support from Mexican state institutions. However, in some cases, it seems like that these governmental attempts prevent Chiapanecan migrants from establishing independent migrant organizations. In addition, Chiapanecos in the United States still lack the necessary resources and skills they need to establish independent organizations – like Oaxacan migrants did for the last three decades – because they are simply not long enough in the United States, and they are too dispersed in many different cities to organize, educate themselves, and to build essential political networks and transnational links. It will be interesting to observe the development of the Chiapanecan diaspora-state relationship in the future time, especially when Chiapanecan migrant leaders accumulated more skills and resources to build independent organizations, or if another policy change occurs inside the diaspora or inside the state.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In sum, the cases of the Mexican states of Oaxaca and Chiapas show, despite similar political frameworks and socio-economic conditions in the home states and relatively similar large emigrant populations in the United States, how different institutional approaches of the states of origin toward migrant communities can develop and be proceeded on the subnational level. Indeed, both states practiced an institutional change from exclusion to more inclusion of emigrants, but in different processes. While the institutional opening in Oaxaca goes back to various initiatives by Oaxacan migrant organizations in the United States, which can be regarded as a bottom-up process, the policy change in Chiapas toward more inclusion of the emigrant community was actively promoted by the government of Chiapas, which in contrast can be regarded as a structural top-down process.

However, because these policy changes just happened in the last five to ten years, it is too early to predict how these institutional changes impact the relationship between state and emigrant communities in the long-run. Just the implementation of institutions – ranging from diaspora departments and institutes, state offices in migrant communities in the United States, implemented migrant seats in the state parliament to the introduction into governmental state programs, such as the ‘3x1’ development program – that serve as an access to policy-making processes in the home state, does not mean that they are actually utilized by migrants abroad. So far, it looks like that these institutions are partially used by migrants, but mainly by skilled migrant leaders who are in most cases elected by community members, but do only represent a small fraction of the entire diaspora. That is even more the case in the Chiapanecan migrant community than in the Oaxacan one. It is also important to mention that collaborations and participation in state institutions after the policy change do not always run in a smooth way. Some migrant leaders, Oaxacan as well as Chiapanecan, still complain about corruption and the missing willingness of state authorities to include critical incitements of migrants into their political agenda, and in the policy-making process on the state level. Furthermore, the traditional fraught relationship between Chiapanecan and Oaxacan migrants on the one side, and Mexican state institutions on the other side, still influences collaboration in a negative way. Particularly due to the fact that still many people leave Oaxaca and Chiapas

to escape political suppression and economic marginalization. These new emigrants do not seem to be willing to work with Mexican state institutions in the near future.

Despite these obstacles, many organized migrants pragmatically perceive these new institutional channels as an opportunity to get access to policy makers in home states, and to utilize state programs to contribute to political and social developments of underdeveloped home communities in Oaxaca and Chiapas.

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## MIGRACIJA I INSTITUCIONALNA PROMJENA: SLUČAJEVI JUŽNIH MEKSIČKIH SAVEZNIH DRŽAVA I NJIHOVIH ISELJENIČKIH ZAJEDNICA U SJEDINJENIM AMERIČKIM DRŽAVAMA

### Sažetak

U radu se daje prikaz načina na koji institucije iseljeničkih država pristupaju iseljenicima u inozemstvu kao i prikaz promjena ovih načina tijekom vremena. Različiti su načini pristupa iseljenicima u inozemstvu i to u rasponu od njihove potpune isključenosti i izostanka komunikacije, preko djelomične suradnje u određenim stvarima sve do trajne institucionalne uključenosti, npr. preko zastupanja migranata u domaćim parlamentima ili vladama. Institucionalno uključivanje ne odvija se samo na nacionalnoj nego i na subnacionalnoj razini. U Meksiku, kao federalnoj državi, mnoge savezne države vode svoje iseljeničke politike djelomice u skladu s naporima koji se ulažu na federalnoj razini a djelomice neovisno ili u suprotnosti s nacionalnim nastojanjima uključivanja iseljeničke zajednice u inozemstvu. Cilj je rada objasniti različite načine pristupa iseljenicima na primjerima južnih meksičkih država Oaxaca i Chiapasa. Iako ove savezne države imaju sličnu političku i socijalnu strukturu i relativno veliku iseljeničku populaciju u SAD-u, načini su institucionalnog pristupa iseljenicima dvojaki: dok se institucionalna otvorenost u Oaxaci svodi na različite inicijative iseljeničke zajednice Oaxaca u SAD-u, vlada u Chiapasu s druge strane aktivno promovira promjenu politike u Chiapasu s ciljem bolje uključenosti iseljeničke zajednice.

*Ključne riječi:* migracija, institucionalna promjena, Meksiko (Oaxaca i Chiapas), Sjedinjene Američke Države

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