

Innovating Government:
Migration, Development, and the State in Morocco and Mexico, 1963-2005

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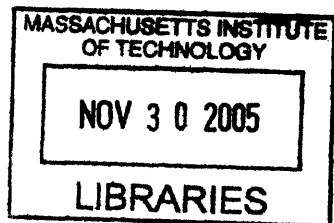
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ABSTRACT

Mexico and Morocco have some of the longest standing and most advanced policies linking the emigration of their low-skilled workers to their national and sub-national economic development. In my dissertation, I examine the processes through which the governments of both countries designed the migration and development policies now being emulated by sending countries around the world as models of “best practice.”

Based on multi-sited longitudinal case studies of the main migration and development policies deployed by both countries, I follow current policy instruments back through their earlier – including failed -- iterations as well as through the multiple geographic and national spaces in both migration sending and receiving areas where those policies were implemented.

I argue that Moroccan and Mexican processes of migration and development policy elaboration suggest a need to re-consider the purchase of current models of policy formulation. Most representations of policy design depict a process best described as *analytic*. Policy makers analyze a problem, identify solutions, and then evaluate their effectiveness. However, the Moroccan and Mexican experiences with crafting migration and development policy, with all of their messy indeterminacy, illustrate a process that was essentially *interpretive* in character. Policy makers were acting in social and economic contexts that were constantly shifting, that were incessantly being remolded by massive migration patterns – and that were, as a result, unintelligible to policy makers and extremely resistant to straightforward analysis. Policy makers engaged migrant and migration communities in interpretative processes through which they generated new meanings, constructed new identities, and forged new relationships, in an effort to make sense of the mutable field in which they endeavored to act. Those insights and connections served as the basis for the new institutions that would come to be regarded as major policy breakthroughs. The institutions provided structures through which the state, migrants, and their communities could re-envision local and national development in an on-going manner and could generate new conceptual and institutional innovations. Stated differently, they built institutional spaces for continuous state learning and innovation.

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-- Fatima Mernissi, *Scheherezade Goes West*

“Tell me, then, what is the essence of ‘style’? Today, both the Franks and the Chinese talk about the character of a painter’s talent, what they call ‘style.’ Should style distinguish a good artist from others or not?”

“Fear not,” I said, “a new style doesn’t spring from a miniaturist’s own desire. A prince dies, a shah loses a battle, a seemingly never-ending era end, a workshop is closed and its members disband, searching for other homes and other bibliophiles to become their patrons. One day, a compassionate sultan will assemble these exiles, these bewildered but talented refugee miniaturists and calligraphers, in his own tent or palace and begin to establish his own book-arts workshop. Even if these artists, unaccustomed to one another, continue at first in their respective painting styles, over time, as with children who gradually become friends by roughhousing on the street, they’ll quarrel, bond, struggle, compromise. The birth of a new style is the result of years of disagreements, jealousies, rivalries, and studies in color and painting.”

-- Orhan Pamuk, *My Name Is Red*

Chapter 1

Introduction:

Analysis and Interpretation in Government Innovation

Conversations about globalization and development have focused on trade, foreign direct investment, and multinational production, but international migration – the movement of people across national borders – is a phenomenon that now rivals these factors as a determinant of local and national economic development. Migrant remittances worldwide have risen to stratospheric levels, topping \$150 billion in 2004 – a sum almost triple the amount of international development aid and poised to surpass foreign direct investment (Ratha 2005). For many developing countries, migrant remittances have become an indispensable source of capital, literally making or breaking economic fortunes. Over and above these infusions of hard currency, international migration has provided sending countries with other critical factors for economic development. Migration has sparked knowledge and learning transfer across national boundaries, it has woven social networks that serve as infrastructure for international production and exchange, and has laid the base for powerful political lobbies that influence the policies of the countries that migrants leave and the countries they adopt as their new home. Through countless small transfers of savings and through innumerable social exchanges, migrants are transforming the places they have left in fundamental and irrevocable ways. Community by community, they are changing their countries, redefining nationhood itself, and creating radically new prospects for economic development.

The sheer magnitude of migration's effects on economic development have made them impossible to ignore, and increasingly, governments of sending countries around the world have been searching for ways to foster a synergistic relationship between labor migration and economic growth. Governments have worked to facilitate the transfer of remittances, often attempting to capture a portion of those funds for specific economic development projects; they have promoted emigrant investment, encouraging those who left to bring back not just their money but also their know-how and their networks; and they have attempted to organize their nationals abroad into political machines that can

press their foreign relations agendas from abroad. A good many governments have also launched public relations campaigns recasting emigrants from suspect prodigal sons into national heroes, and have appealed to them to contribute their money, their sweat, and their creativity to the country that they stress will forever remain their home and their responsibility. (Orozco 2001; Gonzalez Gutierrez 1999; Munzele Maimbo et al. 2005).

In their endeavors, sending country governments, most of them having only recently awoken to the significance of international migration to their economic futures, have looked to the experience of a small handful of countries that already had longstanding policy to tie migration to development. Morocco and Mexico have featured prominently as a source of “best practice” in this area. The governments of both countries have well established policies that support the relationship between low-skilled migration and development. Amongst other, these include ground-breaking financial institutions dedicated to emigrant needs, creative and far-reaching partnerships with emigrants for infrastructure provision, and transnational forums for development planning. Moroccan and Mexican policy instruments have consistently been innovative, sometimes exceptionally so, propelling government into completely new functions, extending it new into geographic and international spaces, and enlisting aspects of migration as slippery as cultural identity for political and economic ends. However, as governments new to policy making in the field of migration and development have copied the practices of countries like Morocco and Mexico more or less indiscriminately, the results of their efforts have been decidedly mixed. Their interventions have remained approximate, poorly tailored to the specific needs of their economies and of their emigrants, and have even, at times, constricted the possibilities for positive transformation that migration can represent.

My project in this thesis was to move beyond this problematic “best practice” approach to policy making in the area of migration and development. I wanted to develop an understanding of the *processes* by which governments could adapt to new circumstances generated by migration and seize on the opportunities that those changes might offer for economic transformation. More specifically, I wanted to examine how these processes emerged in Morocco and Mexico, decades before the potential of migration as a catalyst for economic development caught the attention of governments, scholars, and development institutions. Why, and more importantly, *how* were their

governments able to perceive the changes caused by out-migration, some of them very subtle and diffuse, and how were they able to conceive of them as openings for economic development? What were the processes by which they were able to institutionalize these understandings into innovative policies, sometimes reframing their own role and mission? And how were these processes fueled and supported by discussions, conflicts, and collaborations with emigrant constituencies in sending communities and in receiving countries?

What I found was that the Moroccan and Mexican policies now being emulated by sending country governments as models of “best practice” were ironically never designed with a view to using migration for economic development, or at least not a version of economic development that included migrants and their communities in any meaningful way. Instead, they were initially devised to respond to domestic political challenges. Both the Moroccan and Mexican governments engaged with migrants when doing so seemed likely to yield resources that could be applied like mortar to the crumbling foundations of their political legitimacy and could strengthen their hold on power. Furthermore, I found that even though Morocco’s and Mexico’s policies fundamentally—even radically—redefined nationhood, development, and citizenship for both countries, the process of policy development was so iterative and improvisational that neither the governments nor their migrant constituencies ever predicted, much less intended, their outcomes. Moreover, I found that it was precisely this indeterminacy and ambiguity that lay at the heart of the learning and innovation that produced the policies now regarded around the world as models of excellence for building bridges between migration and economic development.

Moroccan and Mexican trajectories with migration and development policies suggest a need to re-consider the purchase of current models of policy formulation. Most representations of policy design depict a process best described as *analytic*. Policy makers analyze a problem, identify solutions, and then evaluate their effectiveness. Moreover, these discerning policy makers are part of a state that is distinct from the society, and through their policies, they act on that separate social sphere. However, the Moroccan and Mexican experiences with crafting migration and development policy, with all of their messy indeterminacy, illustrate a process that is strikingly different in its unfolding, in that it was essentially *interpretive* in character. Policy makers were acting in social and economic contexts that were constantly shifting, that were incessantly being

remolded by massive yet changing migration patterns, and that were being stretched across national borders – and that were, as a result, unintelligible to policy makers and extremely resistant to straightforward analysis. Together with migrants and their communities, they engaged in processes of interpretation through which they generated new meanings, constructed new identities, and forged new relationships, in an effort to make sense of the mutable field in which they endeavored to act. Those novel insights and connections, produced through the conversations that stretched across the political boundary between state and society, served as the basis for new institutions that would come to be regarded as major innovations because of the way they linked migration to development. Less celebrated but more important is the fact that these institutions created structures through which the state, migrants, and their communities could re-envision local and national development in an on-going manner and could generate new conceptual and institutional innovations. Stated differently, they built institutional spaces for continuous state learning and innovation.

In the remainder of this introduction, I provide a theoretical framework for understanding how interpretive processes led to policy innovation in Morocco and Mexico, and how those processes differ from the analytic approach generally applied to policy challenges. I follow with a section explaining why I chose Morocco and Mexico as sites to explore how migration and development policies and institutions arose, and describe the methodology I used to trace the emergence of those policies over a period of roughly four decades, from 1963-2005. Finally, I conclude with an outline of the chapters of this thesis, in which I briefly summarize the policy innovations examined in each country and the ways their emergence speaks to theory on institutional change, innovation, and power.

1. Innovating Government: Analysis and Interpretation

Analytic method

In a prescient critique of the ways that states make policy, Don Schon (1971) argued that governments cannot solve new public problems unless they also develop the ability to learn. He advocated the idea of government as a learning system that “undertakes a continuing, directed inquiry into the nature, causes, and resolutions of our problems” (1971:116). Furthermore, he proposed that the state had to design the

institutional processes for itself “through which new problems can continually be confronted and old structures continually discarded” (1971:116). However, Schon coupled his insight with the lament that governments—especially the U.S. federal government that was the focus of his study—displayed a “systematic failure to learn.”

He attributed this chronic failing to the fact that governments seemed wedded to the practice of using an *analytic* approach to policy design, and supplied one of the most complete descriptions of the analytic process in policy literature to date. He explained that policy makers rely on an experimental model, patterned on the method deployed in the physical sciences, to design interventions. In this “rational/experimental model,” social problems are first “defined and qualified,” with the relevant variables parsed out to simplify then down to systems into which the state can intercede. Then, hypotheses about the causes of a given social problem are formulated, and interventions are designed based on those theoretical suppositions in the form of a “social experiment.” The outcome of those interventions are then measured and evaluated to determine whether or not, and under what conditions, the “social experiment” should be “replicated” (1971:122; see Illustration 1.1).

Schon added that, in this analytic approach, policy design and policy implementation were separated out. Government offices commission to elaborate policy interventions and appraise their effectiveness were not the same agencies charged with executing them. Moreover, Schon observed that the government bodies that devised policy had significantly more power – in terms of political clout and resources – than the branches of government that merely implemented it. The government authorities that design policy cement this power, according to Schon, by parceling out the tasks involved to different government agencies, thus securing their position the sole proprietors of integrated policy blueprint. Schon’s critique has been echoed and fleshed out by observers of production processes in firms. They note that the engineering aspect of most product design has led to a disproportionate emphasis on modularity (Mintzberg 1991; Bechky 2003). The analytic method used in developing goods has broken down the design process, and then later the product, into a series of discrete components which are brought back together in some optimum combination defined by the lead firm (Lester &

Piore 2004). The challenge to firms that arises as a result is how to coordinate the design and coupling of the various components (Sanchez 1995 & 1996; Dewar 1986).

The management consideration of modularity makes explicit an effect of the analytic approach that Schon implies but does not fully elaborate. Studies of modularity observe that the compartmentalization of a product into separate components complicates production flexibility. While it may allow for existing components to be assembled in a myriad ways, creating a wide gamut of products based on possible combinations, it makes a fundamental re-conceptualization of the product extremely difficult and costly. Revolutionizing design of one component, especially key components, is likely to have significant and possibility disruptive consequences for the design and production of the others (Sanchez 1995; Cusumano and Selby 1995). The magnitude to these ripple effects has a tendency to build rigidity into the design, making it resistant to fundamental re-invention.

Similarly, the division of public policy into design and implementation, as well as the allocation of different aspects of implementation to various government offices, makes policy static and resistant to change. As social phenomena shift and move, the unchanging policy grows stale and increasingly maladapted to the problem it was designed to address. However, this division of labor also hardens the social problem the policy was design to address, both in the perceptions of policy makers, and, through the government actions they mandate, in lived reality. It “fixes” the problem, nailing it down and curtailing the opportunities for positive change. The reason is that this compartmentalization of design and execution, and of the various tasks involved in carrying out a policy, correspond to the variables identified as important in the emergence and resolution of the social problem. Those variables become the narrow windows through which the government views the problem, and based on those optic slivers, the state designs and evaluates its policy (Lester and Piore 2004). The social changes that occur behind the walls remain invisible to a state that chose not to view social problems from that angle, but the changes themselves are constrained by government policy interventions which tend to reinforce the dynamics that the government is able to see with its obstructed vision. Schon intimated that these “windows” not only shape government approaches to social problems, but over time they begin to constrain “public inquiry.”

State defined variables begin to structure social knowledge and social representations of social dynamics, defining which are “problems” the state should address (Foucault 1994).

Schon argued that the analytic approach to policy making is so entrenched that the only time governments are shaken out of their stubborn adherence to the experimental model is when they face an institutional crisis. In a Kuhnian take on policymaking, events on the scale of the Vietnam War or the social movements of the 1960s present the state with clear evidence that its institutional model is not working. At that moment of crisis, the state is jolted into looking for new ideas on the margins of society, ideas that until then had been perceived as unreasonable or that the state itself had tried to squelch precisely because they seemed *too* reasonable. The state begins to look for solutions behind the walls it itself constructed. (Schon 1971: 128-133)

As an antidote to this analytic approach, Schon argued for deliberate attention to “the hidden process” by which ideas come to be valued and variables are delineated. “Underlying every public debate and every formal conflict over policy,” noted the scholar, “there is a barely visible process through which issues come into awareness and ideas about them come into good currency” (Schon 1971: 122). Only by making that process explicit, and bringing the power dynamics that drive it into high relief, can it be challenged or remedied. “Reform requires, first, recognition that there is such a process and this it is susceptible to certain kinds of influence” (Schon 1971: 143). The reform he proposed was essentially to tear down as much of the walls separating the proverbial “variable” windows as possible and to open up the process of policy design to a wider range of ideas and multiple perceptions of social dynamics and social problems. (Schon 1971: 116-179).

However, even the remedy that Schon proposed shares two fundamental assumptions with the analytic approach it attempts to counter. First, the issues to be addressed by the state are clear; they are just blocked from view by government institutions and policy design methodology. Once those obstructions are removed, the problems to be solved become visible, if not necessarily well understood, and the ideas for how best to attend to them emerge, even if they emerge on the margins of society. (Lester & Piore 2004).

Second, the state remains separate from society, and preserves its role as an autonomous institution that acts *on* social dynamics. In a view of the state that is pervasive in the literature on development and on migration, the state is portrayed as a freestanding institution that is conceptually and actually distinct from society, and that performs functions that are portrayed as essentially unchanging and independent of historical context (Hansen et al. 2001). As it performs those functions, the state intervenes in society, and acts on social processes. To that end, the state may sometimes intercede in the most intimate aspects of people's lives and affect the minutia of everyday exchanges. It may even open up its activities to non-state actors from time to time, as is amply documented in the literature on participatory governance (c.f. Fung et al. 2003; More 1989; Ackerman 2004). However, the decision to make its boundaries temporarily permeable is always the prerogative of the state, and the state is perceived as devolving power to the populace, even "activating" its participation (Ostrom 1996). It remains separate from the society that it is charged with governing. It prevails as the subject to a society that is reduced to the status of object.

As Morocco and Mexico produced their migration and development policies, however, the social dynamics to be address and the means to address them were far from clear. Furthermore, both the social dynamics and the political and economic contexts in which they played out were constantly changing. They were too mutable for the state to define a problem to be solved, much less identify a set of hypothesis to be applied, or narrow down the list of relevant variables to be considered. Faced with such acute indeterminacy, the state engaged with migrants and their communities in conversations so dense in exchange that they began to erase the boundary between the state and society. Not only did who was acting on whom become unclear, but identifying the author of actions, and of the meanings behind them, also became impossible. Their shared processes of interpretation transformed policy formulation from the act of designing policy to the art of forging relationships.

Interpretive conversation

Increasingly, the literature on industrial innovation and organizational learning has turned its attention to the process through which innovations are produced (Cook et al

1999; Orlikowski 2002; Nootboom 2000; Nonaka et al. 1995; Von Hippel 2005; Lester and Piore 2004). The process they describe provides a basis for understanding the *interpretive* process of policy generation that produced Mexican and Moroccan migration and development institutions and programs. They provide a frame for discerning the processes through which both states, migrants, and their communities collaboratively created new meanings to appreciate migration and the changes it caused, built new relationships inspired by those meanings, and envisioned new prospects for development based on the connections that they forged.

Lester and Piore (2004) offer one of the most lucid descriptions of the process of innovation in product design. They argue that, while firms tend to stress analytic problem solving and tend to organize their operations around an analytic compartmentalization of their products and their systems of production, *interpretation* is at the heart of product innovation. They characterize the process of interpretation as “a conversation among people and organizations with different backgrounds and experience” trying to reach a common understanding about the possibilities and constraints that both technology and the market generate for product development. (2004: 53).

Lester and Piore portray these interpretative conversations as adventures in ambiguity, both in terms of their content and their process. As participants bring distinct and often mutually unintelligible meanings and perspectives to the conversation, the dissonance between those meanings and perspectives create misunderstandings and confusion; the dissension in meanings steeps the exchanges in ambiguity. Likewise, the conversations in which the process of interpretation occurs are unpredictable, sometimes even unwieldy, both in their form and duration. As they explain, “Interpretation is an open-ended process, ongoing in time, perhaps with a beginning but with no natural end. Unlike people engaged in problem solving, the participants in a conversation often have no idea where their discussion is going when it starts, and even if they do, the actual direction may turn out to be quite different. Indeed, in retrospect they many not be able to say exactly how the conversation evolved as it did” (2004: 53). Significantly, they celebrate this ambiguity and argue that it is precisely this blurriness of meanings that is makes interpretative conversations generative, ensuring that the exchanges that they

support allow new insights to surface (as does Nooteboom 2000). “It is the ambiguity that makes the conversation worth having, not the exchange of chunks of agreed upon information,” they conclude (2004:54).

By engaging in conversation, the participants draw shared meanings out the murky ambiguity. “Only by continuing to talk to one another can participants overcome their initial lack of comprehension, work through their early misunderstandings, and make new discoveries and new insights about one another and the situations they confront” (2004: 54). Participants engage with one another and with the concepts brought to the conversation through a process of *interpretation*: they construe the indeterminate meanings in the conversation in light of their beliefs, judgments and circumstances, and represent their interpretations of those meanings to the other participants in the conversation. In what some of observers of this process have called “a hermeneutic circle” (Lester and Piore 2004; Nooteboom 2000) and others “a generative dance” (Cook et al. 1999), other participants will use those interpretations as inspirations for their own interpretations, engendering successive generations of interpretation and meaning. Drawing on the same analogy of language and conversation as Lester and Piore, Nooteboom stresses the collaborative nature of this process of interpretation: “This interpretation is not purely subjective, but largely intersubjective, embedded in the history of the speaker in his speech community” (2000: 142).

As the conversation progresses, participants can wrest a common language, built on well-defined concepts and patterns, from the initial Babel-like confusion. It is at this point that the conversation can yield new ideas. As the interlocutors develop a “common language community” (Lester and Piore 2004), they can begin to distinguish ambiguity in meaning from unintelligibility. They can “separate out problems of interpretation from ignorance of particular phrase” (Lester and Piore 2004: 72). To illustrate this dynamic, Lester and Piore offer the example of the word “bird.” Before a common language is established, participants may not understand what the word means, even if the most general sense. However, once a language community is created and members understand “bird” as connotating a feathered animal that can usually fly, participants can begin explore why “bird” evokes an ostrich for some and a robin for others. Lester and Piore pinpoint this interpretive exploration as the source of new insight and ultimately,

innovation: in the difference between “ostrich” and “robin” lie different ways of seeing, and once those differences in perspective are articulated and made explicit, they can be appropriated and even combined to create new ideas. Nootboom complements this view of a language community by observing that, in addition to allowing for the identification of ambiguity, it allows for the emergence of metaphor. As a figure of speech in which a word or phrase denoting one object or idea is used in the place of another, metaphor, argues Nootboom, “provides a link between two previously unconnected fields of meaning” (2000:145). In doing so, it can bring together radically different meanings in new combinations, and allow for a richer interpretive process that can generate understandings that are distinct from those that already existed in those “fields of meaning,” but that draw on the palette that they provide.

In Lester and Piore’s view of innovation, the interpretive conversations yield insights that help identify the design challenge to be tackled, as well as possible ways to address it. In sharp contrast to the assumptions that underlie the analytic method about problems always being clear, if not always in plain unobstructed sight, the problem to be solved is nowhere near apparent before an interpretive conversation makes it so, and thus, the ideas to address it do not exist anywhere in a fixed form, not even on the margins. Stated differently, it is not just that plausible answers to a given question have yet to be developed, but it is that the question itself does not yet exist in any clear form. In their view, both the problem and the idea – or the question and answer -- emerge from interpretive conversation. They are held in the spaces of ambiguity inherent in language and linguistic exchange, and the on-going and iterative process of conversing allows them to be articulated. In the process, they become visible and precise, and can be applied to analytical problem solving. Based on this observation, they conclude that companies -- and by extension, economies -- interested in fostering innovation have to create and protect conversational settings where people can engage in interpretation. “The interpretive spaces do not grow up naturally in market economies. They must be created; and once created, they must be cultivated, renewed and enriched” (2004: 9).

Interpretive engagement

Morocco and Mexico's migration and development policies grew out of interpretive spaces of the kind Lester and Piore describe, spaces that were created, and "once created, were cultivated, renewed and enriched" in both countries. The conversations between the state, migrants, and their communities generated new understandings and new identities, and would provide the basis for innovative institutions and state actions that would link migration to development. For the most part, the interpretive conversations fit the description laid out in the literature on innovation in product development. However, they differed in several subtle but important respects. The interpretive conversations that produced policy innovation were steeped not only in ambiguity but also in the changing politics of emigration and development in both countries. This fact alone determined who participated in the conversations, how they were able to contribute, and the meanings that those interpretive exchanges generated.

Lester and Piore note that companies invite participants into interpretive conversations based on their background and the perspectives they can bring to the exchange. In the case of Morocco and Mexico, who was included in the conversation depended on who began it. When the state initiated the interpretive engagement, and opened an interpretive space, actors that were *visible* to the state were included in the conversation. As numerous theorists of the state have observed, government deploys myriad bureaucratic measures designed to make society and social dynamics legible to the state, and "to arrange the population in ways that simplif[y] classic state functions" (Scott 1998: 2; Hansen et al. 2001). Those interventions are applied more vigorously to segments of the population that are either seen as an asset that the state can mobilize for state defined priorities, like national economic growth, or as the root of a social problem, like popular rebellion (Foucault 1994). To return to the metaphor used to characterize Schon's description of state policy making, government can only include participants in the conversation that it chooses to see through the narrow windows of "variables" that it defines as important. Relatedly, when non-state actors opened interpretive conversations, they were able to draw government into the exchange if and when they succeeded in *making themselves visible* to the state apparatus. Mexican and Moroccan migrants were able to pull the state into an interpretive engagement when they were able to organize

themselves into a constituency that the state could not ignore, or when the practices they generated through their own interpretive processes became attractive to the state as solutions to longstanding development challenges.

The political contests that influenced who participated the conversations highlight the second important distinction between interpretive processes behind product design and those that drive policy generation. Just like conversations for product innovation, interpretive engagement for policy development is situated; that is to say it is located in specific contexts, anchored in specific relationships, and travels through specific exchanges (Lave and Wegner 1991). For Morocco and Mexico, the interpretive conversations that produced migration and development policy were situated in migrants' communities of origin as well as in receiving country factories and neighborhoods; they were situated in government offices and in the corridors of power that ran between them. The conversations were also situated in the interactions that made them up; they were situated in iterative acts of interpretation that made them generative of new meaning. However, they were also situated in the models of economic development Mexico and Morocco adopted, and in the repeated economic crises that convulsed both countries. They were situated in the political struggles that at various moments held the polities of both countries in a painful vise, but were situated as well in heady moments of political transition and aperture. Finally, they were situated in the decay of the industrial structure of receiving countries and in the changes it caused in emigration patterns from both Mexico and Morocco. The conversations that produced policy were so profoundly determined by these factors that it may be fair to say that they were more permeated by their situatedness than conversations held in the more protected environment where product design occurs. The interpretive conversations that are the subject of this study were situated in relationships, spaces, and practices that were buffeted by political and economic winds much more violent than those that blow through the firms, organizational practices, and everyday interactions that go into product innovation.

In a similar vein, the power dynamics addressed only implicitly in the literature on product innovation processes emerge in high relief in the conversations that produced migration and development policy. In both the Mexican and Moroccan cases, the interpretive engagement that was established, as well as the quality of the exchange it

supported, embodied the power relationships in which they were situated (Contu & Willmott 2003). Moreover, those power dynamics hewed the evolution of the interpretive conversations: the relative power of state and migrant participants determined the twists and turns their engagement would take; it informed when the conversations were sustained, when they were abandoned, and when they were revived (Latour 1987). Furthermore, the power relations that wove through the conversations informed the meanings that could be introduced into the conversations, and the interpretations that gained credence (Latour 1987). However, those power relations were not fixed. The meanings that the conversations produced became sources of power in and of themselves, and provided a basis from which to resist control, challenge legitimacy, and assert the right to author one's own future.

The final difference between the interpretive conversations described in the literature on product invention and the interpretive engagement that produced Moroccan and Mexican migration and development policy was the centrality of relationships in the latter. While the basis for product innovation is the insights and new ideas interpretive conversations yield, the basis of policy innovation is the quality of the relationships that are forged through interpretive engagement. For Mexico and Morocco, the relationships that were established through interpretive engagement played the role Nootebloom attributes to metaphor: they brought "previously unconnected fields of meaning" together. Those relationships created policy and institutional innovation when they became what Miller and Stiver call "mutually constitutive" (1997). Miller and Stiver argue that the "something more" that is added in the process of interpretation not only "creates the flow and change, the progression" of an engagement, but also *constitutes* the participants, shaping their identities, perceptions, and power. Osterman, in his work on community organizing by the Industrial Areas Foundation, makes an analogous observation: "self-interest is *relational*. A person's understanding of his or her self-interest emerges out of interaction with other people" (2002: 175; emphasis mine). (Lave et al. 1992)

However, the exchanges in the mutually constitutive relationships of interpretive engagement not only shape participants, but also, note Miller and Stiver, they "enlarge the relationship" itself (1997: 29). The exchange makes the relationship more robust and

gives it the tensile strength to tolerate greater ambiguity-- and all of the generative capacity that the ambiguity holds. This is important because the relationships forged through interpretive engagement are basis for moving into action (see Illustration 1.2). Because they bring together multiple fields of meanings and because they serve as the means through which participants constitute each other as agents who can act in the areas those meanings define, they make action not only possible but often also necessary. Through the relationships of interpretive engagement, Mexican migrants, for example, became constituted as political actors who could and who did shape state development policy, and in Morocco, the state became constituted as an actor that could and should intervene to support the development of the long neglected rural areas from which most Moroccan emigrants heralded.

In Morocco and Mexico, the relationships that became the basis for moving into action blurred the boundary between state and society. It was no longer a case of the state *acting on* society, but rather it became a matter of *relationships* between state and society producing new institutions, new policies, and new visions for economic development. The relationships that grew out of and became part of interpretive engagement between emigrants and their governments not only muddied the distinction between state and society, but they also began to efface the lines the state drew to divide migrants from other parts of society in order to control them and to keep their engagement with them circumscribed to certain issues – to certain fields of meaning. In the Mexican case, interpretive relationships between migrants and the state began to scuff out the distinction that the state maintained between Mexican emigrants and Mexican-Americans. In Morocco, they definitively closed the divide that the state had tried to pry open between emigrants and the marginalized rural communities that most of them were from.

Illustration 1.1: Analytic Policy Formulation

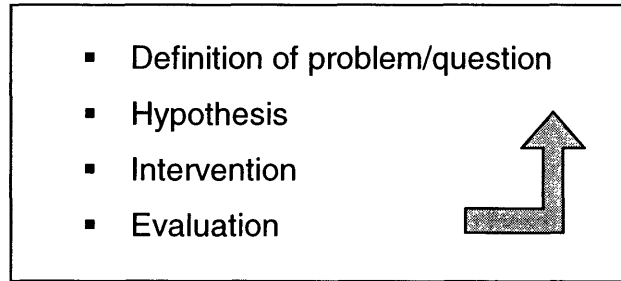
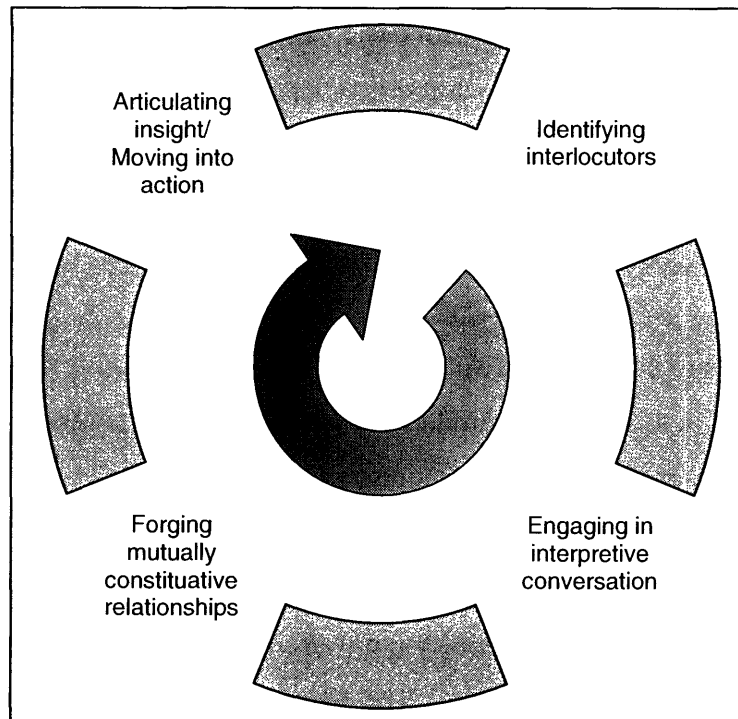


Illustration 1.2: Interpretive Policy Formulation



2. Methodology

Case selection

Mexico and Morocco are two countries that offer rich case material to explore the processes by which policies to support the relationship between the migration of low-skilled workers and economic development were fashioned. Through processes that began as early as the late 1960s in both countries, interpretive engagement between the states and emigrants of Morocco and Mexico produced a wide range of path-breaking institutions and policies for emigrants. These include, but are not limited to, pioneering financial institutions and services that were tailored to the needs of emigrants and that played significant roles in national economic development; creative partnerships between the state, migrants, and their communities of origin for public works which not only provided thousands of communities with basic infrastructure but also sparked new conceptual connections between essential service provision and models of economic growth; and a host of novel vehicles that not only enabled emigrants to participate in the cultural and political life of their countries of origin, but also involved migrants in the envisioning of new possibilities for – and even new definitions of -- economic development.

In addition to the wide array of well-established and creative policies that Morocco and Mexico boast in this area, the similarities and differences between the two countries make comparing their process of innovation particularly fruitful. The commonalities that the two countries share in their migration patterns and economic structures make the comparison between them meaningful. They make it possible to illustrate that interpretive engagement produced policy innovation in Mexico and Morocco, rather than national variation or historical accident. The differences in political system and institutional structure that distinguish the two countries, however, show how the process of innovation was stained in the ink of situated national contexts. They highlight what factors caused the interpretive engagement between migrants and the state to evolve along divergent trajectories in Mexico and Morocco and to produce different policy outcomes. As a result, the differences bring to the fore the relationships between

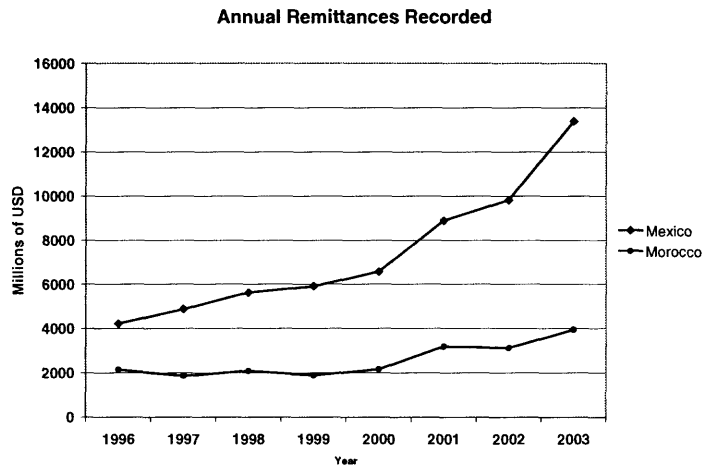
meaning, practice, institutional structure, and power that wove like skeins through the interpretive engagement in both cases, and informed the policy innovation now being lionized as models of best practice. To paraphrase Locke and Thelem's defense of "contextualized comparisons" across national contexts (1995), the examination of interpretive engagement that may have followed divergent paths and generated different policies in Morocco and Mexico captures both what is at the core of that engagement and how it was affected by different national settings (1995: 244). It elucidates how the situatedness of interpretive engagement shaped the process of innovation it supported, and it reveals how and why the relationships forged through that engagement were able to transform the contexts in which they arose.

Similarities

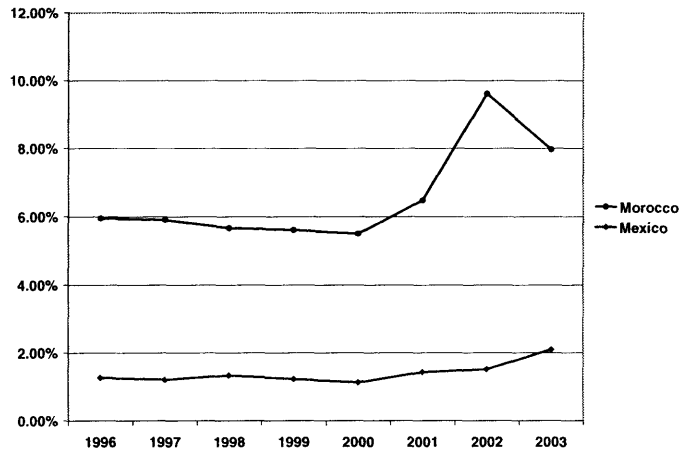
Emigration has profoundly shaped the economic and social landscape of Morocco and Mexico. In the post-war period, both countries have seen huge numbers of their citizens cross their borders in search of work or to join their families, and presently, at least ten percent of their populations live beyond their borders. For both nations, the economic impacts of labor migration have been substantial: while it has undeniably created substantial dislocation in many sending areas, it has also provided a substantial boon, infusing the local and national economies with cash, skill, and social capital. In 2002, the year that I began my research, the 2.6 million Moroccan living outside the Kingdom's borders, or 10 percent of the national population (20 percent of the active workforce), sent home US\$ 3.6 billion, gifting their country with a sum equivalent to a little under 10 percent of GDP (Fondation Hassan II, 2002; Office des Changes, 2002; INSEA 2001; see Graphs 1.1 and 1.2). It was by far this North African country's largest source of national income. A similar proportion of Mexicans living abroad, an estimated 8-12 million of country's 100 million, sent home almost US \$9 billion in 2001 (Central Bank of Mexico, 2002; World Bank, 2002; see Graphs 1.1 and 1.2). While that amount represented a smaller slice of Mexico's GDP, at only 1.5 percent, the flows of money back across the border were highly concentrated, disproportionately benefiting a small number of sending states (9 out of 32) (Woodruff and Zenteno, 2001, see Table 1.1). For them, remittances represented close to 10 percent of GDP, portions almost as large as the proportion they

represent the Moroccan GDP, where their impact is much more diffused throughout the country (Woodruff and Zenteno, 2001). Moreover, Mexico and Morocco were among the countries that received the highest amount of remittances in the world. In 2001, Mexico and Morocco ranked second and fourth respectively (www.imf.org)².

Graph 1.1: Annual Remittances for Mexico and Morocco, in millions of USD, 1996-2003



Graph 1.2: Annual Remittances as a Percentage of Mexican and Moroccan GDP, 1996-2003



Sources: IMF Country Statistics; Office des Changes, Kingdom of Morocco; Banco de Mexico

¹ In 2003, Mexico was still the second highest receiver of remittances in amount, trailing only behind India. Morocco, however, had fallen to sixth place, after the Philippines, China, and Pakistan. (Ratha 2005)

² In 2003, Mexico was still the second highest receiver of remittances in amount, trailing only behind India. Morocco, however, had fallen to sixth place, after the Philippines, China, and Pakistan. (Ratha 2005)

Table 1.1: Mexico: Remittances by State, 1999

State	Remittances in thousands of USD	Percentage of GDP
Zacatecas	437,340	13.40
Nayarit	242,310	9.90
Colima	112,290	4.55
San Luis Potosi	319,140	4.31
Durango	212,760	3.87
Guanajuato	496,440	3.51
Michoacán	301,410	2.80
Other States (total/average)	356,964	0.91
Republic of Mexico	5,910,000	1.34

Source: INEGI in Delgado et al. 2001

In terms of emigration, Morocco and Mexico are both border countries. Both countries are contiguous – or almost – with the destination of the vast majority of their emigrants: Mexico shares an extensive land border with the US, and the narrow Gilbralter Straits, a little more than a dozen kilometers wide, makes Europe easily accessible from the North African nation. Because of Mexico’s and Morocco’s proximity to receiving areas, low-skilled labor migration has overwhelmingly dominated emigration from these two countries: in the early 1990s, more than half (61%) of Mexican emigrants had six years or less of formal schooling, and an almost equal proportion (60%) of Moroccan migrants in the mid-1990s had only a primary school education or less (Enadid 1994 in Bustamante et al. 1998; INSEA 2000.) The relative ease of movement makes emigrating an attractive and feasible economic option even for workers and increasingly, for families of limited means. Moreover, because of the emigration policies that both countries instituted in the post-war period (and even earlier in the case of Mexico), emigrants have traditionally been rural in origin. In recent years, emigrants have increasingly come from urban areas, as people seek alternatives to the chronic urban unemployment and underemployment that hit young unskilled workers particularly hard. Additionally, the periodic return of emigrants to their home regions for holidays and other reasons, or outright circular migration, has been almost ubiquitous, nurturing solid cultural, political, and economic ties between sending areas and migrant communities abroad. These parallels in Mexican and Moroccan emigration patterns, striking in their similarity, make

comparing their processes of government innovation in both countries meaningful enough for the cases drawn from their experience to provide grist for theory-building about the processes that lead to policy interventions for migration and development (Garson 1994; Chattou 1998; Cornelius and Marcelli 2001; INSEA 2001; Bustamante et al. 1998)

Differences

The differences between Mexico and Morocco also support theory-building in this area. The close resemblance of emigration patterns from both countries stands in sharp contrast to the difference in meaning affixed to emigration in both national contexts. In Morocco, the state aggressively promoted emigration. It viewed emigration as an important source of income for the Kingdom, and considered emigrants an integral part of the national economic development planning. Through its direct policy intervention, the state proactively exported workers until Europe formally closed its borders to mass labor immigration in the mid-1970s. Since then, as emigration has continued independently through family reunification and undocumented border crossing, the state had continued to keep careful track of Moroccans living abroad and of their contributions to the national economy. In Mexico, on the other hand, the state, until very recently, viewed emigration as an economic safety valve of middling importance, if it considered the phenomenon at all. Moreover, emigration surfaced as source of conflict between Mexico and the United States on a number of occasions, and the Mexican government generally tried to squelch the tensions by simply ignoring the issue. The different economic and political significance of emigration in both nations elucidates the factors that informed the state's willingness to engage with migration, as well as the quality of the engagement that is established. It shows how the role emigrants were assigned in national economies affected emigrant participation in interpretive conversations with the state, in terms of both receptiveness to emigrant interpretations and obstacles set up to censor their contributions.

The second critical distinction between Morocco and Mexico that aids in theory-building about interpretive engagement for policy innovation is their difference in political system and institutions. Ever since Morocco secured its independence from

France in 1957, it has functioned as constitutional monarchy in theory, and an authoritarian Sultanate in practice. The King is considered both the temporal and spiritual leader of the Moroccan people: broad legislative and executive powers vested in the King, including the right to dissolve parliament at will and to issue binding royal decrees, ensure the monarch's political supremacy, and his lineage traced back, according to Moroccan tradition, to the Prophet Mohammed establish him as the "commander of the faithful" (*amir al-mu'mininnin*), a religious leader whose personhood is considered sacred and who is above the secular norms of the constitution. Hassan II, whose reign from 1961 to 1999 covered most of the period considered in this study, ruled through a mix of concentration of powers, repression of the opposition, and manipulation of the parliament (Layachi 1998: 28). Mexico, by contrast, has until very recently been governed through the comparatively amenable dictatorship of a single political party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). In a profoundly corporatist system, the PRI maintained its dominance since its founding in 1929 through the cultivation of strategic alliances with key sectors of society, most critically organized labor, and the performance of regular, but largely symbolic, elections. The PRI functioned as a mammoth and hegemonic political machine. The party distributed patronage through elaborate networks that penetrated deeply into Mexican society, and produced voluble revolutionary rhetoric to mask what were essentially clientelic relationships. (Layachi 1999; Tozy 1999; Middlebrook 1998; Roett 1993)

Despite Morocco's and Mexico's difference in political system, the glaring concentration of political power in both countries has been mirrored by an equally disturbing concentration of wealth: in the late 1990s, Mexico had one of the highest rates of inequality in Latin America, with a Gini coefficient of .57 (0 is perfect equality and 1 is complete inequality). In Morocco, the Gini coefficient has tended be slightly better, at between .4 and .5 for the period considered in this thesis, but the rough measure does not fully reflect the concentration of wealth in the hands of the royal family, reported to own about a fifth of the lands in the country, as well as collecting the lion's share of the revenue from phosphate production, which one of the Kingdom's largest source of income and remains a royal concern³ (The Economist 1999). (www.worldbank.org)

³ Inquiry into the royal family's finances are illegal under Moroccan law (The Economist 1999).

The difference in political system that distinguished Mexico and Morocco shift this study away from a focus on an ahistorical state and towards an explicit consideration of how both countries' political systems, and more specifically, the institutions that supported them, shaped the interpretive engagement between migrants and the state. It enables this study to explore how the mechanisms the Moroccan and Mexican states deployed to maintain power structured the conversations between government and emigrants, and to what extent they curtailed innovation. Moreover, the difference in political system and political history places the significance of the relationships forged through the interpretive engagement that is the subject of this thesis, and illustrates how a similar process produced very disparate results depending on the context in which it occurs. Furthermore, it demonstrates how interpretive engagement in both cases generated meanings that challenged entrenched power structures, even though the meanings produced in Mexican conversations were often very different from those that surfaced in the Moroccan exchanges. Lastly, it depicts how those relationships and meanings, so varied in their content and in their significance, targeted the structures that produced and reinforced the egregious economic inequality in both countries, and prompted a re-envisioning of economic development that included low-skilled migrants and their communities.

The final relevant distinction between the two countries for the exploration of interpretive engagement between government and migrants is that the impetus for changes in government policy came from a different source in Morocco than in Mexico. In highly centralized Morocco, policy innovations began at the national level and were expanded "downward" toward the provinces. Furthermore, when local initiatives and interpretive processes did emerge, the central government swallowed them up rather quickly, and represented the new policies it implemented based on them as government-authored innovations. In contrast, most of the policy innovations in Mexico were crafted at the local level, and more specifically at the state or even municipal level. In federalist Mexico, the national government struggled to synthesize these local initiatives into a coherent national policy that addressed emigrant issues. This important difference enables this research to speak to the argument that government innovation depends on government structures, rather than on the processes that move through them – or more

accurately, instantiate them. In particular, this study speaks to the contention that decentralization produces greater government responsiveness and ingenuity simply because government's ear is closer to the ground. The comparison of innovation in highly centralized government of Morocco and the multi-layered federalist government of Mexico enables this study to tease out proximity from process.

Happily, both Morocco and Mexico have recently experienced transitions toward political aperture that are unprecedented in their modern histories. As of 1999, Morocco has a new King, the young Mohammed VI, who has been hailed as a political modernizer and has presided over the most open and competitive parliamentary elections since Moroccan independence. In the Mexican presidential elections of 2000, an opposition party, the National Action Party (PAN), was elected into power, unseating the PRI and ending its 71-year- monopoly of formal political power. The political transitions in Mexico and Morocco, colored by the specifics of both countries' political histories, demonstrated how regime change informed interpretive engagement with migrants, but it also illustrated how those same interpretive conversations shaped the form that the change began to take.

In sum, Morocco and Mexico provide rich material for a “contextualized comparison” of interpretive engagement (Locke and Thelem 1995). Their emigration patterns, though evolving, have remained similar enough that a comparison of the interpretive conversations that occurred and of the ways that they produced policy innovation remains meaningful. Their differences in political structure and history, and the role assigned to migrants within that structure, help clarify the extent to which policy innovations can be attributed to the interpretive engagement between the states, migrants, and migrant communities in Morocco and Mexico, rather than simply to the peculiarities of both nations.

Methods: Institutional archeology

To study the processes that produce policies that link migration and development in Morocco and Mexico, I used an approach best described as “institutional archeology” – a case-study method applied through time and across space. As a starting point, I used the migration and development policies in force when I conducted my research (2002-

2004), and then I applied a case-study methodology to discover the processes that had produced them. I relied on a case study methodology because I found it to be the most appropriate for understanding social processes, and the processes that generated migration and development policies – rather than the policies themselves --were the central focus of my analysis.

Case-study methodology allows for the elaboration of theory based on reflexive observations of situated social processes (Peattie 2000; Burawoy 1998). In case studies, social processes not only are focus of the analysis, but drive the practice of research itself. The researcher “explore[s] processes at work in such a way as to grow theory of social causation grounded in the observation of these processes in concrete settings” (Peattie 2000). The process is necessarily reflective because once the researcher enters the setting she is exploring, she changes it through her presence in that setting, and through her interactions with people and with the context; moreover, her understanding of the research site is shaped by how people choose to engage with her. The boundary between researcher as subject and processes as object of research is erased⁴; “the analytic space is thus ‘shared’ – even if unevenly” (Peattie 2000: 12; Burawoy 1998). Described as endeavors of “research craftsmanship,” case studies are based on an iterative process through which the methodologies and research strategies used draw on conceptual frameworks that are constantly being amended as insights are gleaned from the research itself. As Peattie notes, “field strategies draw from a conceptual framework that in turn is informed from further field experiences” (2000). The practice of honing conceptual frameworks – building theory from the ground up – requires a constant review and refinement of methods, leading to the development of tacit research skills that are specific to the case being studied, and that enable the researcher to develop a more precise understanding of the process being observed. (Peattie 2000; Burawoy 1998; Van Maanan 2000).

Most definitions of case-studies view them as explorations of a specific policy or phenomenon in a given place at a given moment in time (Van Maanan 1999; Vaughan 1992). The approach I used for my research differs from that accepted understanding in

⁴ During my research in Morocco, I conducted field work with Zakya Daoud for a short period. She later included me as a character in her book on emigrant-led development projects in Morocco (Daoud 2005). I became an object of her research.

that I extended the case study approach retrospectively through time and across multiple geographic and political spaces. My study was not bound by a delimited space, or a particular timeframe; instead it was defined by the scope of the processes that I was trying to understand. In order to identify the processes that created migration and development policy and to trace their evolution, I followed them backward, exploring them through the various iterations of the policies they produced. I pursued them across national borders to sites in the United States and in Europe, just as I followed back to the local hamlets in isolated areas of Mexico and Morocco. Through this research approach, policies that today appear very coherent and well-developed unraveled into multiple and disparate threads that reached back into numerous physical places and political events, and policies that seemed like break-through innovations were revealed as merely the last in a long series of iterations of a single original approach. As followed the process of innovation, I uncovered layer upon layer of institution structure, some well-documented and some partially in ruins and almost forgotten. I also encountered various generations of meaning that have emerged through interpretive engagement between migrants and the state in Mexico and Morocco. Finally, I came to know of policies that had once existed, but had been abandoned along the way, and I tried to discern the process that led fully formed policies and institutions to be discarded, fractured into shards on the ground.

Methodology: Nuts & bolts

To carry out my study, I spent eight months in Morocco and eight months in Mexico. In both countries, I spent time in the places where the policies were formed and in the places where they were implemented. In Morocco, I conducted research in Rabat and Casablanca, but I also conducted focused localized research in the province of Taroudant, in Tangiers, and in Fez. In Mexico, I conducted research in Mexico City, but I also conducted in the states of Jalisco, Michoacan, and more intensive research in the states of Guanajuato and Zacatecas. I also conducted research in receiving sites for emigrants of both countries: I spent several weeks in Paris and Brussels, two cities with large Moroccan populations; and I conducted research in Chicago, a city with important, deeply rooted, and politically active Mexican emigrant population, as well as the Philadelphia area, the site of emigrant activism that led to policy change in Mexico. In

keeping with a case study approach, I selected the receiving country sites based on emerging findings from research in Morocco and Mexico.

At all of these research sites, I used mixed methodology, ranging from statistical analyses of remittance transfers, to surveys, to open-ended interviews, oral histories, and participant observation (see Table 1.2 for summary of methods). The methodologies I used given settings and given moments were tailored to the context and processes that I was observing and grew out of the conceptual understandings I developed as the research progressed. While I used a wide variety of methods, I favored qualitative approaches because they are uniquely suited to the study of ambiguity and shifts in meaning (Piore 1979a).

In terms of qualitative research, I interviewed current and former government officials, focusing first on government agencies charged with implementing policies for emigrants, at both national and local levels, and then extending outward from there to government offices that may not have directed policy toward migrants but that were affected by the interpretive engagement between migrants and the state. I interviewed migrant activists, participants in emigrant organization, and members of migrants' communities in both sending and receiving areas. I also spoke with researchers, consultants, representatives of multilateral organizations like the World Bank and the UNDP, staff from non-governmental organizations, and members of the press who had either participating in the interpretive processes I was studying or who had followed the conversations or their outcomes. In total, I conducted 148 structured and semi-structured interviews for the Morocco portion of the study, and 132 for the Mexico portion. I also conducted innumerable open-ended, informal interviews. Most of the oral life histories that people shared with me happened in this way. Apart from a handful of interviews in the Amazight (Berber) language where I relied on the generous help of a translator, I conducted the interviews directly, in Spanish, French, and Arabic depending on the context.

In addition to interviews, I engaged in ethnographic participant observation. I visited dozens of emigrant-driven development project in communities throughout Morocco and Mexico. I joined strategy meetings called by emigrant activists, in sending and receiving areas. I attended plenary sessions and town-hall meetings organized by

government officials, and observed a number of internal government meetings. I also went to consular offices and observed interactions between migrants and consular staff, and I traveled to major border transit sites – at Tijuana and Tangiers – crossed the border, and interviewed government officials, independent observers, and migrants on both sides. I also observed service provision to migrants at local and national government offices (including banks) that had programs directed to them. Additionally, I attended fairs and conferences that were either expressly organized for emigrants, or addressed issues relating to emigration and to the relationship between migration and development in particular. Finally, and most importantly, I spent a lot of time “hanging out” in emigrant communities – again, in sending and receiving areas – participating in the everyday practices of daily life, as well as attending community festivities, like holiday celebrations and weddings.

I also conducted extensive documentary research. Most of the government agencies and non-governmental organizations that participated in the process of policy development that I examined graciously opened their archives to me, as did the World Bank. I took full advantage of their generosity and used their archives extensively. I also conducted thorough reviews of government publications and video produced for emigrants, and completed searches in local and national printed press on emigrant issues. Finally, I drew on data in electronic media, including websites produced by government offices and migrant groups, electronic newsletters sent by government and emigrant organizations, and postings to weblogs and chatrooms.

Table 1.2: Summary of Methods

Methods	Morocco (8 months)	Mexico (8 months)
Principle Government Authorities (Federal/Central)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Fondation Hassan II; Banque Centrale Populaire; Bank Al-Amal	Ministry of Foreign Affairs; SEDESOL
Localized case sites	Taroudant; Tangier/Algesiras	Zacatecas; Guanajuato; Jalisco; Michoacan
Receiving country sites (2 months total)	Paris; Brussels	Chicago; Philadelphia
Semi-structured and structured interviews	148	132
Open-ended interviews	many	Many
Participant observation	Projects sites (M/D); migrant group meetings; transit reception sites; consular offices; BCP branches	Project sites (3x1; Mi Comunidad); government meetings, plenary sessions, migrant group meetings; consular offices
Press review	Local and national press (EU and Morocco); emigrant publications in EU; government newsletters/glossies for migrant population; development organization publications	Local and national press (US and Mexico); emigrant publications in US; radio interviews; government newsletters/glossies for migrant population
Archives	National archives; bank archives; migrant organization archives; Fondation Hassan II archives and databases	SRE archives; Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Jalisco municipal and state archives; local church archives
Conferences/Fairs	MIT Migration and Development Conference; EMIM conference (Brussels); FH2 Fair for Moroccans living abroad (Casablanca)	MIT Migration and Development conference; Migration and Development conferences (Zacatecas and Mexico City); Movilidades conferences (Satillo)
Other data sources	Migrant group websites; government websites; weblogs; state and INSEA surveys; state television features	HTA Federation websites; government websites; weblogs; SRE electronic newsletter; email lists; state and university produced surveys, processed and unprocessed; author survey (Zacatcas)

Creating data and naming names

My choice of data was not only informed by the specifics of the processes that I was studying. It was also determined by the types of data available. As Melissa Nobles argues in her book on the census in the United States and Brazil, the production of data “is as much a political act as it is an enumerative one” (2000: 1). States construct social and political categories through the ways that they tabulate and classify people and actions. Similarly, political discourses shape the way that states conduct their counts and devise their taxonomies. (Nobles 2000)

In Morocco and Mexico, the political and economic significance with which migration was infused determined the kind of data both states collected, and that data in turn bolstered certain views of migration, both figuratively and literally. The data both states produced made certain aspects of migration visible, while the data the government did not generate left other aspects invisible. In Morocco, for example, large scale labor emigration was promoted by the government as a central economic strategy for the Kingdom, and as a result, the state kept meticulous records of worker emigration and has continued in that vein, conducting extensive periodic surveys of Moroccans living abroad which track everything from demographic information to plans for investment. In its most recent survey of Moroccans in countries around the world, the government specified that its study included not only Moroccans *living* abroad (Marocains résidant à l'étranger) but also Moroccans *from* abroad (Marocains de l'extérieur) in order to capture trends among second and third generation Moroccans who may never have set foot in the Kingdom. In Mexico, by contrast, the government's political decision of ignoring emigrants for much of the last four decades has led to a dearth of data on emigrants. What is available is produced through comprehensive household surveys conducted as a precursor to poverty reduction interventions. While Mexico is short on demographic data, government archives are both more complete and more accessible than those in Morocco, where documentation and public access to records of government practices, under the autocratic rule of Hassan II for most of the post-war period, tends to be markedly more restricted.

In my own data production practices, I have endeavored to be as cognizant as possible of the political context in which I carried them out. In this thesis, this effort may be most palpable in what is not said, and more specifically, in who is not named. The interpretive engagements documented in this thesis have vacillated between collaborative and conflictual. Many of those who participated in the conversations that were their medium did so at some political and personal peril. In a number of cases, it is unclear that the risk has completely disappeared. As a result, the confidentiality of the people I interviewed is maintained throughout this thesis. Where necessary, the organization, place, and month in which the interviews occurred is noted. However, there are a few notable exceptions to this general rule. In some cases, the participation of certain people in interpretive conversations determined whether or not the relationships and insights they generated would in fact become policy; governors, for example, fall into this category. All of my interviews with high-ranking government officials were “on the record” and they agreed to be referred to by name. I do identify those officials where necessary in the text. People cited in the press or articles appear as they do in the printed media, and speeches by public officials at public events, designed for public consumption and quotation, are attributed to the person who delivered them.

3. Overview

The central claim of this thesis is that the policy innovations that link migration to development in Morocco and Mexico were produced through *interpretive* processes. The governments of both countries engaged with emigrants in interpretive conversations through which new meanings, new relationships, and new identities were generated, and those meanings, relationships, and identities provided the basis for new policies and new institutions. How those conversations began depended on whether or not state perceived emigrants as valuable interlocutors. Whether the state had deployed administrative measures to make migrants visible or whether, instead, emigrants had to organize to make themselves visible to the state determined the genesis and the progression of the interpretive conversations that took place. The conversations were infused with intense ambiguity. As Morocco and Mexico’s intense migration patterns changed the contexts in

which the conversations occurred, as well as the interlocutors themselves, participants brought mutually unintelligible meanings and perspectives to the interpretive engagement. However, that ambiguity was precisely the quality that enabled the conversations to yield new insights as participants explored the differences and slippages between their understandings. The insights that emerged had their most powerful effect for policy when they took the shape of relationships, and more specifically, relationships through which emigrants and the state constituted themselves and one another. Through those relationships, emigrants and the state articulated new understandings about migration, development, and the connection between them, and began to act on them, transforming them into policy and institutions. In an iterative cycle, those novel policies and institutions, more often than not, set another round of interpretive engagement in motion, creating an on-going dynamic of state learning and innovation. The following chapters illustrate how this interpretive process of policy innovation led to policies now being emulated as “best practices” in the field and development. They also convey how much those policy innovations depended on ideas and ways of relating just beyond the horizon, the not-as-yet-understood and the not-as-yet-imagined possibilities that the “best practice” approach forecloses by definition.

The narrative presented in the thesis begins with an exploration of how and why the states of Morocco and Mexico perceived migrants as they did, and suggests the consequences this had for the ways that both government chose to engage with their nationals abroad. Chapter 2 describes the shift in emigration policy both countries experienced in 1963, and provides a historical overview of the political and economic events that led up to that change. The historical account I present is grounded in theories about the bureaucratic practices deployed in order to make social phenomena visible to the state, but suggests that these practices may be more strategic and flexible than current theories on “state seeing” acknowledge.

The thesis then turns to Morocco and describes how the state, which viewed Moroccan emigrants as an important economic resource, took assertive steps to initiate and sustain an interpretive engagement with its nationals abroad. Chapter 3 depicts the evolution of that engagement from the mid-1960s through the mid-1990s, and shows how it led to creation of a series of highly sophisticated and tailored financial services for a

population of emigrants traditionally considered unbankable on the one hand, and the new understandings of the political influence emigrants, when they organized, could wield both in Morocco and in Europe on the other. It also portrays how the state developed the organizational knowledge to maintain interpretive engagement such that it continue to generate new insights and new relationships.

While nuanced and vibrant, the state's interpretive engagement with emigrants aimed to capture emigrant resources for national development priorities, which focused on Morocco's industrial coastal areas at the expense of the rural heartland where most emigrants were from. In response to the chronic state neglect of their communities of origin, reflected in the lack of even the most basic services, emigrants initiated interpretive conversations in their villages to generate new techno-social solutions for the provision of infrastructure, but also more broadly, to elaborate new visions of economic development that included their isolated villages, long forgotten by the state. Chapter 4 describes the emergence and evolution of those local interpretive processes, and shows how emigrants deliberately drew the state into those conversations in a bid to change the government's treatment of their communities of origin. By involving the state in the interpretive conversations they began, emigrants were able to amend state practices for infrastructure provision and cause the redesign of major state infrastructure programs. Moreover, they were also able to call into question the national development model that prevailed in the Kingdom – and excluded their villages -- for over three decades. The emigrants' success in drawing the state's attention to rural areas and in demonstrating that areas cast as resistant to development could be poles of economic transformation and innovation speaks the relationship between interpretive practices and power, and Chapter 4 used theories of knowledge and practice to elucidate that connection.

Chapter 5 chronicles how the Moroccan state, in the mid-1990s, began to view the interpretive processes that emigrants were able to set in motion as resources in and of themselves, over and above the financial and knowledge transfers that the Moroccan government had perceived until then. As a result, the Moroccan state established new institutions in an effort to capture those interpretive processes. Chapter 5 describes these institutions and the implications they suggest for theories about how firms and governments can draw on user driven innovations, but it also describes the interpretive

processes emigrants have recently launched in an attempt to discover new ways to resist state cooptation of their creative processes.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 describe the evolution of interpretive engagement in Mexico. Because of the way that emigration complicated its relationship with the United States, the Mexican government engaged only reluctantly with Mexican emigrants and Mexican-Americans, if at all. In the late 1960s, Mexican-Americans approached the Mexican government with a desire to engage with it politically, and Chapter 6 depicts how the Mexican state, for the next three decades, joined in interpretive conversations with Chicanos on a sporadic basis, whenever it appeared that doing so would provide the Mexican government with political resources to resolve its latest political or economic crisis. Over time, the Mexican state developed the capacity to restart conversations that had sputtered and been abandoned, and Chapter 6 situates this ability in theories on the relationship between institutions and memory. The Mexican federal government's interpretive engagement with Mexican-Americans stood in sharp contrast with the analytic treatment it reserved for Mexican migrants and Chapter 6 also show the vast difference in policy results that two approaches yielded.

At the state level, however, a very distinct pattern of engagement between Mexican migrants and state government began to emerge over this period. Municipal and state government authorities began to seek out Mexican migrants and engage them in interpretive conversations. This trend was most pronounced in Zacatecas, and Chapter 7 describes how a matching funds arrangement between migrants and the government of that agricultural state for the completion of basic infrastructure and other services in migrants' communities of origin became an institutional container for an on-going interpretive engagement between government and migrants. It portrays how that interpretive engagement provided emigrants with new sources of political power, and it depicts the ways that emigrants drew on that power not only to protect their participation in interpretive processes but also to redefine economic development in Zacatecas and ultimately in the nation. Chapter 7 also suggests that Zacatecas' experience with interpretive exchange calls for a reconsideration of some of the assumptions embedded in theories on the relationship between meaning and institutions, and between institutional structures and political power.

Finally, Chapter 8 depicts how migrants brought interpretive exchanges that flourished at the state level to the Mexican federal government. It shows how migrant activists used the political opening offered by Fox's campaign in 2000 for president to demand that the Mexican federal government engage with them in ways more meaningful than the reductive analytic approach it had used up until that point. As it describes how migrants used their political power to sweep away analytically generated definitions of who they were and the role they could play in Mexico's political and economic development, and to make themselves visible as indispensable participants in interpretive discussions about their nation's future, a claim that was underscored when they won the right to vote in Mexican presidential elections in mid-2005. This chapter brings the thesis full circle back to the issue of "state seeing" and migrant visibility, arguing that analysis made migrants visible to the state but interpretation transformed state practices of seeing.

This thesis traces the evolution of interpretive conversations between migrants and the state in two countries, over a forty-year period. As it follows the progression of the exchanges in their different contexts, it looks at the process of interpretation and the ways that it leads to policy innovation from multiple angles. From the different perspectives the case material offers on interpretive processes, the conclusion draws a summary of the implications that interpretation as a source of innovation has for how we conceptualize global exchanges, community organizing, and economic development.

Chapter 2
Discretionary State Seeing:
Emigration Policy in Morocco and Mexico, pre-1963

Introduction

Nineteen sixty three marked a turning point in the emigration policies of both Morocco and Mexico. That year, Morocco began concluding a battery of guestworker agreements with European nations. With the ratification of the labor export conventions, the Moroccan state departed from the indifferent and haphazard approach that had characterized its administration of worker emigration since independence, and embarked on an ambitious program of state-managed labor export. Mexico, by contrast, saw its participation in the largest guestworker program in history end in 1963. When the United States discontinued its massive program for the recruitment of Mexican workers for agribusiness after twenty years, the Mexican state withdrew from the direct management of worker emigration, and through its disengagement, quietly enabled the continued large-scale migration of Mexican workers across its northern border. This cardinal shift in the emigration policies of both nations would cause an equally radical change in the way the Moroccan and Mexican states perceived emigration and emigrants. For both Morocco and Mexico, the policy change would determine the visibility – or invisibility – of emigrants to the state for decades to follow. This (in)visibility would be crucial to the elaboration of Moroccan and Mexico’s policies to link migration and development. The way the state discerned migration –the specific ways in which state administrations chose to “see” migrants – informed how the state engaged with emigrants. It defined the tenor and the boundaries of the conversations between migrants and the state – conversations that would ultimately generate the policy innovations that tethered migration to economic development. In sum, state policies to send migrants out – and the ways of state “seeing” on which they depended –would shape state policies to bring migrants back in.

State “seeing”

Increasingly, analysts of the state have focused on the practices of state “seeing” and the relationship of those practices to policy design and political control (Foucault 1994; Dean 1995; Scott 1998; Hansen et al. 2001). They have demonstrated how the state intervenes in local contexts to make the realities and social process that were opaque and unintelligible to it visible and legible to the state apparatus. They have shown how bureaucratic practices, such as standardization and legal codification, are deployed to simplify local realities replete with “an infinite array of detail,” and to bring them to the surface to slot them into “a set of categories that...facilitate summary descriptions, comparisons, and aggregations” (Scott 1998: 77; Gupta 2001). Complex and often contradictory social phenomena are reduced to data points that the state can “see” and act upon.

And as these theorists note, the state *does* act on what it “sees.” State practices make social phenomena visible to the state *so that* those social process can then be subject to state intervention. The knowledge collected and produced in this fashion is critical to the state’s ability to impose its jurisdiction and maintain control. The state’s control can be direct, through the immediate state manipulation of social processes (Scott 1998) , or it can be indirect, as the knowledge generated through state practices and state “seeing” make “specific policies plausible, specific forms of rationality thinkable, and specific forms of political discourse possible and intelligible” (Hansen et al. 2001: 4; Foucault 1994; Dean 1995; Bourdieu 1999).

So critical is state “seeing” to governance that most of its observers share a bias about this form of statecraft that smacks of historical determinism. Their nuanced observations of the multiple and historically specific practices through which the state makes social processes visible notwithstanding, many analyses of the production of state knowledge associate the bureaucratic practices that enable the state to “see” with the modern state, and make an implicit assumption that the range of state “sight” in a given bureaucratic administration will remain entrenched. What the state “sees” now, it will continue to “see.” Moreover, there is an implicit characterization of the state as having an inexorable drive to increase what it can measure, categorize and control. Because the state’s legitimacy is based on the ability to govern, and because the ability to govern is

delimited by what the state can “see,” the push to render society, in all its local detail, legible to the state is viewed as rooted in the state’s institutional need for self-replication and self-preservation. The state, or more precisely, the state practices that constitute the institutions that make up the state, will make more and more social phenomena visible, expanding the universe that the state can manage, manipulate, and govern in the process.

The history of Moroccan and Mexican emigration policies call in question these assumptions about state “seeing.” The state practices that Morocco and Mexico used to govern the emigration of its citizens did not uniformly or consistently make emigration and emigrants visible to state bureaucracies. Nor did their state practices push to amplify what the state could “see.” At various moments in time, the state practices of both nations were designed to detect, measure, direct and control the movement of migrants. At others, they reflected an ambivalence or a reluctance on the part of the state to make emigration visible and thus subject to state management. Through their emigration policies, both states expanded and contracted their field of vision as it pertained to migrants. In a sense, both states exercised a kind of “discretionary seeing.”

Whether or not Moroccan and Mexican emigration policy made emigrants visible depended very much on the political and economic significance of migration at any given historical moment. State “seeing” was contingent and strategic. It depended on the political usefulness and ramifications of emigration for the state’s ability to maintain its hold on power and to protect its legitimacy; it depended on the economic consequences of emigration for the nation as a whole, and sometimes for sending areas in particular; and it depended on the fit between emigration and the nation’s economic growth policy. Furthermore, it was also informed by both countries’ historical experience with migration policy, their institutional memory about how emigration impacted economic and political realities, and the bureaucratic tools, already honed through previous engagement with emigration, they had at their disposal.

The political and economic conditions that affected whether or not state practices made migration visible were not exclusively those of the migrant sending state. In contrast to theories on the production of state knowledge and control which primary focus on the relationship between a given state and its society, Mexican and Moroccan experiences with emigration policy suggest that state seeing is not exclusively a national

affair. Both Morocco's and Mexico's rapport with the countries that received their migrants was as pivotal in determining the extent to which their state practices would make migration visible as domestic concerns. When and how their state practices made migration apparent reflected an understanding that the mechanisms that make social dynamics visible to one state are likely to make them visible to another-- and thus subject to its control.

In this chapter, I provide a historical overview of Moroccan and Mexican emigration policies. The narrative for both Morocco and Mexico begins in 1963 with the implications their shift in state emigration policy had for the way that both states "saw" their emigrants, and then traces the historical events that led both countries to change the way they managed migration. In these accounts, I focus on the relationship between both countries' emigration policies and their national economic growth strategies; I pay particular attention to how the changing role of agriculture for national development informed their administrative approach to emigration. Both nations' economic priorities and the ways they translated into emigration policy were deeply influenced by politics, and in the historical review presented in this chapter, I look at how economic growth and emigration policies were shaped by domestic political crises, as well as by the international relationships between the migrant sending countries and the countries that received their emigrants. In both cases, domestic and international political interactions that were structured by power imbalances and were infused with historical experiences of both concord and conflict.

I reconstruct the historical events covered in the chapter by drawing mostly, but not exclusively, on secondary materials. I use the term "reconstruct" purposefully: the historical record for many of the events covered here is incomplete. Some of the information is missing or unavailable, in part because it relates to social phenomena that the states in this story were not interested in "seeing" and therefore did not monitor, measure, and translate into data that was recorded and preserved. Some of the information has been suppressed or deliberately made invisible because of its political sensitivity at various historical moments. Lastly, some of the information is thin simply because the historical study of emigration policy is relatively new and historiographies are still emerging.

Those analyses that do exist have argued for a “neopluralistic approach” to understanding emigration policy, stressing that emigration policy is produced through conflict and collaboration in a state that is “a multilevel organization of distinct component units” for whose interests political actors with varying levels of political power compete (Fitzgerald *forthcoming*). The pluralistic view of the state is implicit in the historical review that I present in this chapter. However, my emphasis is on thematic trends in state practices rather than on the specific state institutions that authored them and carried them out; I privilege the state practices deployed to manage the relationship between economic growth and development, and how they did or didn’t make emigration visible. The first half of this chapter is devoted to Morocco, and the second to Mexico.

1. Morocco: Managing Emigration

Political Crisis, Rural Elites and Emigration Policy

Nineteen sixty-three marked the beginning of political crisis for Morocco. Long-simmering tensions between the urban political parties that had won Morocco its independence in 1956 and the monarchy they had adopted as their nationalist symbol of resistance to French rule finally erupted into a full blown struggle. Urban nationalists’ vision for Morocco as an industrialized country headed by an elected government, perhaps, but not necessarily, in the form of constitutional monarchy, came head to head with the Crown’s determination that the Kingdom should be stewarded by a strong Sultan, a Prince of the Faithful, to whom Morocco’s people would owe their political allegiance and religious devotion. The public fight between the two factions would determine Morocco’s future into the next century, shaping its economic trajectory and its political system.

The political storm of 1963 started gathering after Mohamed V’s untimely death two years before. When his son, the young King Hassan II, ascended to the throne in 1961, he began quietly but systematically consolidating power into his own hands. By late 1962, he had authored a new constitution that ascribed new unchecked powers to the King. In campaigning for its ratification, he addressed the nation, and proclaimed that

this new regal authority was vital “for the good of the people and glory of the motherland” and represented “a renewal of the sacred pact that has always united the people and their King” (Radio Address, November 18, 1962 qtd in Palazzoli 1974: 76).

Urban-based political parties and affiliated labor unions who held fast to plans for a democratically elected government bristled at declarations such as these, and once the constitution was passed in December 1962, spent the next several months publicly rebelling against the concentration of executive authority in the King’s hands. The left-leaning Union des Forces Nationales Populaires derided the King’s call for national unity, declaring that “no national unity is possible around a feudal power, of a spirit that is fundamentally reactionary, and... that has given proof of its contempt for principled action” (qtd. in Palazzoli 1974: 263). The right leaning Istiqlal party, while slightly more measured in its criticism, nevertheless went so far as to publish a tract entitled, “White Book on Repression in Morocco” (Palazzoli 1974: 161). Newspapers shot back at the legislative changes with headlines that read, “No to the return to despotism and feudalism,” and under them appeared a steady stream of critical articles (Al Doustour qtd. in Bennani 2004). Editorial pages lambasted the “personification of the monarchy,” and explicitly opposed the move from the constitution monarchy to an increasingly autocratic rule, holing it directly “responsible for the inequalities that exist in [Moroccan] society” (Bennani 2004). It would be the last year for many decades that such direct critiques of the King could appear in print. (Entelis 1980; Zerrouky 2004, Dalle 2001; Clement et al 1984).

Within a few short months of the press sounding the alarm at the new powers that the new constitution had consolidated the King hands, Hassan II had the mid-year parliamentary elections rigged in his favor, stacking the legislative body with yes-men. To cement his electoral coup, the Sultan, claiming to have discovered a plot to overthrow the monarchy, had over a hundred opposition leaders arrested, including twenty one parliamentary representatives. Dozens of them were tortured, thrown into solitary confinement, and condemned to death. For good measure, the king also purged the armed forces of opposition sympathizers and brought the military to heel as the enforcer of his regime. (Entelis 1980; Zerrouky 2004, Dalle 2001; Clement et al 1984).

Despite Hassan II's authoritarian moves, Morocco's burgeoning cities continued to simmer with growing popular mobilization and unrest. More ominously, the Moroccan countryside, where Hassan II looked to rural elites as the stronghold of monarchical support, saw several instances of peasant revolt. In a trend profoundly disquieting to large landowners, dispossessed peasants occupied tracts of land, and had to be removed by force (Farsoun et al 1976). Popular discontent at the Kingdom's lurch toward authoritarianism and at its economic direction would come to a head two years later, in March of 1965, when student and worker riots rocked Casablanca, Fez and Rabat, Morocco's major urban centers. After putting down the protests in a bloody wave of repression that four hundred dead and thousands more wounded, the King proclaimed a "state of exception": he recessed the parliament indefinitely, suspended the constitution, and assumed full legislative and executive powers. The aspirations of those who had expelled the French to replace the colonial power with a deliberative constitutional monarchy were definitively dashed. (Entelis 1980; Zerrouky 2004, Dalle 2001; Clement et al 1984).

In the midst of the political turbulence of 1963, the Moroccan government, under the King's increasingly authoritarian direction, began signing formal agreements for the export of its workers. In May, Morocco and West Germany ratified a convention allowing for the recruitment of Moroccans to work in German heavy industry. In full post-war expansion, Germany faced labor shortages so severe that they threatened to slow down industrial production. A similar agreement with France quickly followed on the heels of the first one, signed only a month later, and Moroccan workers were exported to France in large numbers to man the republic's assembly lines and to cultivate its fields. Suffering a serious labor shortfall in its mining industry, Belgium would also turn to Kingdom, finalizing a labor convention with Morocco in February 1964. Several years later, the Netherlands, finding the supply of Moroccan labor that it siphoned off from France and Belgium insufficient, would also sign its own labor agreement with Morocco in May 1969. (see Table 2.1; Khachani 2005; Frennet-De Keyser 2004; Fondation Hassan II, mimeos, various conventions 1963-1987).

Table 2.1: Moroccan Guestworker Conventions

Labor-importing country	Date of Moroccan migrant worker convention
Germany (FRG)	May 21, 1963
France	June 1 st , 1963
Belgium	February 17, 1964
Netherlands	May 14, 1969

Source: Fondation Hassan II

The timing was not coincidental. A number of European nations, with France taking the lead, had approached Morocco repeatedly since its independence in 1957 to negotiate possible guestworker programs with the Kingdom, but the reaction of the Moroccan government had been non-committal at best. Moreover, Morocco's attitude toward the emigration of its nationals since independence had been lackadaisical and indifferent; the state granted emigration permits in a haphazard fashion, processing applications as they were submitted and using no specific criteria to approve or deny requests. And yet, in 1963, in what appeared to be an abrupt reversal of policy, the Moroccan government became suddenly amenable to European overtures for labor (Belgendouz 1987).

In fact, the labor accords were a key component of Hassan II's response to the political crisis of the early sixties. Faced with an increasingly discontented urban opposition, backed by mobilized, committed and sometimes violent public support, Hassan II turned to rural elites as a countervailing source of political legitimacy (Leveau 1976). The Sultan sought to cultivate a base of rural support loyal enough and weighty enough to counteract urban middle class demands for political representation and direct access to legislative and executive power. In adopting this strategy, the King fell back on the same political structures and networks the French colonial power had used to maintain power in Morocco. In a classic divide and rule tactic, the French had cultivated clientelic allegiances with Morocco's rural notables, delegating to them the task of exerting control over a restive rural population, and at the same time, building a buffer against urban demands that they quit the territory. To gain the support of rural elites, Hassan II abandoned the industrial modernization planned since independence and backed by the urban middle class, shifted to a model of economic growth based on commercial agriculture, which favored heavily the interests of large landowners engaged

in this endeavor. In doing so, he resuscitated the colonial dream, still largely unrealized, of turning Morocco into the California of Africa, where large farms would grow grain and produce for export. More importantly, he delayed the project of land redistribution indefinitely (Leveau 1976; Daoud 1981).

The Achilles' heel of this solution to the crown's crisis of political legitimacy was that the "California model" of agricultural development would only deepen the rural poverty that was already fueling popular unrest throughout the country – both in the countryside as well as in Morocco's cities. In the rural areas, the poor who had been dispossessed and pauperized under fifty years of colonial rule and who had fought starvation after a series of bad harvests in the 1960s were mobilizing to demand access to land, resorting to violence to underscore their claims (American University 1965; Farsoum 1976). Legions of rural poor also migrated to Moroccan cities, where, faced with stagnating urban economies and high unemployment, they joined the ranks of urban protestors against the King's rule (Clement et al. 1986).

At its core, the problem was that the "California model" of agricultural production was structurally organized around the existence – and, if necessary, the creation – of rural indigence and displacement. In this latifundary approach to commercial agriculture, growers tended to eschew important technological advances in agricultural production, depending instead almost exclusively on the availability of large supply low-wage labor for the profitability of their enterprise. Moreover, they required a labor force that could be recruited on very short notice and in great numbers to harvest crops that often ripened all at once on vast estates that specialized in a narrow range of products for export. But the interdependence between the profitability of this Malthusian mode of agricultural production and rural poverty rendered the "California model" fundamentally unstable. Rural poverty had to be pervasive enough to keep wages depressed, but not so acute as to drive people to leave the countryside in search of work, or to incite them to rise up in protest against the system – and the rural elites -- that exploited them. After independence, the severity of rural poverty, aggravated by a series of political and economic shocks, upset the colonial style of agricultural production. Rural peasants rebelled, and rural elites pressed the King for relief.

The guestworker accords were the crown's response to the rural poverty that, in its intensity, had destabilized the regime and disrupted large-scale commercial agriculture in the Kingdom. The accords paved the way for the Kingdom's return to the colonial "California model" of agricultural development and to the alliance with rural elites that it promised. In orchestrating the large-scale emigration of rural labor, the crown could effectively reduce rural poverty by exporting some of it, while at the same time generating a source of income for the rural poor, through migrant remittances, that would allow them to remain in the countryside where they would be available to labor periodically on large agricultural estates. Moreover, rural residents receiving steady income from abroad would be less likely to migrate to cities, where they might have otherwise swelled the ranks of urban agitators. In addition to using the guestworker agreements as a safety valve to reduce the burden on dangerously taxed rural and urban labor markets, the crown also deployed them tactically as a tool to deflate the political opposition to the monarchy and its allies (Atouf n.d.). The export of labor became the lynchpin that made Hassan II's designs to solidify his position as authoritarian monarch politically and economically feasible.

Over the duration of the accords, Morocco would ship hundreds of thousands of rural poor to labor markets in Europe. Just as the French colonial administration had before it, the Moroccan state exercised thorough bureaucratic control over the movement of rural labor, carefully planning, targeting, and supervising the disbursement of guestworker contracts. Because the Moroccan state managed the emigration of Moroccan labor so deliberately, Moroccan emigrant workers would remain clearly visible to the Moroccan state. Moroccan state practices in implementing the guestworker conventions were designed to make migration legible to the state. Viewing them as a key enabling element in Morocco's national development plans, the Moroccan regime would engage intensively with emigrants during their stay in Europe, integrating them into Morocco's strategies for economic growth and enlisting their direct allegiance to the throne.

The following section of this chapter describes the history of "California model" of agricultural production that Hassan II resurrected to win over the rural elites, and the structural reasons, many of them rooted in France's colonial project, that its preservation could only aggravate rural displacement and poverty. The brief review of Morocco's

experience with the “California model” elucidates why reverting to the colonialist model of commercial agriculture catapulted the bureaucratic management of labor emigration up high on the list of state priorities, and kept the state’s attention trained on emigrant workers abroad.

Building California in Africa: Land, Labor, and Rural Elites

Soon after being appointed Resident General for France’s protectorate in Morocco in 1929, Marechal Lucien Saint sent a delegation to California on a fact-finding mission. Its task was to discover the methods of arboriculture and irrigation that made Californian commercial agriculture both bountiful and profitable, so that the French protectorate could copy them and finally realize the colonial dream of turning Morocco, particularly its southern heartland, into the California of Africa. To the cultivation of wheat, already well established in Morocco thanks to two decades of colonial subsidies and bonuses, the colonial administration wanted to add the production of fruits and early vegetables for export to France and the rest of Europe (Swearington 1985). The vision of vast fruit and nut orchards stretching across the valleys of southern Morocco and across its northern plains, and of large farms striated with rows of early vegetables took firm root in the colonial imagination. French publicity materials on the Souss valley in the south of Morocco promoted agricultural investment in the area to potential colonists with romantic descriptions that reported “veritable natural parks” of fruit trees, including almond, apricot, cherry, pomegranate, quince and fig, and waxed lyrical about the foothills of the High Atlas, “lined with ‘magnificent orchard forests of olive and argane trees’” (Hoisington 1985: 317). Renowned French geographers appraised Morocco as having “fat soils⁵” which, they predicted, would make it “one of the most fertile grain producing regions in the world” (Swearington 1985: 348). Moreover, caressed with temperate ocean breezes, Morocco, with its gentle climate, would support the cultivation of spring vegetables and the expansion of existing citrus groves (Hoisington 1985: 317).

While this idyllic representation of Morocco as the agricultural “El Dorado”—the California-- of the French empire may have lent political appeal to French colonialist

⁵ It was later discovered that these dark, so-called “fat soils,” owed their rich color not to organic content, but to iron salts that made them barely arable. (Swearington 1985: 348)

enterprise, French administrative efforts to make this quixotic vision of commercial agriculture a reality also had permanent structural consequences for rural Morocco. The model of agricultural production that underpinned the romantic ideal was organized around vast estates that employed cheap labor for the large-scale production of goods for export. Protectorate policies to foster it – to build a colonial version of “California in Africa” -- profoundly reshaped the distribution of land, the configuration of political interests and power, and the status of rural peasantry from members of communities that engaged in subsistence agriculture to landless laborers exploited by large agriculturalists. These changes wrought by these policies would set the stage for Hassan II’s recovery of the agricultural model and the elites who benefited from it after independence, as well as for the implementation of the guestworker accords that accompanied the return.

(Hoisington 1985; Swearingen 1985; Daoud 1981; Leveau 1976)

Creating Vast Estates

To lay the foundation for this colonial “California model” of agriculture, the French government began by promoting the consolidation of large tracts of land for commercial agricultural production. The colonial administration specifically recommended that colonial farms in the new protectorate be no less than 400 hectares in size, which it viewed as the minimum area required to support mechanized wheat farming and specialized orchards producing for commercial export. The land grant policy that France applied to its protectorate⁶ was designed to foster large-scale farming: in contrast, France’s policy in neighboring Algeria, where it had summarily expelled peasants from their land in order to redistribute it in modest parcels to small colonial farmers – the infamous “*petits colons*”— the colonial administration in Morocco gave preference in the

⁶ French land policy in Morocco would undergo a meaningful shift during the 44 years of Morocco’s status as a French protectorate (1912-1956). Under Marechal Lyautey, the first Resident General dispatched to Morocco (1912-1926), colonial land policy was more tempered: Lyautey established an unbreakable rule that no land should be confiscated from Moroccans, and that land to be cultivated had to be legally purchased. This stipulation, while principled, was more flexible in actual practice: at the time of the French incursion, only a small fraction of Moroccan lands were registered with legal title. The rest were invested with communal or individual property rights that were recognized informally, without the backing of legal documentation. While binding in the Moroccan contexts, the French colonial administration generally did not recognize these traditional property rights, and French colonists could appropriate the lands with relative ease. Lyautey was eventually removed from his post, because he was viewed as too lenient in his administration of the Moroccan protectorate, and was replaced with a series of hardliners under whose governance the outright appropriation of Moroccan lands became more commonplace. (Bidwell 1973)

allocation of land to French elites and large companies that had the means and the desire to purchase vast tracts of land. The administration encouraged long-term investments, using the latest agricultural technologies, and production for export to supply the metropole, as well as other European markets if France's needs were satisfied⁷.

(Swearingen 1985)

During only forty-four years of French rule over Morocco, between 1912 and 1956, 1.2 million hectares of Morocco's richest agricultural lands – approximately one-fourth of all arable territory – were transferred into French hands. In a heady colonial enclosure movement, France quickly established the dominance of large-scale commercial agriculture its protectorate. In keeping with “California model”, colonial land grants between 1917 and 1931 were large, averaging 250 hectares, somewhat shy of the 400 hectare ideal due to a shortage of available land. Privately settled land, purchased from Moroccans under extremely advantageous terms enforced by the colonial administration, also between 1917 and 1931, was concentrated in farms that averaged 370 hectares in size. (Swearingen 1985: 350; Daoud 1981; Safi 1990)

To make land available for these vast estates, the French colonial administration dispossessed hundreds of thousands of small farmers, using both military and administrative means. On numerous occasions, particularly in areas where peasants rebelled against French rule, residents were summarily and violently expelled from their lands. More frequently, however, the French administration simply refused to recognize traditional property rights, many of which were communal, almost none of which had legal written documentation. The land thus became ownerless, available for colonists to appropriate or purchase at prices far below their market value⁸. In addition to dispossessing small landowners and Berber tribes that held land communally, the French

⁷ Albert Sarraut, Minister of the Colonies after WWI, was the architect of the Plan Sarraut that called for the division of agricultural labor amongst the colonies. Swearingen summarizes the plan as follows: “Each colony should specialize in the production of certain primary materials for the metropole. Thus, for example, Madagascar would produce meat and minerals; the Antilles, sugar and coffee; Indochina, cotton, rubber and silk; and Equatorial Africa, oil, crops, and wood” (1985:351). In the context of this grand colonial plan, Morocco would produce grain and fruit. (Swearingen 1985; Hoisington 1985).

⁸ Jacques Berque, historian and sociologist of Morocco under the French protectorate, also reported that even land-grabbing practices illegal under French colonial law became commonplace, especially in the 1930s and 1940s when the movement to colonize Morocco picked up momentum: he called it “the golden age for the advocate and the lawyer,” when large numbers of Moroccans were swindled out of their land in case after case of “scandalous behavior” by the French *colons* (Bidwell 1973: 213).

colonial administration also expropriated large tracts of land belonging to the crown. Before the protectorate, all land in Morocco that was not privately or tribally owned was considered royal property by default. The French administration thus regarded it as state property that could be confiscated for the repayment of national debt. Although no accurate data is available on the total amount of land transferred from royal to French ownership under the protectorate, historical records suggest that it was not insignificant. By 1924, the colonial administration had surveyed much of the land considered royal property and had already placed a lien on at least 50,000 hectares of it (Bidwell 1973: 200-205). (Safi 1990; Daoud 1981; Bidwell 1973).

Co-opting Rural Elites

The colonial administration was able to carry out this massive transfer of land into French hands by “sharing the spoils” with Moroccan rural elites. In what it would call its “politique indigène” – literally “policy toward the natives”—to subjugate rural Morocco, France forged alliances with tribal governors, called *caïds*, and endowed them with the administrative power and material resources to participate in the large-scale acquisition-- through purchase and confiscation-- of agricultural lands. The French Resident General retained the *caïds* as “collectors of taxes, supervisors of public order, and judges in civil and criminal cases” in rural areas (American University 1965: 32), governing through them in a system Leveau has called “a bureaucracy of tentacles” (Leveau 1973: 14). In the process, the French administration created a class of firmly entrenched rural notables, who became avid supporters of the system of agricultural exploitation on which France’s imperial project was built and staunch defenders of the protectorate that served their political and economic interests.

In exchange for their allegiance and submission, the French invested the *caïds* with “quasi discretionary powers over the persons and goods” in the jurisdictions allocated to them (Leveau 1973:11). Under the cover of French rule, these rural elites swallowed up the communal lands belonging to their own tribes as well as to rival tribes, confiscated private farms, and multiplied their wealth through independent and arbitrary

taxation. A number of them⁹ accumulated properties so extensive they would rival those of the largest colonial land owners in Morocco. The protectorate would “transform [the rural notables] from armed resistance leaders and tribal chiefs into latifundary landowners” (Leveau 1973:11). (American University 1965; Leveau 1973).

The rural elites coalesced into a base of support that the French could use as a political counterweight to the King’s resistance to the protectorate and to the urban middle class independence movement that had begun to rally behind the Sultan. Under the protectorate, the King’s powers had been significantly diminished, but the French were never able to solidify their control over Morocco enough to supplant him completely. Moreover, France’s continued presence and increasingly invasive penetration of the Kingdom’s social and economic structures strengthened the urban resistance movement against foreign rule over the Kingdom. The nationalist movement was primarily made up of the educated middle classes in Morocco’s cities, who, as one historian dryly noted, “had shown a marked reluctance to collaborate with the French” (Hoisingten 1985: 321). Over time, the urban nationalists became more organized, confronting the French with increasingly open defiance, in expressions that ranged from written tracts to violent rioting in the streets of Morocco’s burgeoning cities. The colonial administration responded to the nationalist challenge by progressively reinforcing their allegiance with rural elites, and by implementing a series of policies to make sure the “California model” of agricultural development took hold firmly in the Moroccan countryside. The French viewed an entrenched and successful system of

⁹ Pasha El Glaoui of the Souss region of Morocco was among the most powerful and, as a result, wealthiest of the caids of the protectorate. The protectorate authorities gave him wide latitude to multiply his land holding and to exercise nearly absolute administrative control over Moroccan commerce and agriculture in southwest Morocco (American University 1965). One historical account describes this caid’s exploitation of the area: “Every inhabitant of the Moroccan South has to supplement his regulation taxes by providing presents for Glaoui’s journeys, whether he goes to Mecca or takes the waters in Vichy. He has to furnish presents each time one of his numerous progeny celebrates a marriage; each time the Resident General pays a visit; not to speak of all the payments required when an official document is needed, or a judgement; when one wishes to leave prison or to avoid entering it. Glaoui has the monopoly of the trade in almonds, saffron and olives. He is the only buyer of these products, paying, at the most, half of their open market value.... He requisitions labourers to cultivate his lands and does not pay them; he has also, by various means, appropriated an appreciable part of the good land throughout Southern Morocco. It is literally true that he is the largest exploiter in North Africa. (Bourdet and Barrat, qtd in Hoffman 1967: 164). In my interviews in the Souss (December 2003-January 2004), several of the people I spoke with referenced their tribe’s oppression and exploitation under El Glaoui and noted that the historical memory of that period was one of the reasons they felt compelled to organize against any sort of arbitrary administrative control by the state.

commercial agriculture -- owned and controlled by French landowners with the participation and abetment of Moroccan rural elites -- as the best protection of French interests and the most effective guarantee that France would maintain its long-term presence in a country that it had come to view as an unalienable part of “*une France prolongée*” – an “extended France”. (Leveau 1973; Hoisington 1985)

Calibrating Labor

Along with its policies governing land tenure in the protectorate, the most important policy support that the colonial administration extended to the “California model” of commercial agriculture was the production and control of a large supply of cheap labor. Colonial land policy, with its wholesale dispossession of small landholders and tribesmen (who generally relied on communal land), transformed rural farmers into a labor pool, landless and available to work commercial agriculturalists at low wages. What the colonists left unfinished, the *caïds* completed with their ruthless taxation and land enclosure. “This oppression, particularly in the areas of the Great Caïds, was in an important factor in causing the tribesmen to forsake their homes,” concludes Robin Bidwell in his account of French rule in rural Morocco (1973: 301). By 1935, close to 100,000 displaced peasants, a full 2 percent of the rural population at the time, worked as full-time and seasonal laborers on the large colonial farms that were the foundation of the “California model” (Daoud 1981).

Nineteen thirties French publicity material for colonial investment in Morocco boasted the success of colonial policies, noting that labor was abundant and cheap. However, in also adding that newly “pacified” areas in Morocco, especially the Souss, offered a deep “labor reservoir” on which the prospective agriculturalist could draw, the materials hinted how the policies that produced the labor pool also made that supply of labor unstable. The profitability of the colonial “California model” of agricultural production depended on a supply of labor that was ample enough to make workers easily available to growers at very low cost, but it also required that the laborer be “pacified” and subdued. Large-scale agricultural production was not possible where rural laborers rebelled against colonial rule, or against the poverty that colonial land policy visited on them. Nor was it sustainable, practically as well as politically, when poverty

incapacitated workers through undernourishment and starvation, or forced them to leave rural areas – and, hence, the labor pools that supplied commercial agriculture – in search of work in Morocco’s cities, as well as in France and in neighboring Algeria. This was not a trivial concern: without access to land for subsistence agriculture, masses of rural peasants were made vulnerable to starvation. Low crop yields conjugated with colonial grain export policies and international market prices to cause punishing famines in the Moroccan countryside in 1928, 1930, 1937, and again in 1945 and 1947. (Hoisingten 1985; Bidwell 1973; Joffe 1985).

To calibrate the supply of agricultural labor to the requirements of the “California model,” the French colonial administration exercised significant bureaucratic control over the movement of workers. It crafted a series of administrative measures to check the free travel of rural laborers, and colonial bureaucrats methodically regulated the supply of labor to ensure that the availability of workers was sufficient to meet the needs of agricultural production but not so overwhelming that it would destabilize rural areas where the French authorities governed essentially by proxy, through the *caids* they retained. As Bidwell summarizes, “[t]ribesmen could not get permission to leave areas where the colons were short of labour, while in others, having lost their land, they were forced to join the proletariat in the great cities” (1973:214).

Colonial Emigration Policy

A key instrument –arguably *the* key instrument – that the colonial administration used to regulate the supply of labor was the protectorate’s policy on Moroccan labor emigration. Throughout its occupation of Morocco, the French colonial administration supplied the metropole with Moroccan workers when France suffered from episodic labor shortages, particularly during the two World Wars. However, with the exception of labor mobilization for war efforts, the colonial administration labor emigration policy addressed the needs of colonial employers, chiefly those in agriculture. When the supply of labor overwhelmed the ability of commercial agriculture to absorb it, the colonial administration opened Morocco’s borders, and allowed Moroccan workers to emigrate freely. When agriculturalists complained of labor shortages, the colonial authorities abruptly and forcefully closed the protectorate borders, issuing draconian prohibitions

against labor emigration. A brief review of the protectorate's pendulum-like emigration policies reveals their function as tool to regulate labor supply in Morocco.

During the Great War, from 1914 to 1917, France recruited 35,000 Moroccans as soldiers and an additional Moroccan laborers 30,000 to dig battle trenches and to work in industries that provided the army with munitions. At the war's end, many Moroccan were repatriated or returned on their own, but a number at least equal to those remained in France to work in industries in full post-war expansion. After 1920, when land enclosures in Morocco began in earnest and displaced many ten of thousands, emigration from the protectorate rose dramatically, largely of its own accord, using the infrastructure of transnational social networks fostered by French labor recruitment of Moroccans during the war. Commercial agriculturalists in Morocco, aggressively ramping up their production on newly acquired land, complained of labor shortages. In concert with industrialists setting up factories in Morocco coastal cities, they pressed the colonial administration to restrict emigration. In response, the colonial authorities instituted a set of a regulations in 1923 that were designed to make emigration visible to the state, so that it could limit emigration to areas where there was a demonstrated labor surplus: candidates had to fulfill a series of bureaucratic requirements that were not only daunting, but that made their point of origin and their destination conspicuous to the state, so that the state could trace and control emigrant outflows¹⁰. Additionally, candidates had to obtain approval of their emigration petition from regional colonial authorities, who had to certify that the worker's departure would have no injurious effect on local agriculture or industry. With commercial agriculture experiencing rapid growth, particularly in wheat production, these controls on labor emigration proved insufficient. Agriculturalists continued to report serious labor shortages, and many took matters into their own hands, forcibly conscripting labor¹¹. In response, the colonial administration added another set

¹⁰ These requirements included the submission of a finalized work contract for employment in France, a identification document, a summary of the candidate's anthropometrics, a certificate of good health, and a certificate testifying to the candidate's proficiency and aptitude for the work described in the contract. For the vast majority Moroccans, any one of these requirement would have been practically impossible to obtain. (Belgendouz 1987: 39)

¹¹ The forced labor practices that agriculturalists used were extremely varied, ranging from money-practices that bonded labor to violent intimidation – all with the tacit approval of colonial authorities and the Moroccan caids, many of whom also engaged in the same practices. Additionally, commercial agriculturalists so desperate for labor, began using to Moroccan women and children as farm laborers, a practice they had until then largely avoided. (Belgendouz 1987: 40)

of restrictive conditions on emigration in 1925, extending many of them to cover migration within Moroccan territory. The most draconian of these were penalties, including a sizable fine and six months' imprisonment, levied against any worker who left employment in Morocco, and a requirement that his village provide a worker to replace the deserter. In 1928, the colonial administration, having discovered that many Moroccans were circumventing restriction on emigration by first crossing over the porous border into Algeria, considered a French territory at the time, in order to then continue on to France, issued a blanket prohibition against any emigration whatsoever, regardless of the destination. Registered emigration dropped to 71 Moroccan persons in 1929. (Belgendouz 1987; Atouf n.d.)

But by 1929, commercial agricultural production in Morocco was entering a phase of overexpansion, particularly in wheat cultivation. With the exception of 1930, when an invasion of locusts, descending on the fields in "clouds that blocked the sun" devoured much of the yield, Morocco harvested bumper wheat crops in 1929 through 1934. The colonial agriculturalist harvest flooded an already depressed French wheat market. France, suffering from the serious effects of the Great Depression, reacted by erecting highly restrictive quotas for Moroccan wheat. Moroccan agriculturalists were devastated economically – almost one fourth of all colonial growers in Morocco went bankrupt during this period (Swearingen 1985: 355). In response to this agricultural crisis and to the destabilizing labor surpluses it created in rural Morocco, the colonial administration rescinded all controls on emigration in 1931. In a short time, however, Moroccan agriculture bounced back: agriculturalists diversified their crops, growing more fruits and vegetables, and French demand increased with as its national economic health improved. By 1938, agriculturalists were again reporting that labor shortages were affecting their profitability, and the colonial administration quickly reinstated a complete ban on labor emigration. Within the year, as France entered World War II, the situation had reversed itself dramatically. France was at war and needed men. Emigration controls were suspended, and France began to recruit workers and soldiers aggressively, contracting 100,000 workers and drafting an additional 200,000 men for combat. When Moroccans could not be persuaded to "complete their social duty and defend the nation [sic]" (Belgendouz 1987), the French conscripted Moroccan workers and soldiers by

force. At the war's conclusion, France showed equal resolve in repatriating Moroccans; by 1947, the number of Moroccans in France had dropped to 10,000. Emigration restrictions were reapplied and would remain in force until Morocco's independence. (Belgendouz 1987; Atouf n.d.; American University 1965)

In addition to applying emigration restrictions to modulate the supply of labor to meet growers' needs, the colonial administration used its emigration policy to mollify resistance to its rule. It systematically directed military drafters and recruiters from French industry to areas that were classified as "not pacified," while at the same forbidding Moroccan emigration from any region considered "pacified." In issuing emigration guidelines in 1918, Resident General Lyautey (1912-1926), specified that "workers must only be recruited from the regions of Marrakesh and Mogador, zones of dissidence" (qtd in Belgendouz 1987: 38), thus directing recruiters to the Souss region of the Moroccan south. The Soussis persevered in their armed rebellion against the French occupiers until 1936. Not coincidentally, over eighty percent of Moroccan workers recruited for work or combat were from the Souss, with that proportion approaching a hundred percent at various points in time under the protectorate (Atouf n.d.). Lyautey congratulated himself on his policy, saying, "every departure of a Moroccan immigrant removed one rifle [from battle] and every return was propaganda that increased France's tranquility [in Moroccan territory]" (qtd in Belgendouz 1987: 38). The French viewed the remittances that migrants sent or brought back home as an equally beneficial means to foster the acquiescence of rural populations to colonial land and agricultural policies. "The Moroccan South received from France a large proportion of the resources that allowed it to live, and its pacification occurred almost as much in our factories as in its mountains," concluded J. Ray in 1938, interwar analyst of Moroccan emigration, and considered the foremost expert on the matter during that period. (1938: 73, qtd. in Belgendouz 1987). (Belgendouz 1987; Atouf n.d.)

The bureaucratic record that the French colonial administration kept of Moroccan emigration was extremely detailed. The precision with which the colonial authorities monitored emigration was indispensable to its targeted, almost surgical, management of labor export to satisfy the protectorate's economic as well as political goals. Records for emigration from the Souss, a critical region for the French protectorate, reflect the

accuracy with which the state oversaw the movement of Moroccan workers. For any given year, the colonial state collected data on the total population in each municipality of each rural province, and on the number of emigrants in France from each of those municipalities. For example, in 1937, the villages of Taroudant, Irherm, and Tafraout, all in the province of Taroudant, had 250, 152, and 139 emigrants respectively living in France (Belgendouz 1987:40; see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Soussi Emigrants 1937

Province	Municipality	Population	Emigrants in France
Taroudant	Taroudant	83,000	250
	Irherm	48,000	152
	Tafrouit	33,000	139
Agadir	Agadir-banlieue (Inezgane)	108,000	1,089
Tiznit	Tiznit	43,000	1,054
	Anzi	40,000	1,000
	Beni Izakarem	41,000	330
	Ait Borha	60,000	550
Total		456,000	4,564

Source : Bulletin Economique du Maroc 1958, cited in Belgendouz 1987

Independence, the Rise of the Urban Middle Class, and the “California Model”

The excesses of the colonial model of agricultural exploitation began, over time, to corrode its political foundation. Opposition to the displacement and impoverishment of rural laborers, as well as to the immoderation of the rural caids, emerged with the rise of nationalist resistance against French rule. As early as 1934, Moroccan nationalists included in a list of petitions for reform submitted to the French authorities a demand that the judicial and administrative functions of caids be eliminated (American University 1965:37). Dispossessed peasants who were forced to migrate to Morocco’s coastal cities in search of work were “a ready audience” for the nationalist rejection of latifundary exploitation, and many of them joined the anti-occupation riots that rocked Morocco’s cities in the 1930s and 1940s (Joffe 1985: 294). After a series of failed harvests in the mid-1940s compounded the colonial rationing during the war, which, predictably, heavily favored French settlers, armed rebellion against the French even erupted in the

countryside, consolidating by the 1950s into the Armed Liberation Movement operating out of the Rif mountains in the North (Waterbury 1970: 33-57).

Ultimately, however, the downfall of the colonial “California model” of agricultural production was caused by the dissonance between the archaic and increasingly fragile political structure on which it depended and a post-World War II shift in the economic priorities of the protectorate. As France would discover in a gamble that cost it a fair piece of its “France prolongée,” the network of clientelistic relationships between the colonial authorities and exploitative feudal caids was unsuited to growing French industrial investment in Morocco cities. After growing at a conservative pace for most of the protectorate tenure, with only 2 percent of colons settling in cities, foreign investment soared in the early 1950: in 1952, an estimated USD \$570 million (in 1952 value) entered Morocco, with the lion’s share going to industry in urban areas. By 1953, foreign investment for the year represented 18 percent of Morocco’s GDP (World Bank 1966: 13-14). To create a system of governance that would allow colonial investors greater say over the direction of the protectorate, the colonial administration proposed local and regional councils where half the members would represent 300,000 settlers and the other half, 12 million Moroccans. King Mohammed V flatly refused to sign the law. In response, the French summoned their loyal caids, who surrounded the royal palace with their militias on horseback and in borrowed tanks, and had the King deposed. The French exiled the King to Madagascar in his nightshirt and replaced him with a feeble caid from central Morocco, and in the process, generated a political crisis and popular upheaval so great that France was never able to reassert its suzerainty. Rural peasants and small farmers, exhausted by decades of exploitation by rural elites and French colons, joined urban nationalist parties in a nationwide revolt against the caid usurpers. France flew Mohammed V back from exile and recognized Morocco’s independence in 1956. (Lugan 1992; Joffe 1985; Waterbury 1970; American University 1965).

The denouement of France’s rule over Morocco precipitated the Kingdom’s political and economic shift from the predominance of the colonial “California model” of commercial agriculture to an emphasis on modern industrial production. Newly reinstated Mohammed V sidelined the caids who had betrayed him, summarily divesting them of any formal administrative or judicial power. However, cognizant of their

immense informal political power and vast resources, and perhaps hoping, as Leveau argues, to co-opt them in due time as the French had before him, he did not move to destroy the caids, provided they did not challenge his authority, but he did not defend their economic interests.

The urban nationalist parties who had spearheaded the independence movement dominated parliament in the newly established system of constitutional monarchy, and redirected Morocco's economic growth policy. Their goal was to promote heavy industry and infrastructure in Morocco littoral cities. Moreover, most of the parties favored land redistribution and the promotion of new models of agricultural production that privileged small farmers. In a rejection of the vast estates that characterized the colonial model of agricultural production, the powerful – and right-leaning-- Istiqlal (literally: Independence) party adopted the slogan, “Land to the tiller!” and its manifest on economic policy called for “the transformation of the economic and social structures” that affected “the rural masses” (qtd. in Palazzoli 1974: 144). Independent Morocco's first five-year National Development Plan for 1960 through 1964 codified this new direction in economic growth policy. It outlined an ambitious state investment program for heavy industry and in primary resource transformation, and forecast “an agrarian reform in order to promote the rationalization of [agricultural] exploitation” (Plan Quinquennial, 1960-1964: 15, qtd. in Leveau 1973: 61).

The 1960-1964 National Development Plan was never implemented. Hassan II, in the throes of the political crisis precipitated by his power grab after his father's death, annulled the plan midstream. A new National Development Plan for 1964-1967 was formally issued in 1963. It abandoned industrial development goals and the urban middle classes that industrial investment would strengthen. Instead, it mandated the development of large-scale commercial agriculture, and allocated significant state resources to construction of irrigation and other necessary infrastructure for agribusiness. Predictably, the plan also skirted the thorny issue of land redistribution, stressing instead on how to improve the yields of vast estates. The plan revived the discredited colonial “California model” of agricultural production, reinstating with it the network of political allegiances and patronage between the caids and the ruler-- now Hassan II instead of the France.

Poverty Effects

In a redux of colonial land policies, the crown actively fostered the consolidation and expansion of the estates owned by rural elites, as well as those that were royal property. After France quit its protectorate, colonists, fleeing a political situation they viewed as unpredictable, sold 400,000 hectares of prime agricultural tracts at bargain prices to the crown and rural elites, and the Moroccan state confiscated much of the remainder (Clement 1986). Over the next two decades, the state would redistribute less than a tenth of those lands to small-scale farmers. The rest were either maintained as state or royal properties, or were granted to rural notables in exchange for their allegiance to the crown and royal policies. (Entelis 1980; Dalle 2001).

As a result of the crown's land policies, the distribution of land that, under the protectorate, was already the most unequal in all of North Africa, became decidedly more inequitable after independence (Ashford 1969). Between 1961-1963, three and half percent of landowners held thirty-three percent of the available land, while the poorest sixty percent of the population shared seven percent of the land. By 1974, the distribution of land had become even more polarized: the number of large land-owners grew slightly, with six percent of landowners laying claim to fifty percent of available land, at the expense of the poorest who were reduced to sharing barely four percent of the remaining arable surfaces (see Table 2.3; Safi 1990; Daoud 1981). When Morocco is disaggregated by region, the concentration of land that occurred during this period is exposed as even more glaring. For example, in the Haouz region of central Morocco, one percent of the landowners controlled 38 percent of the land by 1980; in the Gharb region in the center north of Morocco, the state and a handful of Moroccan capitalists had captured 45 percent of the land by 1970 (Daoud 1981).

Predictably, the endorsement by the crown and the Moroccan government – for all practical purposes, one and the same after 1965—of a version of the colonial “California model” of commercial agriculture had significant economic consequences for both rural and urban areas. The consolidation of land, compounded by rapid population growth through increased life expectancy and high birth rates, aggravated rural poverty. In 1960, when a full three-fourths of the Moroccan population lived in rural areas, rural poverty was severe: according to a household consumption survey conducted by the

Moroccan state in 1959-1960, over eighty percent of people who lived outside of the cities endured moderate to extreme poverty (World Bank 1981: 224). By 1970, after a full decade of healthy agricultural growth at close to 4 percent per annum, the percentage of rural households classed as living in extreme poverty had nearly doubled from 9 percent to 17 percent (see Table 2.4; World Bank 1981: 224). Not only did poverty increase, but the distribution of wealth became markedly more inequitable over this period: the percentage of overall expenditure by rural household accounted by the two lowest income deciles fell by half from 8 percent to 4 percent. Not only did the very poor suffer economically during this period, the moderately poor were also affected: the proportion of expenditures represented by the poorest 40 percent of the population shrank from 20 percent in 1960 to 14 percent a decade later. Meanwhile, the richest fifth of the rural population expanded their expenditures by almost 20 percent (see Table 2.5; World Bank 1981: 223)¹².

Table 2.3: Land ownership distribution in Morocco, 1961-63 and 1973-74

	Properties				Surface area			
	1961-63		1973-1974		1961-63		1973-74	
	%	cumulative	%	cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative
Landless	32.90	32.90	34.5	34.5	0	0	0	0
< than 1 ha	27.1	60.0	23.1	57.6	7.0	7.0	3.7	3.7
1-2 ha	14.2	74.2	12.0	69.6	9.3	16.3	6.4	10.1
2-10 ha	22.5	96.7	24.6	94.2	50.5	66.8	41.7	51.8
10-20 ha	2.5	99.1	4.0	98.2	17.3	84.1	20.7	72.5
> than 20 ha	.9	100	1.8	100	15.9	100	27.4	99.9

Source : Safi 1990 from National Agricultural Census

Table 2.4: Percentage of population by expenditure class, 1959-60 and 1970-71

Expenditure class (1959-1960 Dirhams per annum)	Proportion of rural households	
	1959-1960 - percentage	1970-1971- percentage
Under 900	9.0	17.4
900-3,000	72.3	48.4
Over 3,000	18.7	34.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: World Bank 1981 – Mission estimates

¹² The World Bank indicates that the estimates cited in its report are likely to be conservative because of sampling differences between the Household Consumption Survey conducted in 1959-1960 and the Household Consumption Survey conducted in 1970-1971. (World Bank 1981: 218-227)

Table 2.5: Urban and rural income distribution, 1959-60 and 1970-71

Household group	Percentage of expenditures			
	Urban areas		Rural areas	
	1959-60	1970-71	1959-60	1970-71
20% highest income group	42.7	50.4	41.0	47.9
40% lowest income group	18.8	12.5	20.5	13.8
20% lowest income group	7.1	4.1	7.9	4.4

Source: World Bank 1981: 223

The rural poor fled to Morocco's cities in unprecedented numbers, at a rate of almost 100,000 a year between 1960 and 1970, at a time when the Kingdom's total population was a little over 11 million and its urban population on just over 3 million. Due in large part to the rural-urban migration of working-age peasants, Morocco's cities were growing at a rate of almost 6% a year, a rate that would double the population of urban areas every decade(see Table 2.6; Safi 1990). The employment generating capacities of the Kingdom's urban economies were overwhelmed¹³. The unemployment rate for urban areas during the 1960s has been estimated at anywhere between 30 to 50 percent, with an equally large proportion of those holding jobs underemployed or employed in the informal sector (Garson et al. 1981; World Bank 1966).

Table 2.6: Moroccan Rural-to-urban migration, 1990-1980

Time period	Average yearly total
1900-1912	8,000
1936-1952	30,000
1960-1971	87,000
1980	200,000

Source: Moroccan Ministry of Planning, in Safi 1990

Exporting Labor

To address the labor surpluses in both rural and urban areas, and to stave off the political threat that they represented to the "California model" of agricultural production, to rural elites and to the King, the crown drew on a strategy that had been effective in

¹³ During this period, Morocco displayed a healthy growth rate: an average annual GDP growth rate of 4% from 1960 to 1964, and of 2.4% from 1965-1967. However, it was not sufficient to generate the urban employment growth required to cope with the large-scale migration to the cities that the country was experiencing at the time. Moreover, an important share of this growth rate was due to agricultural production which represented a third of the GDP over the 1960s (World Bank 1981).

modulating labor supplies during the colonial period: emigration policy. Starting in 1963, the Moroccan government ratified guestworker accords with France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands for the export of surplus labor. Just like the French during the protectorate, the Moroccan state maintained and exercised significant administrative control over the allocation of worker contracts. According to the text of the conventions, the Moroccan Ministry of Labor maintained the discretion to organize recruitment of Moroccan workers by foreign firms or governments as it saw fit (Ministry of Labor, 1963, 1963a, 1964, & 1969). Morocco drew on this authority and used the guestworker programs strategically to reduce pressure on rural labor markets, to divert migration away from Morocco's cities, and to assert political control. So critical a tool did emigration policy become in the management of labor surpluses that the Moroccan state would make it a structural feature of its long-term economic planning. As a result, Moroccan emigrants – the individual workers who emigrated -- would remain an important and explicit concern of the Moroccan state.

Under the guestworker conventions, the Moroccan state exported a significant portion of its workforce in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The total number of Moroccan workers in Europe whose departure from Morocco was registered with the Moroccan Ministry of Labor would increase five-fold between 1963 when the first conventions were signed to 1974 when Europe essentially closed its doors to labor migration: in 1963, the total number of Moroccan workers abroad was 60,745 and by 1974, it had jumped to 302,295 (Safi 1990; see Table 2.7). According to calculations by the Moroccan Ministry of Planning, Morocco in effect exported 13 percent of its workforce—or 1 in 8 of the nation's workers between 1963 and 1974 (CERED 1991: 72). The Ministry of Planning also conjectures that Morocco's state management emigration reduced the national unemployment rate by one fourth (CERED 1991: 72).

In managing emigration under the guestworker accord, the Moroccan government had significant data at its disposal. The abandoned 1960-1964 first National Development Plan after independence recorded a wide array of data on the rural population, possibly in anticipation of land redistribution. In addition to basic demographic information on the rural Moroccans, the 1960-1964 Plan featured data on how dispersed the rural population was. This information would have been critical for the planning of the allocation of land

and for the determination of the importance of communal land resources in various locations. But the plan also contained numerous metrics that were collected to facilitate the task of promoting more equitable agricultural development: the plan included estimates of agricultural unemployment and underemployment, disaggregating the information by geographical location, by age, by skill level, amongst other variables. The plan also noted how many laborers were employed per hectare, and classified intensity of labor usage by region. Additionally, the plan forecast future supplies of labor for agricultural production, including in their projection the potential participation of women in the agricultural workforce. (CERED 1991: 21-32). Over and above existing data, the Moroccan administration kept careful records of the origin of emigrants and the proportion that they represented with respect to the population in their communities of origin. Just like the colonial administration before, the Moroccan state instituted a series of mechanisms to ensure that it could “see” emigration; its practices made the dynamic of emigration, and the emigrants that made it up, visible to the state.

Table 2.7: Cumulative Moroccan worker emigration, 1915-1976

Year	Emigrant Workers (cumulative)	Year	Emigrant Workers (cumulative)	Year	Emigrant Workers (cumulative)
1915	700	1945	44,000	1966	102,193
1918	13,121	1949	17,000	1967	112,479
1919	3,000	1950	16,000	1968	119,521
1920	7,000	1951	18,000	1969	143,397
1920	9,000	1955	11,368	1970	170,835
1921	10,000	1956	14,200	1971	194,296
1924	15,000	1957	23,290	1972	218,146
1929	21,000	1958	31,296	1973	269,680
1936	10,000	1959	23,125	1974	302,295
1938	13,000	1960	29,718	1975	322,067
1940	40,000	1961	36,957	1976	347,984

Source: Moroccan Ministry of Labor, in Safi 1990

Emigration under the guestworker accords showed significant regional differentiation, with a clear bias towards rural areas, and to specific rural areas in particular, suggesting that the Moroccan state drew heavily on the data in the discarded 1960-1964 plan as well as the data it collected for the duration of the agreements. The Moroccan government directed guestworker recruitment to rural labor pools in general,

and rural workers represented anywhere between 69 and 75 percent of all workers who emigrated under the terms of the worker agreements (Belgendouz 1987). Areas with larger labor surplus were targeted for emigration: the provinces of Meknes, Oujda and Taza experienced proportional emigration rates between 1969 and 1971 that were higher than the national average, and all had official unemployment rates that were well above the national average, with Meknes and Oujda in particular registering rates that were almost double the national average (Belgendouz 1987; World Bank 1981: Statistical Annex p.8).

Furthermore, in a coda of the colonial tactic of using emigration as a means to weaken opposition to rule and to “pacify” areas in active rebellion, the Moroccan government directed recruiters to areas of the Kingdom that it viewed as restive and as potential threats to stability because of political activity. The Ministry of Labor oriented European recruiters, especially those from Belgium and Germany, to the Rif region in Morocco’s mountainous north. The Rif had been the base of the Armed Liberation Movement, the guerilla army of rural Berber tribes whose activities in rural areas helped drive the French out. After independence, it reemerged as a popular movement calling for free and fair elections and a representative national government that took Berber concerns and identity seriously. In 1958, Hassan II, then crown prince, accompanied by 30,000 soldiers, went personally to Rif to subjugate the movement by force. In his wake, he left 3000 dead and a region that would remain politically marginalized throughout his reign¹⁴. Not coincidentally, the region would be strongly represented amongst Moroccan emigrants. Emigrant worker recruitment between 1969 and 1972 showed a glaringly disproportionate reliance on the Rif mountains and surrounding areas: according to data collected by the Moroccan Ministry of Labor, the “Rif” and “Al Hoceima” administrative regions experienced labor emigration rates of 26 people per thousand inhabitants and 19 people per thousand inhabitants respectively, whereas the corresponding rate for the rest of Morocco averaged below 10 people per thousand inhabitants (Belgendouz 1987:24). By 1974, the main administrative province of the Rif, Nador province, would account for

¹⁴ Hassan II refused to visit the Rif anytime during his almost forty year reign (1961-1999) (White 2001). The region also suffered persistent government underinvestment in infrastructure and industrial development. (Bossard 1979).

18 percent of all migration from the Kingdom, even though it represented only 3 percent of the country's total population (Bossard 1979).

So satisfied was the Moroccan government with the results of its emigration policy that it featured emigration in the Five-year National Development Plans that followed the ratification of the guestworkers accords. In both the 1968-1973 and the 1973-1977, the Moroccan Ministry of Planning called for the significant expansion of labor emigration. The 1968-1972 plan states the government's goal "to achieve is the augmentation of workers abroad by the end of the five year period [covered by the plan]," (Plan Quintennale 1968-1972, qtd in Belgendouz 1999: 34). Unable to foresee the economic crash that would force European industry to grind to a virtual halt after the petroleum shocks of 1974 and would put an end to the large-scale importation of foreign workers, the Ministry of Planning, in its 1973-1977 plan, set a numerical target for the increase of emigration by 150,000 workers over five years. "The estimates of the possibilities of emigration remain very positive and are the result of the economic situation of European Community countries and their immigration policy," sanguinely notes the Ministry of Planning in its 1973-1977 plan (Plan Quintennale 1973-1977, Ministère du Plan, Royaume du Maroc).

Both National Development Plans also forecast the positive effects of labor export for the Moroccan economy and mandate the creation of institutions to foster the virtuous impacts of emigration. The 1968-1972 plan notes, for example, that labor emigration "would permit the increase of remittances of [foreign currency] which would finance internal investments in part" and would ensure "the employment of a portion of our population that cannot be absorbed within our frontiers without an increase in the labor pool in the unproductive sectors" (Plan Quintennale 1968-1972, qtd in Belgendouz 1999: 34). The 1973-1977 plan identifies a series of institutional measures to reinforce and capitalize on the economic and political benefits the state saw in emigration. The plan calls for "the development and organization of a bureau responsible for [managing] emigration from Morocco" as well as the "the reinforcement of social services to support emigrants through the organization of [state] activities that are directed towards them" (Plan Quintennale 1973-1977, Ministère du Plan, Royaume du Maroc).

Because of the central position of emigration policy in Moroccan national development planning, Moroccan emigrants would become an important preoccupation of the Moroccan state. The success of the regime's emigration policy in fulfilling the crown's economic and political aims depended on the careful management and supervision of migration recruitment and migration flows. The close monitoring of emigration implied close monitoring of emigrants. To do this, the state had to be able to "see" emigrants, and as a result, it exercised state practices that kept emigrants visible to state apparatus. The Moroccan state kept its attention trained on emigrants in Europe and engaged intensively with them throughout their stay abroad.

While Morocco kept its sight focused on its emigrants, Mexico averted its gaze. When Mexican emigration policy changed in 1963, the Mexican government disengaged from practices that would have made emigrants visible to the state. The main reason for this lies in the asymmetrical relationship between Mexico and the United States. Once the United States outlawed much of Mexican immigration, Mexico had a vested interest in making migration invisible and illegible to its powerful northern neighbor. Reflecting an understanding that "an illegible society is a hindrance to any effective intervention by the state" (Scott 1998: 78), the shift in Mexican state practices embodied a strategy move to shield Mexican emigration from control of the United States.

2. Mexico: Discretionary Optics

Towards "a policy of having no policy"

In December 4, 1963, the United States Congress extended the Bracero program for one final year. Since its inception in 1942, close to 5 million labor contracts had been issued to Mexican workers under its terms. The United States – Mexico bilateral recruitment scheme was the largest guest worker program in either country's history, and indeed in the world to date. The name of the program, derived from "*brazo*" the Spanish word for "arm," evoked the role that imported Mexican workers were to play in the United States economy: the immigrant contract workers filled the most arduous and difficult jobs in the industries to which they were assigned, and yet were treated as

“arms” to which the host society had few, if any, obligations (Calavita 1992: 1). The overwhelming majority of the “braceros” were dispatched to agribusiness growers in California and throughout the Southwest, but during World War II, significant numbers were also sent north to work on railroad tracks and to man heavy industry production lines throughout the war effort. (Calavita 1992; Driscoll 1999; Galarza 1964)

The Bracero program was not, strictly speaking, a program at all. Instead, it was a series of policy measures that U.S. government agencies, after having conferred with the Mexican authorities, instated by administrative fiat. The agreements were ratified and periodically extended by the U.S. Congress, and rescued through executive intervention when domestic or international political pressure called for their repeal (Calavita 1992:2). With each successive legislative iteration, the terms of the program were renegotiated. For most of the program’s duration, U.S. agribusiness lobbied Congress successfully to lower wage and housing requirements for the Mexican braceros, regularly persuading lawmakers to abrogate the baseline conditions Mexico had set for its participation in the program in the process (Galarza 1965; Garcia 1980; Calavita 1992).

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, however, opposition against the program began to mount. Organized labor and church groups mobilized against the guest worker arrangement, arguing that the braceros were exploited and that their presence depressed agricultural wages and working conditions for domestic workers (Galarza 1965). After a series of newspaper articles and a widely viewed film documentary¹⁵ in the early 1960s exposed the poverty and abysmal living conditions of Mexican immigrants hired under the program (Calavita 1992: 143), broad public outcry lent political support to the union-led campaign. When Kennedy signed a two-year extension for the Bracero program in 1961, he did so only reluctantly, stating that he could no longer ignore the grievances of domestic agricultural workers:

¹⁵ The documentary was a CBS film called “Harvest of Shame” released on Thanksgiving Day in 1960. The documentary sought to depict the deplorable living and working conditions of migrant workers who had harvested the food on the traditional thanksgiving table. According to observers of the documentary’s impact, the film “touched off a reaction of astonishing proportions” (Healey 1966, qtd, in Calavita 1992: 143), and would help put farmworker conditions of the political agenda. The flood of mail sent to the network and Congress by a “conscience-stricken” public led, in part, to the passage of the Migrant Health Act in 1962, which called for the establishment of clinics for farmworkers and their families, amongst other measures. (Discovery Times Channel, 2005; Calavita 1992:143)

The adverse effect of the Mexican farm labor program as it has operated in recent years on the wage and employment conditions of domestic workers is clear and cumulative in its impact. We cannot afford to disregard it. (qtd in US Congress 1961, cited in Cross 1981: 41).

The ambivalent president also qualified his assent to the program's renewal by arguing that its abrupt termination would have a detrimental effect on the neighboring country's economy:

I am aware...of the serious impact in Mexico if many thousands of workers employed in this country were summarily deprived of much needed employment (qtd. in Migration International, 2003).

But by 1963, opposition to the Bracero program had grown so formidable that even staunch allies of agribusiness judged the political costs of extending the program too steep; Representative Sisk of California, a long-time supporter of the program, summed up the situation: "the time has come to serve notice on the American farmer that he and we must come up with an alternative program....This is the last time I shall enter the well for an extension.... We have come to the end of the line" (qtd. in Rosenberg 1993: 3). When served with that notice, agribusiness issued warnings that were predictably dire about the ruinous effect labor shortages would have on their industry. Under an administration that had passed the Civil Right Act and had launched the War on Poverty, growers' well-worn threats of crops rotting in the fields for lack of workers to harvest them simply did not hold the same sway as they had at previous times. (Martin 2001; Calavita 1992; Craig 1971)

The Mexican government, faced with the specter of hundreds of thousands of newly unemployed Mexican laborers crossing back across its border with the program's termination, lobbied vigorously for the program to be extended, or at the very least, phased out more gradually (Creagan 1965; Craig 1971: 185; Calavia 1992: 208). The Mexican Ambassador Carillo Flores pleaded for "an attempt [to] be made to make the decrease gradually, in order to give Mexico an opportunity to reabsorb the workers who have habitually been working in the United States and thus stave off the sudden crisis that would come from an increase in national unemployment" (qtd. in Creagan 1965: 548). The US Congress, faced with rising domestic political pressure, was unmoved by Mexico's insistent and well-founded appeals. On December 31, 1964, the Bracero

program was quietly allowed to expire. As the new year dawned, Braceros began returning to Mexico by the thousands (Salazar 1998b).

For Mexico, the program ended in the same manner that it had begun. The colossus to the North had set the terms. Virtually by fiat, with scant attention to the attendant political and economic impacts on Mexico, the United States government determined when the program would begin and when it would end. Throughout the program, it had defined how many workers it would need, what labor it would need them for, and what remuneration they would receive in return. Unlike Morocco, which had quickly converted itself into an enthusiastic exporter of its labor, and on whose cooperation European nations depended to mobilize the vast number of workers their industries required, Mexico was only a reluctant participant in the recruitment of its nationals. As the United States negotiators and government agencies made clear on several occasions throughout the program's duration, the United States was prepared to run the program unilaterally if necessary, and with a largely unguarded border 3,000 miles long, there would be little Mexico could do about it. The United States shared the management of the Bracero program with Mexico as matter of diplomatic courtesy and administrative convenience (Galarza 1965; Garcia 1987; Calavita 1992; Driscoll 1999).

The Mexican government spent the duration of the Bracero program trying to contain its effects. Through a series of administrative and diplomatic agreements with its Northern counterpart, the Mexican state strove to manage the significant repercussions that the United States' aggressive recruitment of Mexican labor had on Mexican national economic growth policy and the maintenance of domestic political stability. While Mexico certainly enjoyed a number of benefits from the guestworker program, its negative effects were by no means insignificant. The Bracero caused labor shortages in strategic labor markets, particularly in those that supplied agricultural production in northern Mexico, a sector which was in direct competition with agribusiness on the other side of the border; it generated considerable political fallout as segments of the Mexican public were incensed at the treatment of their compatriots working on American farms; and it hardened into a symbol and experience of political and economic subordination to the US. If Mexico's attempts to mitigate these consequences ran counter to US government or business priorities, they were systematically thwarted. Indeed, every time

Mexico drew a line in sand over the manner in which its nationals were recruited and used, the US government, with agribusiness generally goading it on, scuffed it out.

When the Bracero program expired in 1964, the informal system of labor emigration that replaced it, with vast numbers of Mexicans migrating to the United States illegally, arguably served Mexico's interests much better than the formal system that the United States defined and controlled. With close to five percent of Mexico's population in 1960 having labored under a Bracero contract at some point since 1942 (Cross et al 1981), the program fostered structural dependencies of local economies on labor emigration. It also created durable social networks through which Mexican emigrants were able to enter the US and find work once they had crossed over the border. Together, these two factors would ensure that labor emigration from Mexico would continue apace, irrespective of whether or not a formal labor recruitment program was in place.

Furthermore, over the two decades spanned by the bracero program, Mexico's economic growth policy underwent a shift that transformed the labor market significance of emigration: from a drain on strategic labor pools, large scale emigration evolved into a safety valve that reduced the political pressure generated by a sharp increase in rural poverty. As Mexican industrial policy went from one which supported agriculture both as a export commodity and as a source of food for Mexico's growing urban proletariat, to one that favored industrial development to the serious detriment of agricultural production, labor emigration became an outlet for the growing numbers of unemployed and underemployed workers in Mexico's increasingly depressed rural areas, and a check on exponentially intensifying rural to urban migration. However, with no organized US demand for Mexican workers from a politically consolidated industry base—like agribusiness, the likelihood that the U.S. government would instate a new guestworker program was improbably slim.

Undocumented labor emigration supplanted state-managed and recognized labor export program as the only viable means for the Mexico to rely on US labor markets as an economic cushion and as political buffer. The Mexican government explicitly disavowed undocumented emigration as a matter of state policy, but quietly tolerated, even facilitated the migration of Mexican workers across the border. The Mexican government treatment of Mexican emigrants in the United States, both legal and illegal,

reflected its “policy of having no policy” (Garcia 1987). For close to two decades after the end of the Bracero program, the Mexican state essentially refused to recognize the vast numbers of Mexicans living and working in the US. It turned a metaphorical blind eye, refraining from exercising the state practices that made migration visible. It engaged with Mexican emigrants only with the greatest political reluctance, preferring as a matter of course to deal with groups that identified themselves as representing Americans of Mexican origin. Even as their numbers north of the border grew rapidly, Mexican emigrants became their nation’s phantom citizens: unacknowledged and unclaimed. The next section details the historical events that led to Mexico’s adopting a “policy of having no policy” toward emigration and the Mexican government’s attendant resistance to engaging with Mexican emigrants.

The emergence of the Bracero program

In May 1942, the Mexican Embassy in Washington and the United States government began preliminary negotiations for the creation of a contract labor program that would allow for the large-scale employment of Mexicans in US agriculture (Galarza 1964: 47; Driscoll 1999: 54). Growers in California and throughout the Southwest had been pressing for guestworker program with Mexico since the outbreak of World War II. Mobilization for the war had suddenly revved up industrial growth in US cities and had drawn unskilled farmworkers from harsh, poorly remunerated work in the fields, to production lines in the nation’s rapidly expanding heavy industries, especially those that were critical for national defense. As a result, US agribusiness faced a labor shortage that was turning increasingly acute, even as the demand for grains and vegetables soared because of the war effort. Stopgap measures-- including shortening the school year, recruiting the mentally ill, closing businesses during harvest periods, and after April 1942, conscripting Japanese and Japanese-American workers forcibly held in US internment camps – proved insufficient (Gamboa 1990; Driscoll 1999: 52; Galarza 1964). Growers lobbied the US government hard, threatening food scarcity as crops went unharvested and demanding relief from labor shortages they viewed as generated by government policy, as the US entered WWII. For several years, the US government had resisted pressure from growers out of a concern that the introduction of temporary foreign

labor would undermine working conditions for domestic farmhands. But early in 1942, the government yielded to growers' demands and created a commission to explore the possibility. (Calavita 1992; Galarza 1964)

In response to US overtures about a guestworker program, Mexican president Avila Camacho set up an interdepartmental committee which he directed "to study the various aspects of the migration of braceros" (Secretary of Labor, Mexico, 1946, qtd. in Galarza 1964: 47). The Mexican government had a series of grave reservations about entering into a guestworker program with the US. These were based on Mexico's previous experience with an informal bracero program with its northern neighbor at the close of the First World War (Garcia 1980; Driscoll 1999). Faced with shortages in the U.S. agriculture sector, the Wilson administration unilaterally repealed portions of the Immigration Act then in effect to allow for the large scale immigration of Mexicans, many of whom headed north fleeing the violence of the Mexican Revolution and later, of the Cristero Wars. U.S. growers, along with railroad, mining, and other industrial sectors, sent legions of labor recruiters south to Mexico to try and fill their labor needs. The large-scale recruitment of Mexican workers depleted labor markets in key sectors of Mexico's economy, most notably agriculture and mining. The Mexican government, newly installed and ill-prepared for such a mass exodus of labor, attempted unsuccessfully to control emigration. Beginning with the Madero administration in 1910, the Mexican national government instated various programs to attract braceros back to Mexico and integrate them into programs for agricultural development (Alanis 2004; Driscoll 1999: 41-46). Mexican state and municipal governments, as well as local consulates in the US, also tried myriad strategies to slow or reverse emigration, ranging from a requirement – unheeded – that labor recruiters post a \$1000 bond for each worker contracted in the state of Sonora, to a patriotic plea published in a Spanish language newspaper in El Paso urging miners to return to their jobs in Northern Mexico (Driscoll 1999: 43-44). Desperate at the injurious labor shortfalls that the bracero program caused in Mexico, the Carranza administration passed a law in 1917 that made it illegal for Mexicans to emigrate without a contract in hand that guaranteed certain wages level and working conditions (Driscoll 1999: 41-46; Alanis 1999). The law was widely

disregarded, and Mexico continued to hemorrhage workers in large numbers until the Great Depression. (Alanis 1999; Garcia 1980)

After 1929, agricultural and mining output in the United States fell drastically (more than by 50 percent by some accounts – see Cross et al 1981: 13), and the United States’ aggressive poaching of Mexican workers was completely reversed. Nativist opposition to Mexican workers flared¹⁶, and Mexico was soon dealing with a massive influx of returning migrants. Between 1929 and 1933, the U.S. authorities sent 400,000 braceros and their families back to Mexico. Many more returned of their own accord. As a rule, the migrants returned under very difficult conditions, often penniless and many of them having been subjected to zealous and bruising deportation sweeps. The Mexican government was saddled with the costs of transporting ten of thousands of indigent workers back to their communities of origin in northern and central Mexico. The returning migrants glutted local labor markets: in the core migrant sending region of Mexico, labor market swelled by 10 percent in a few short years. Many returning migrants, faced with perilously worsening conditions in the rural areas to which they returned, continued on to urban centers, contributing to a growing underclass bloating the already ruthless urban labor markets: between 1930 and 1940, for example, 250,000 emigrants, settled permanently in Mexico city (Cross et al 1981: 14). (Alanis 1999; Driscoll 1999: 46-48; Garcia 1980: 20-23; Gonzalez 1999: 78-83; Lipshultz 1962).

In addition to the apprehensions that stemmed from Mexico’s grievances with the first bracero program, several departments in the Mexican government raised the concern that a large scale guestworker program with the United States would undermine Mexico’s agriculture sector. The Camacho administration made agricultural expansion a cornerstone of its economic growth policy. Since the early 1930s, the government of Mexico had already begun to make significant public investment in agriculture. Until 1940, however, the costs of implemented large-scale land reform and implementing the

¹⁶ See Lipshutz 1962 for the variety of expressions of this sentiment. Lipshutz notes that U.S. growers drew on racial discourse to counter moves to deport Mexican agricultural laborers, arguing that because they were of “inferior racial stock,” Mexican immigrants posed no threat to domestic workers. Ralph Taylor, Executive Secretary of the Agricultural Legislative Committee of California, for example, told the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization in 1930 that “[t]he Mexican, [sic] does not have this ambition, to get ahead and consequently, is a ...desirable person to have around, for he will work for other people. He is not ambitious, either to own land, to control local, state, or national policies, or to displace Americans in those spheres of life where they want to work” (qtd. in Lipshutz 1962: 11).

ejido system represented the lion's share of these expenditures, although the state also established foundational institutions tailored to agricultural production (like agricultural development banks). With Camacho's ascendance to the presidency, the new administration shifted its emphasis from land redistribution to the development large-scale commercial agriculture. Agricultural production was emphasized as a means to subsidize Mexico's industrial modernization. Large-scale agribusiness would supply new industrial centers in urban areas with low-priced staples, but more importantly, agricultural exports would provide Mexico with the foreign exchange to import necessary inputs for industrialization. In keeping with this new vision, the state made important capital investments, primarily in irrigation and related infrastructure, that would benefit large landowners, concentrated in the north of the country. It also promulgated a variety of technological advancements in seeds and fertilizers, focusing its extension services and agricultural credit on border enterprise agriculture. (Levy et al. 1983: 139-142; Cardenas 1996: 23-85; Cross et al. 1981; World Bank 1953: 19-37).

Given the strategic importance planned for agriculture in Mexico, Camacho's Secretary of Agriculture, Marte Rodolfo Gomez, was staunchly against the implementation of a bracero program. He was convinced that the guestworker program would tax labor markets in the north of country, drawing dangerously large numbers of workers across the border. A quorum of officials in other government department's allied themselves with Gomez, among them Miguel Aleman, Secretary of Government, who had stated that "the rightful place for Mexican labor at home" (qtd. in Garcia 1980: 22). This caused a stalemate that obstructed negotiations over the guestworkers agreement for a while. According to a dispatch from the U.S. ambassador in Mexico at the time, Camacho was forced to intervene, and press upon the statesman just how critical to Mexico's interests was cooperation with the United States during the world war. (Driscoll 1999:68; Garcia 1980: 20-23)

Faced with the prospect of a second bracero program, the Mexican government sought both to prevent the problems caused by its the first experience and to protect its domestic agribusiness. The Mexican state tried to codify a series of legal mechanisms that would enable it to monitor— to "see" -- labor migration. The goal of the Mexican state was to develop policy tools to control, even limit, the flow of workers northward,

and to anticipate the repatriation of Mexican workers when they were no longer needed in order to mitigate any effect on local labor market. At the close of negotiations with the Americans in June, these controls amounted to three main stipulations included in the compact: first, that Mexican workers would only be hired to supplement and not to replace domestic workers; second, that they would be paid prevailing wages and working conditions in the sector, equal to those earned by domestic, backed by a written contract¹⁷; and third, that the United States would take pay round-trip transportation costs between recruitment centers in Mexico and migrants' place of employment. Additionally, the Mexican government insisted that Texas growers be excluded from guestworkers program because of egregious mistreatment of Mexican workers in the lone star state during the first bracero program and the subsequent mass deportation of Mexicans during the depression. The Mexican government viewed the US government as guarantor of all of these conditions, even when it was not the direct employer of the braceros¹⁸. (Calavita 1992; Galarza 1964; Driscoll 1999; Garcia 1980)

From the beginning, the Mexican government tried avoid labor shortages by maintaining administrative control over recruitment. The Ministry of Interior identified areas with surplus labor, designating the center-west of Mexico as a priority recruitment zone. For a series of geographical and political reasons, the unrest of Mexican revolution and the Cristero wars was particularly brutal in this region. It decimated profitable agricultural production in the area, reducing the impoverished and traumatized residents who chose to stay to subsistence farming, and sending thousands of others to urban

¹⁷ Erasmo Gamboa, historiographer of the bracero program in the Pacific Northwest, noted that in actual fact the contracts were meaningless because the Mexican workers recruited in the program did not understand, and therefore could not demand compliance with, the protections which they laid out. He notes that, "in spite of the fact that the contract was explained to [the bracero recruits] before they affixed their signatures, most of the men did not have a rudimentary understanding of the terms and conditions. The whole idea that a young person from a tiny community in Michoacan could comprehend the meaning... was farfetched. In reality, the workers understood little beyond the fact that they were going to work in the United States" (Gamboa 1990, as qtd. in Calavita 1992: 20).

¹⁸ This was a perspective shared at least in principle by the US government, if not in practice. President Truman's Commission on Migratory Labor specified that, "[t]he negotiation of the Mexican International Agreement is a collective bargaining situation in which the Mexican Government is the representative of the workers and the Department of State is the representative of our farm employers" (President's Commission on Migratory Labor, 1951, qtd. in Calavita 1992: 18). Additionally, during the war, bracero contracts were government-to-government; when the United States unilaterally changed that provision in 1947 to make bracero contract grower-to-worker, the Mexico perceived it as a grave affront. The change severely curtailed the Mexican government's ability to control who migrated: Mexican authorities lost control over the numbers, skill level, and geographical origin of workers. (Calavita 1992; Cross et al. 1981).

centers in search of employment. To remedy the resulting rural-urban migration, the Mexican government allotted more than 50 percent of its bracero permits to the states of Durango, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacan, San Luis Potosi, and Zacatecas, which together only comprised 25 percent of Mexico's total population (Sandos et al. 1983: 44). The Ministry of Interior assigned quotas to the state governments, who would then parcel them out to various municipalities. Local magistrates then issued *permisos*- emigration permits -- to potential braceros, certifying that the laborers met the necessary requirements to qualify: they were unskilled, landless, and performed no vital function in the local economy. (Driscoll 1999:85; Cross et al. 1981:37; Garcia 1980: 18-63).

The Mexican government also insisted that recruitment centers be located near future braceros' places of residence in the center and center-west of the country. U.S. growers, responsible under the bracero agreement for the costs of transporting workers from the recruitment centers to their farms and back, resisted the Mexican demands. A compromise solution was reached during the initial bilateral negotiations over the program design; it allowed for recruitment centers in central as well as in northwestern Mexico. Over the duration of the bracero program, this compromise, along with numerous other provisions in the agreement, would be revised several times over, each time drawing the staging arena for recruitment closer to the border, each time favoring U.S. agribusiness and industry over the interests of Mexico and its workers. (Calavita 1992; Garcia 1980: 18-63; Galarza 1964).

Problems with the Bracero program

The guarantees that Mexico negotiated with the US and the administrative controls it maintained over recruitment proved insufficient right from the start of the guestworker program. Very quickly, Mexico was confronted with the same labor shortages and social dislocations caused by the first bracero program. As early as 1944, Mexico was struggling to fill labor demands from the US that in a year and half had already amounted to well over 100,000 workers for agriculture and for railroads¹⁹. Local labor markets in the states to which the Mexican government directed recruiters –

¹⁹ Under a short lived bracero program (1943-1945) for railroad track construction and maintenance—see Driscoll 1999.

amongst the most impoverished, with the highest levels of unemployment in the country (see Cross et al. 1981) --were rapidly depleted, and offices of the U.S. War Manpower Commission (WMC) in Mexico reported they were falling far short of meeting their targets for labor recruitment. In January 1945, for instance, the WMC noted that in the state of Zacatecas alone, 6,000 slots for the railroad bracero program had gone unfilled (Driscoll 1999: 82). The United States government unilateral decision to include Texas agri-business in the bracero program in 1943 exacerbated Mexican labor shortages: after California, Texas growers registered the largest demand for Mexican labor (Calavita 1992).

During World War II, the U.S., dependent on Mexican labor at the height of the war effort, negotiated with the Mexican government to address the southern nation's concerns about labor shortages, about recruitment centers, and about working conditions for braceros on US farms, suggesting all the while that the bracero program be viewed not just as a vehicle for labor exchange but also as a concrete symbol of Mexico's allegiance to the Allies (Driscoll 1999). After World War II came to an end and with it, the labor emergency that it generated, the U.S. government, under formidable pressure from an increasingly powerful agri-business lobby, not only extended the bracero program but significantly *augmented* the number of workers contracted under its terms. Yearly Bracero recruits went from 50,000 in 1945 to 110,000 in 1949 to 310,000 in 1954 to almost 500,000 at its peak in 1956 (Congressional Research Service, 1980 cited in Calavita 1992: 218—see Table 2.8 for more detailed information on numbers of braceros contracted yearly, 1942-1964).

Furthermore, various departments in the U.S. government engaged in actions that made it unambiguously clear that the United States was prepared and able to conduct the bracero program unilaterally if Mexico refused to cooperate. On two infamous instances, in 1947 and again in 1954, when Mexico suspended its participation in the bracero program because it objected to U.S. recruitment practices and falling wages rates for farmworkers, the US Immigration and Naturalization Service, in clear violation of the terms of the guestworker agreement, unilaterally opened the border to thousands of Mexican workers who had amassed at border checkpoints in response to U.S. advertisement of the event. A mere five months after the 1954 incident, the US Attorney

General's office launched Operation Wetback, a massive deportation sweep against undocumented immigrants, ten of thousands of which US agriculture had employed with impunity; the Operation, by the INS's own estimate, sent over a million Mexicans back over the border within a matter of months (see Garcia 1980 for a detailed account of Operation Wetback). (Calavita 1992; Galarza 1964)

Table 2.8: Mexican Foreign Workers Admitted Under the Bracero Program—1942-1964

Year	Number Admitted	Year	Number Admitted
1942	4,203	1954	309,033
1943	52,098	1955	398,650
1944	62,170	1956	445,197
1945	49,454	1957	436,049
1946	32,043	1958	432,857
1947	19,632	1959	437,643
1948	35,345	1960	315,846
1949	107,000	1961	391,240
1950	67,600	1962	194,978
1951	192,000	1963	186,865
1952	197,100	1964	177,736
1953	201,380		

Source: Congressional Research Service, 1980. In Calavita 1992: 218

Moreover, as the bracero program evolved, the US government instituted a series of provisions, including, among other measures, special entry cards²⁰, to attract and capture skilled Mexican laborers for U.S. growers. The Mexican government resisted the new policies at various level of its bureaucracy, creating sabotaging delays at recruitment centers when the central government was unable to achieve the repeal of the card system

²⁰ The two most significant of these measures were the I-100 card and the Specials permit issued to braceros. The I-100 card, instituted in 1954 after Operation Wetback, certified that the bracero was skilled or performed his job in a manner that was “satisfactory,” meaning that they had completed their contract without deserting, without “agitating,” and in a manner that the employer considered adequate. The “specials” card were versions of the I-100 that indicated that the worker had a special skill. Eventually, the system evolved to permit growers to submit lists of workers they wanted to rehire, a move that was in violation of the bracero agreements with Mexico and that undermined the Mexican government’s desire that braceros should only work in the US for one turn. Workers who were perceived as troublemakers or who had deserted were not issued I-100s, effectively blacklisting them and making their return to the US almost impossible under the bracero system. This measures tied workers contractually to their employers. Growers’ main complaint about undocumented immigrants is that they would desert their jobs if the conditions were too arduous or the pay insufficient. Combined with a INS campaign to arrest, deport, and blacklist “skips” – workers who had left the farm to which they were contracted – this system reduced braceros to the status on bonded workers who could not even “vote with their feet.” (Calavita 1992: 87-100).

(Calavita 1992: 94). In addition to abrogating US agreements with Mexico and reducing its negotiating position in the process, the U.S. government actions also undermined the bargaining power of Mexican workers. Constantly at risk of deportation either for work permit inconsistencies or for accusations that they were agitators in a climate of anti-communist hysteria, workers were unable to challenge falling wage rates already well below those paid domestic workers (especially in Texas – see Galarza 1964) and working conditions. One mid-western grower, addressing a Committee of Bishops in 1960, summed up the position to which the Bracero program had reduced Mexico and Mexican workers: “We used to buy our slaves,” he said, “now we rent them from the government” (qtd in Garcia 1980: 230). (Calavita 1992; Galarza 1964)

The “Mexican Miracle” in agriculture and its undoing

As Camacho’s Secretary of Agriculture had predicted at the start of the bracero program, the bullying practices of large-scale labor recruitment by U.S. growers, with the U.S. government acting as their proxy, eventually undermined agribusiness south of the border. However, the effects of the program were not straightforward or immediate. U.S. growers’ heavy use of cheap Mexican labor – “In many areas this valuable labor supply is no longer supplemental, it is the labor supply” reported the San Diego Farmer’s Association (qtd. in Galarza 1965: 235) -- conjugated with changing Mexican state policy toward commercial agriculture to weaken that sector of the Mexican economy. Specifically, Mexico’s massive provision of workers to the US, all of whom were politically marginalized and legally compelled to work at below market rates, amounted to a subsidy of U.S. agribusiness, a sector with which Mexican commercial agriculture was in direct competition (Cardenas 1996). Combined with redirection of public investment toward industry, the large-scale export of Mexican workers helped drive the southern nation’s commercial agriculture out of business and marginalized it as a source of foreign exchange.

Unprecedented levels of public investment in irrigation and new agricultural technologies throughout the 1940s and early 1950s paid off handsomely as Mexico experienced a remarkable Green Revolution after the war. From 1947 through 1958, Mexican agriculture registered growth rates between 7 and 10 percent, equal to the

highest rates in the world (Cross et al 1981: 18). The production of Mexico's main staple – maize – increased by over 500 percent between 1940 and 1970 (Cross et al 1981: 18). Agricultural exports also soared, growing at a rate of 9.7 percent between 1951 and 1956, and constituting a full 50 percent of all Mexican exports for 1956 (Cardenas 1996: 74). Outside observers labeled the geometric growth in agricultural output “the Mexican Miracle” (Cross et al. 1981:20).

The agricultural policies that spurred such impressive rates of agricultural growth allowed Mexico to maintain them despite the United States intensive recruitment of Mexican labor. This is because the policies favored large land owners at the border at the expense of agricultural investment in the rural areas in the center and center-west, the source regions that the Mexican state had designated for the bracero program (Levy et al. 1983: 139-143). In fact, the central band of Mexico was subject to significant policy neglect and mismanagement, compounding the economic dislocation and low agricultural productivity that were already that region's legacy (Cross et al. 1981). With economic prospects so poor in the migrant sending area and population growth so rapid – Mexico grew by 250 percent between 1940 and 1970 (Cross et al. 1981), large numbers of laborers from the region migrated to border states in search of work, often as a first stage in a journey to cross into the US illegally. For at least three out of the six states the Mexican government privileged in the allocation of bracero permits, migration to the Mexican border region rivaled or superceded migration across the border (Cross et al. 1981: 33; see Table 2.9). Admittedly, many of the migrants traveled to work in the north of Mexico as an intermediate stage on their way to U.S. farms (see Zabin 1995 for a contemporary analysis of “stage migration”), and the Mexican authorities struggled to contain the exodus of skilled laborers across the border.

The technological improvements coupled with heavy reliance on cheap labor on both sides of the border raised production to levels so high that agricultural markets were periodically glutted with excess products. Both the U.S. and Mexican governments offered some form of prices guarantees to offset the variations in product prices that this excess production caused (Salazar 1998a). However, as long-time observer of the industry, Enersto Galarza reports U.S. growers found these price guarantees to be insufficient and put “in force a system of managed production based on marketing orders

which permitted the administered destruction of food...[at] a drop in the market price below the incentive for the producer.” (1964: 240) (Galarza 1964; Cardenas 1996)

Table 2.9: Percent of Total Out-Migration from Designated Bracero Sending States to Border States, 1960

Sending State	Percent to Border States
Durango	64.7
Guanajuato	18.3
Michoacán	14.6
Jalisco	29.6
San Luis Potosí	64.1
Zacatecas	48.1

Source: México, VII Censo General, 1960. *In* Cross et al. 1981: 33

This overproduction by U.S. and Mexican growers, who were in direct competition with each other for certain goods, helped bring an end to the “Mexican Miracle.” In 1958, U.S. cotton growers, who ranked a close second in the use of bracero labor after tomato growers, experienced a banner year. They flooded international markets with their products, causing prices to plummet, while at the same time, successfully lobbying the US government to institute a series of protective trade barriers to safeguard the US market from foreign competition. Mexican growers, who also did well that year, suffered badly from the international drop in prices and their exclusion from U.S. markets. The turn of events that hobbled Mexican cotton production for export was repeated for other agricultural products, although in less dramatic form, that year and in the years immediately following. The cumulative impact, however, was disastrous. The rate of annual agricultural growth dropped from almost 10 percent in 1958 to a little over 2 percent in 1959, a sluggish rate above which it was unable to rise for the next decade. Furthermore, by 1961, Mexico’s agricultural exports had dropped by half and would never recuperate (Nacional Financiera and Banco de Mexico, cited in Cardenas 1994: 33, 73-77). Agricultural exports could no longer be relied upon as a lucrative source of foreign exchange. (Cardenas 1996; Cross et al. 1981)

Mexico’s agricultural crisis caused the trajectories of Mexico and U.S. agribusiness to diverge, such that, within a short time, they were no longer competing directly with one another. Mexico’s economic planners modified their growth policy to

favor industry more heavily, and the state diverted funds and institutional resources away from agribusiness while at the same time imposing a series of distortionary price controls on growers (Cardenas 1996: 23-85). In one indication of this policy shift, the proportion of direct state investment in agriculture dropped from 23 percent in 1949 to less than 10 percent in the early 1960s (Nacional Financiera cited in Cardenas 1996: 68). As a result, Mexican agriculture began a steady decline, marked by decapitalization and technological degradation, which ultimately transformed Mexico from a net exporter of food to a significant importer of agricultural products, especially staples like maize and beans (Cross et al. 1981). (Cardenas 1996; Cross et al. 1981).

Meanwhile, U.S. growers embarked on the aggressive mechanization of agricultural production, devising machines able to complete operations, like harvesting and sorting. In 1951, only 8 percent of cotton, for example, was harvested by machine. By 1964, a full 78 percent of the cotton crop was mechanically harvested, producing a “radical transformation,” as one analyst termed it, in the agricultural system of production and in the organization of farm labor (Calavita 1992: 143).

The transformation of both U.S. and Mexican agribusiness changed the function of braceros in agriculture on both sides of the border, and revised the significance of the bracero program for the Mexican economy more generally. No matter how low bracero wages were, US growers found machines to be more cost effective, and once they had mechanized important aspects of agricultural production, their demand for bracero workers dropped. As their dependence on braceros declined, so did their willingness to expend the rising political capital necessary to get the program renewed in the face of mounting political opposition. (Calavita 1992: 1943-1944; Cross et al. 1981: 52-59).

In Mexico, the bracero program came to represent an increasingly vital safety valve for growing numbers of unemployed or underemployed rural workers. From a concern that the program would siphon off critical labor supplies from Mexico’s vital agricultural sector, the Mexican government moved to a reliance on the program as a source of livelihood for hundreds of thousands of rural residents, and a source of political stability for a regime struggling to cope with rapid rural-to-urban migration and the sharp rise in urban poverty that it presaged (Creagan 1965). Increasingly invested in the continuation of the bracero program, the Mexican government watched as the U.S.

government dismantled it, powerless to change the course of US policy. (Cross et al 1981:59-73)

From bracero program to bracero networks

Mexican emigration dipped somewhat after the termination of the bracero program, but by the end of the 1960s, it had already returned to previous levels (Calavita 1992; Cross et al. 1981; Samora 1969). For all practical purposes, the end of the bracero program had had little impact on migration flows from Mexico, with one important caveat. Instead of entering under the terms of a guestworker program officially managed by both the U.S. and Mexican government, with a bracero contract in hand, Mexican workers now entered of their own accord, both with or without documentation.

Those who entered with documentation crossed the border as so-called “commuter aliens”—that is, immigrants who had at one point in time received a permanent residence card but lived in Mexico and commuted to the US on a seasonal basis to work in agriculture or other industry. The U.S. Department of Labor estimated in 1969 that “commuter aliens” represented a significant proportion of the agricultural labor force in California and the Southwest, filling 85 percent the agricultural jobs in California’s Imperial valley alone (cited in Calavita 1992: 154). However large the numbers of “commuter aliens” were by the late 1960s, they were far surpassed by the numbers of Mexican workers who entered the US illegally (Valdes 1995). While it is, by definition, impossible to accurately tabulate undocumented migration, all observers of Mexican immigration to the US agree that illegal entry into the US rose dramatically after the end of the bracero program, and that the total number of Mexican immigrants in the United States (including permanent and seasonal) actually increased (Valdes 1995; Cross et al. 1981; Calavita 1992; Samora 1969). To explain the acceleration of Mexican immigration, analysts cite the widening economic disparity between the two nations, and the fact that migrants, no longer bound to agribusiness employers by contract, moved into urban labor markets and other economic sectors. (Valdes 1995; Cross et al. 1981; Calavita 1992; Samora 1969).

Regardless of the new economic realities and the new industrial labor demand that fueled Mexican migration after 1965, its foundation was the bracero program. During the

two decades of the bracero program's existence, local economies in Mexico's sending regions organized themselves around the seasonal work migration of a large segment of its workforce (Mines 1981). Cross and Sandos's survey of ethnographic case studies of villages in center-west of Mexico provides a powerful, if impressionistic, view of just how significantly the bracero program had penetrated rural economies in sending areas:

In Tzintzuntzan, Michoacán, 50 percent of the adult males had been to the U.S. by 1960, many of them on 10 or more occasions. Other village studies yielded similar results: "most able-bodied men village men" from Las Animas, Zacatecas, participated; San José de Gracia in Michoacán frequently sent 20 percent of its workforce in a given year; by 1962 Huecorio, Michoacán had seen a third of its adult male population obtain work experience in "the North"; an anonymous village in West Central Mexico had sent 53 percent of its male laborers, and 34 percent of the households in another unnamed community in Michoacán had a family member who had worked as a bracero. A field study of nine villages in Jalisco found that "just about everybody went" (Cross et al. 1981: 43).

The extensive experience of Mexican rural laborers – as well as of the communities to which they belonged -- with the bracero program provided a solid basis for continued migration. Through their involvement with the guestworker program, braceros had acquired information about how to cross the border, about labor markets and job opportunities, and about how to cope in and with U.S. employment arrangements (Mines 1981; Cross et al. 1981; Calavita 1992; Samora 1969). Additionally, thanks to their experience in the U.S. and as well as their relationship with Mexican emigrants who chose to settle north of the border, braceros could access social networks that facilitated their entry into the U.S., into specific labor markets, and often, into specific farms or firms. Through community networks and family ties, braceros' knowledge and social capital quickly became communal property (Mines 1981; Samora 1969). Thus, even after the bracero program had ended, it continued to provide the framework for Mexican emigration. Sampling studies of undocumented migration conducted between 1969 and 1978 consistently bear this out: an average of 50 percent of the undocumented migrants surveyed came from the six states that the Mexican government have designated as priority sending areas-- and to which it had allocated 50 percent of all bracero contracts! (cited in Cross et al. 1981: 59; Sandos et al. 1983; see Table 2.10)

Table 2.10: Estimated Undocumented Immigration from Designated Sending States, 1969-1978

Migration to U.S.	1969	1975	1977	1978
Percent from sending states	48.2	48.5	46.4	51.2

Source: 1969—Samora 1969; 1975—North and Houstoun; 1977—CENEIT; 1978—CENEIT. All in Cross et al. 1981: 59

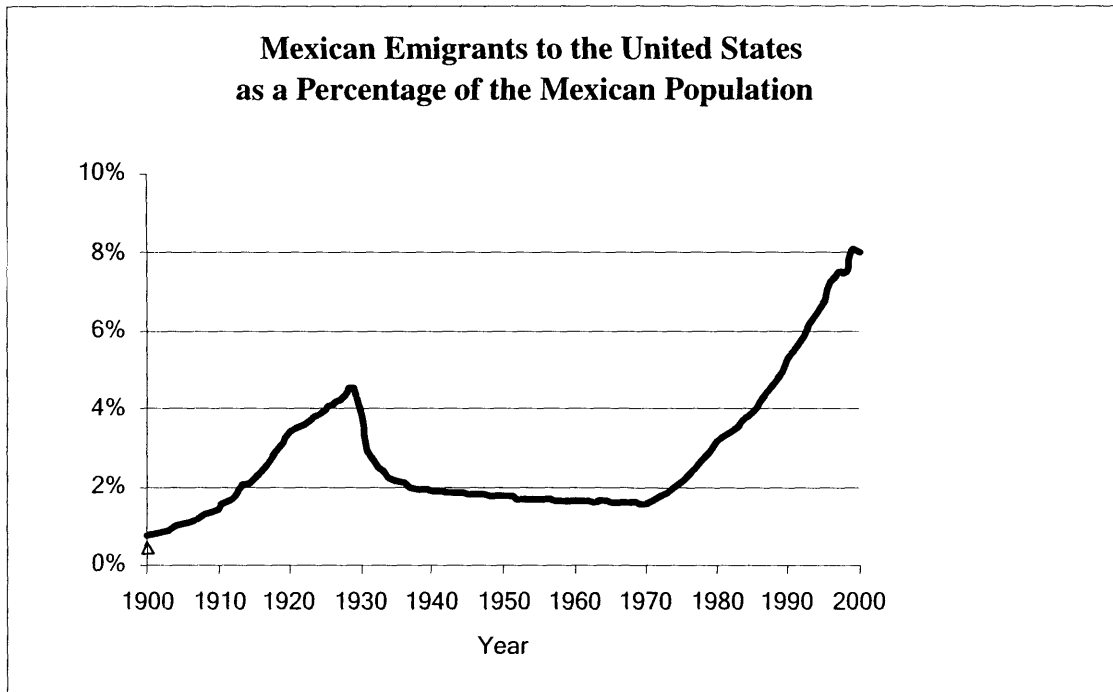
For the Mexican government, this informal dynamic of labor migration offers several advantages over the formal guestworker program that had been in place for the previous two decades. Under the economic conditions emerging in Mexico in the late 1960s through the liquidity crisis of 1982, Mexican emigration became an important strategy for the management of economic downturns (Cardenas 1996). Under the informal system, emigration did more than merely continue apace: it increased dramatically (see Graphic 2.1). The practice of seasonal and personal migration provided employment and income to local communities in some of Mexico's poorest (and most neglected) rural areas, and it curbed the rural-to-urban migration that was still swelling Mexico's main urban centers²¹ (Cross et al. 1981). With the decline of Mexican agribusiness, the Mexican government no longer needed to protect the labor pools that supplied commercial agricultural production from U.S. poaching.

Released from administrative engagement with the US government over the use of bracero labor, the Mexican government was no longer subject to the capricious strong-arm tactics of its northern neighbor. No longer was the Mexican government compelled by international agreement to facilitate U.S. recruitment of Mexican labor, and to respond to the sudden gargantuan increase in braceros requested; no longer was it responsible for petitioning the US government when the latter party did not enforce the wage and working conditions stipulated in the bracero agreement. Furthermore, with U.S. agriculture, and to a growing extent U.S. industry, dependent on Mexican migrant labor, the Mexican government could rest easy that a large-scale operation to deport massive

²¹ In a summary of a 1980 briefing session sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation on the topic Mexican emigration, and attended by U.S. and Mexican government officials, representatives of lobby groups, including Chicano organizations, and academics, Ann Craig reports that, "[f]or the Mexican policymakers and politicians, the more general problem of rural-to-urban migration within Mexico has been a higher-priority concern than emigration to the U.S., because the results of the internal migratory flow are both more visible and more politically and economically costly to Mexico" (1981:19).

numbers of migrants workers, like Operation Wetback, that had imposed significant economic costs and political disruption on Mexico, was unlikely (Calavita 1992; Jenkins 1978).

Graphic 2.1: Mexican Emigrants to the United States as a Percentage of Mexican Population



Source: Fitzgerald, *forthcoming*. Calculated from decennial U.S. and Mexican Census data taken from the Mexican Migration Project NATLHIST file 2002. mmp.opr.princeton.edu.

The perpetuation of this informal system of labor export depended on its administrative invisibility. For almost two decades after the formal termination of the bracero program, the Mexican government purposefully avoided addressing the considerable emigration of its citizens north across the border (Santamaria 1994). The laws Mexico did have on the books to limit undocumented emigration – like a prohibition against crossing the border without proper documentation – were rarely, if ever, enforced (Samora 1969). Furthermore, the Mexican government periodically reiterated the freedom of Mexicans to circulate within their country, including up to the border (Craig 1981). Furthermore, in a tacit agreement that suited both the Mexican authorities and

U.S. business interests, rarely did either government bring up the subject of migration – particularly undocumented migration -- in bilateral negotiations (Craig 1981; Santamaria 1994). Moreover, when pressed by U.S. organized labor as well as Chicano groups to address the question of large-scale Mexican emigration, the Mexican government stalled by ordering a series of studies on the question, beginning in the late 1970s (Craig 1981). Lastly, the Mexican government avoided engaging with Mexican migrant organizations, which were generally weak and informal anyway, for years after the end of the bracero program. If anything, the Mexican authorities dialogued, albeit often reluctantly, with Mexican-American or Chicano organizations, which they viewed as representing Americans of Mexican origin, rather than Mexicans (Garcia-Acevedo 1996; de la Garza 1980). For the informal Mexican emigration dynamic to continue and thrive, Mexican authorities kept it invisible: through their administrative actions, they acted as if Mexican emigrants did not exist.

Conclusion

The shift in emigration policy that both Morocco and Mexico experienced in 1963 would determine how the states both nations would choose to “see” emigrants. They both exercised a form of “discretionary state seeing”: they deployed administrative measures to make certain aspects of emigration visible and to keep others invisible, to their own state apparatuses as well as those of the countries that would receive their nationals. What the states of Morocco and Mexico chose to make conspicuous and what they chose leave undetected depended on the function the state slotted to emigrants in national economic development. It also depended just as heavily on the political significance of emigration, at home as well abroad. For the government of both nations, emigration in 1963 represented an economic lifeline and a political safety valve. To preserve it, Morocco instituted a series of government interventions to keep the phenomenon visible in all of its detail, while Mexico deliberately refrained from acknowledging it.

How the governments of Morocco and Mexico chose to “see” – or “not see” – emigrants set the stage for how it would engage with them over the next four decades. It determined whether the state was able to perceive them as interlocutors that could be

drawn into conversations of the sort that would eventually produce institutions that enable emigrants to fulfill the economic and political potential both states had just begun to glimpse in the 1960s, or whether, on the contrary, migrants would have to make themselves visible to a stubbornly myopic state.

Morocco
Practicing Interpretation

Chapter 3

Relational awareness and controlling relationships:

Moroccan state engagement with Moroccan emigrants, 1969-1996

Introduction

In 1963, Morocco began ratifying migrant worker agreements with several European countries and soon began exporting labor en masse. To send labor, however, the Moroccan state first had to produce it. In conjunction with European labor recruiters, the Moroccan state set about transforming largely non-Arab Berber peasants that were firmly rooted in their communities into Moroccan workers for export – generic, homogenized and dislocated. Drawing heavily on areas of Morocco that confronted the state with the twin challenges of high unemployment and political opposition to the King’s often tenuous but brutal rule (see Chapter 2), the state divorced landless peasants from their communities and remade them into a homogenized migrant workforce. Through a series of practices conducted by the Moroccan state as well as European recruiting agencies operating in the Kingdom, men who had been heads of families, members of communities, and kinsmen in Berber – or Amazight—tribes were reduced to commodities. They were recast as labor inputs that had certain qualities that were attractive to European employers: workers selected to man Europe’s taylorist production lines, to descend into its mines, and to harvest its crops had to be young, strong, healthy, and docile. At recruiting centers set up primarily in the country’s rural areas, candidates for migration were subject to invasive and dehumanized medical exams (“they treated us like livestock” (Interview, Paris, February 2004)), they were tagged and identified with a contract (“I could barely read, I wasn’t even sure what I was signing, they told me, just hold onto to it, and follow instructions, and there will be work” (Interview, Paris, February 2004)), transported to Casablanca or Tangier for final clearance and shipped directly to their place of employment in Europe (“I was sick the whole way, but there was no rest. Bus, boat, cattle car, bus. ...[When we arrived], they threw us out in front of the factory barracks in the middle of the night (Interview, Paris, February 2004).) Once on European soil, the transformation was complete: men from villages in the Moroccan Souss, the northern Rif Mountains, and the plains near Meknes, became Moroccan labor.

They were undifferentiated from the rest of the immigrant proletariat that was powering the rapid European economic expansion of the 1960s and 1970s in all respects except one: European employers singled out Moroccan labor as a source of manpower they “appreciate[d] very much” (“Le Soir,” January 1964, qtd. in Belguendouz 1998: 47) for being “just as capable but more malleable” than migrant labor from other sources (Belgian Consul General in Casablanca, 1963, qtd. in Frennet 2004: 220).

In severing migrant workers’ ties to their communities, the Moroccan state was also creating a workforce for its own economy. Even though Moroccan workers were sent abroad, the state viewed them as an integral part of Moroccan economic production. As the Moroccan government specified in its National Development Plan for 1973-1977, state-assisted Moroccan labor emigration was “the equivalent, in economic terms, of the export of a product produced in Morocco” (qtd. in Belguendouz 1998: 39). Moroccan workers provided foreign currency and investment capital through their remittances, and with their eventual return, anticipated in state economic projections, they would contribute to “the constitutions of a larger group of nationals having acquired the professional qualifications and attitudes favorable to entrepreneurship and economic development” (National Development Plan 1968-1972, qtd. in Belguendouz 1998: 34).

The perspective of the Moroccan state was in keeping with the prescriptions of the development theory of the 1960s and 1970s. According to development doctrines at the time, articulated most lucidly by Rostow in his treatise, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, and embraced by the World Bank and governments around the world, a division of labor had to be engineered in economies in order for them to expand, with “some men in society...[assuming] the risks of leadership” in industry, with others providing capital “to back the innovating entrepreneurs,” and the rest accepting the labor of production and their place on the factory floor (Rostow, qtd. in Saldana Portillo 2003: 30). The role of government, in this view, was to coordinate this division of labor, and to assign economic functions if necessary to various segments of society. The Moroccan government, having inherited the bureaucratic culture of meticulous state planning from the French colonial administration, approached development planning with notable diligence. Its periodic National Development Plans specified detailed projections for levels of production for various sectors, for employment created, and for socio-economic targets in areas like

health and education that the economy, like a well-oiled and predictable machine, would attain. Moreover, Morocco's National Development Plans did not merely lay out goals and directions; in the Kingdom, they had the status of binding law (World Bank 1981).

Within the context of this framework, Moroccan migrants were simply and significantly fulfilling a task that the Moroccan government had defined in the division of labor it laid out in its planning for economic growth. Through migration, the Moroccan state sought to transform Moroccan peasants and Amazight tribesmen, with strong cultural and political ties to their communities of origin, into a workforce that served as a mechanism in a system designed to promote national economic development. Furthermore, the Moroccan state defined the precise function that migrants would fulfill in the economy, as well as the magnitude of their impact, in its succession of Five Year Development Plans (National Development Plans, 1968-1972 through 2000-2004; Secretariat of Planning and Regional Development, Kingdom of Morocco).

Because of the role that the state envisioned migration playing in the economy, the Moroccan state was fastidious in its monitoring and control of emigration, tracking and calibrating migrant recruitment, migrant employment and wages, and migrant return. The Moroccan state kept its sights trained on labor emigration, and on emigrants, deploying a series of state practices to keep migrants visible to the state (See Chapter 2). However, the Moroccan state quickly discovered that "seeing" was not the same as "apprehending." The elaborate accounting systems the state had devised to tabulate labor migration and measure some of its effects were not sufficient to keep Moroccan emigrants – and their economic activity—tethered to the Moroccan economy. The Moroccan state soon determined that it had to create institutions to enroll emigrants' contribution to Morocco's economic development. It had to establish structures to tie emigrants to Morocco and to enforce their participation in the economic system the state had designed to manufacture the Kingdom's economic prosperity.

While the Moroccan government had a relatively precise record of Moroccan emigration and of the labor that Moroccan emigrants performing in European economies, it had very little sense of how to create institutions to tie emigrants to the role it had defined for them in the Moroccan economy. In order to discover how to construct the necessary structures, the Moroccan government engaged with Moroccan emigrants. In

this chapter, I argue that this engagement created a space for on-going interpretive conversations in which state actors and emigrants generated a series of mutually intelligible – but not always mutually agreed upon – insights that revised the state’s view of the role that emigrants and their resources could play in Morocco’s economic development, expanding that role and re-inventing in numerous and unforeseen ways. Furthermore, the new conceptual understandings and new relationships articulated in those conversations enabled the state to erect institutions that allowed emigrants to broaden and develop their role in determining Morocco’s economic and political trajectory.

Two conversations: relational awareness and controlling relationships

In its interactions with emigrants, the Moroccan state fostered two very distinct types of interpretive engagement: one that centered on migrant remittances and emigrants’ direct economic participation in Morocco, and the other that addressed emigrants’ status as workers. Through the first set of conversations, Moroccan state and Moroccan emigrants collaboratively elaborated advanced and subtle institutions that enabled emigrants to participate in the Moroccan economy as suppliers of capital, as consumers and eventually as investors, and compelled the state to address emigrants’ increasingly diverse and sophisticated financial needs. Through the second area of engagement, the Moroccan state tried to circumscribe emigrants’ identity as workers, and tried to contain emigrant worker mobilization. The Moroccan state engaged with emigrants to acquire the understandings about a population that was changing during its stay in Europe so that it could better control them and impose the ideal of docility on them. In the process, however, the interpretive engagement redefined state conceptions of worker identities and their political role in Morocco, and it reshaped emigrants’ political relationship to their country of origin.

These two types of interpretive engagement had different processes. In the conversations focused on financial issues the Moroccan state, and especially the organizations fostering the engagement in this area, became very adept at what Judith Jordan calls “relational awareness” (2004). Eager to glean new ideas about how to better transfer migrant resources back into the Moroccan economy, these organizations

developed the skills to keep an interpretive conversation vital and moving in new directions. They cultivated their institutional capacity not only to hold ambiguity necessary for interpretive conversations to yield insights, but also to sustain that ambiguity long enough for the engagement to offer up new understandings that would have been closed off if the institution decided on a course of action prematurely. Moreover, they developed a heightened sensitivity to relational patterns, noticing when the engagement begins to break down into disconnection and reactivity and when the conversation holds the potential for new insight. Furthermore, they acquired the ability, often tacit, to identify when to shift from an interpretive mode of engagement to analytic model of policy and institutional formulation. The interpretive conversations in this area continued seamlessly through repeated cycles of engagement, exchange, insight, and institutionalization, as migrants and the state collaboratively articulated new concepts and crafted new policies, but also as they redefined the role of both migrants and the state in their relationship to one another, and in the Moroccan economy more broadly.

Lester and Piore (2004) describe this almost intuitive capacity to nurture and sustain interpretive conversations as a skill, calling it “interpretive management.” But in this case the term “relational awareness” may be more accurate. “Interpretive management,” as Lester and Piore define it, suggests that one party plays a greater role in determining the success and sustainability of the conversations, and that the actions and skill of that party define how generative the interpretive process will be of new insight. “Relational awareness,” on the other hand, suggests that participants together constitute the conversations and together determine its longevity, its energy, and its generative capacity. The power to foster interpretation is not concentrated as implied in “interpretive management” but rather is diffuse, as those who join in the conversation, by virtue of their participation, have equal access to the skills necessary to keep a conversation going; indeed, the maintenance of an interpretive conversation depends, in this view, on multiple participants developing “relational awareness.” In the Moroccan state’s engagement with emigrants over their financial participation in the Moroccan economy, emigrants’ role in shaping and sustaining the conversations, protecting the ambiguity which made interpretation possible, and elaborating the insights as they began to emerge was just as significant as the state’s.

Unlike the financial conversations, the conversations over the status of emigrants as workers were marked by a chronic lag between the generation of insights and their institutionalization. Contrary to the assertion in current theory on interpretive conversation that the engagement requires a friendly receptiveness from participants in order to be generative of insight, the conversations the Moroccan state had with Moroccan emigrants about their political rights as workers were *highly conflictual*. As the Moroccan state engaged with emigrant workers in an effort to generate the insights needed to control them, the Moroccan migrants engaged by pushing back, and by offering competing understandings about their role in the political economy of Morocco, as well in the nations where they labored. The conflictual but engaged exchange of meaning generated new perspectives on emigrants' function in Morocco's economic development and the political power this afforded them. However, because many of these insights posed fundamental challenges to the monarchy, the Moroccan state displayed pointed reluctance to institutionalize those concepts. Only when the government recalcitrance threatened to sever its engagement over their political position as workers did the state institutionalize the insights produced. The process of interpretation advanced in jolts, and only when the crown found it politically obligatory.

Despite their differences, both streams of interpretive conversation were firmly situated in space and time. They were informed by the national, political and economic contexts in which--and across which-- they occurred. The threads of the conversation that would weave the new understandings, and the new institutions that brought emigrants into the process of Morocco's economic development, did not exist in some suspended form. Rather, they were spun by the economic and political circumstances in Morocco: by its periodic plunges into economic crisis, and the paranoid fragility of the throne as it faced the ensuing popular unrest; by the King's megalomaniac adventure in the Western Sahara, and the years of war and political repression that followed; and by the movement toward political reform that the King explored in anticipation of his son's accession to the throne. Similarly, the threads of conversation were also dyed in the ink of political and economic conditions that Moroccan emigrants faced in Europe. Their perspectives, their contributions, the multiple ways they engaged with the Moroccan state were all informed by events such as the labor mobilization in the hot summers and autumns that spreads

through Europe in 1968, by the oil shocks that brought an end to worker immigration in 1974, and by the continent's depressing de-industrialization in the 1980s and 1990s. Their engagement was also colored by many emigrants' growing rootedness in Europe, as they established families, businesses, and lives that became thoroughly transnational, and by the sense of political entitlement, guaranteed by legal right or assured through political awareness, that this gave them.

The situatedness of the conversations between the Moroccan state and Moroccan emigrants determined the significance of the exchanges they held. The interactions between the Moroccan state and its emigrant groups had meaning *because of* the context in which they occurred. The historical moment and place in which the conversations took place infused the exchanges that made them up with specific connotations that drove the conversations in a particular direction. It calibrated the urgency of with which the state engaged migrants, and with which migrants responded or resisted the state's overtures. Similarly, the situatedness of the conversations between the state and emigrants offered emigrants new possibilities to contest and resist Moroccan state control over their lives in Europe, as well as to rebuff or appropriate state attempts to define their identities as Moroccans, and as Moroccan workers in particular. In sum, the situatedness of the conversations determined the sources of power and the sources of resistance on which the participants in the exchanges could draw.

In this chapter, I trace the evolution of both streams of interpretive conversations, situated as they were in place and time. I show how the engagement over emigrants' financial participation produced innovations that still stand out as some of the most innovative in the world. In particular, I depict the interpretive process by which the Moroccan state, in collaboration with emigrants, developed a compendium of state banking services for a population that might still be considered "unbankable" today, and was thus able to channel remittance to large-scale national development projects. I also follow the twists and turns of the Moroccan state's engagement with migrants over their status as workers, and how the conversation lurched as migrants came up with new ways to resist state efforts to keep emigrant workers locked into the economic and political system the crown so determinedly enforced. Finally, I depict the relationship between the two streams of interpretive conversation. I argue that despite the Moroccan state's best

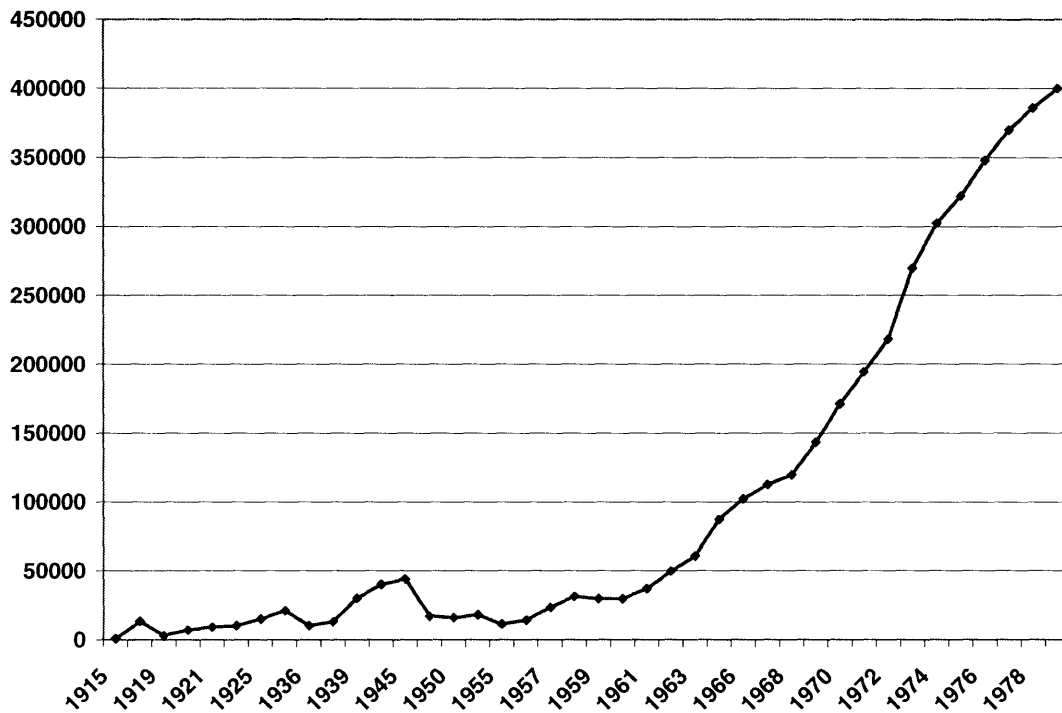
efforts to keep them separate, the political conversation, and the state agenda of maintaining political control of emigrant workers, began to damage the financial conversation. Faced with the potential economic consequences of its political policies, the Moroccan government found itself compelled to draw the two conversations together, and to bring the same level of “relational attentiveness” to interpretive processes that addressed the political economy of emigration as it did to those that considered the financial boon it represented for the Kingdom. The history of the engagement between the Moroccan state and Moroccan emigrants can be divided into three stages, and this chapter presents them in that fashion, in three sections. The first phase begins in 1963 with the signing of the guestworker conventions and ends with Europe’s closure of its borders to large-scale worker immigration in 1974. The outreach of state actors -- as well as former state actors who in the mid-1960s become the exiled opposition-- to emigrants characterized this first phase. The second phase runs from 1975 through 1989, and is marked by state attempts to control emigrants and emigrants’ strategies to resist them, and closes with the conversations about migrants’ economic role in Morocco showing signs of distress. The last phase considered in this chapter starts in 1990 and continues through the mid-1990s, and is characterized by the political challenges to the crown’s rule that the alchemy between the two streams of conversation produce.

1. Initiating Conversations: 1963-1974

By the end of February 1964, Morocco had ratified labor export agreements with France, Belgium, and West Germany. The era of state-managed export of Moroccan workers had begun. Morocco sent workers to man the production-lines of French and German heavy industry, and to labor in the coal mines of Belgium and Northern France. After a sputtering beginning during which Morocco and the labor-receiving countries set up the institutions to recruit workers and transport them to Europe (“the efficiency of the Moroccan authorities [in the matter of recruitment] is not quite up to speed” complained the Belgian ambassador to Morocco in 1963 (qtd. in Frennet 2004: 227)), Moroccan registered worker emigration began to pick up momentum in the late 1960s. Between 1969 and 1974, the stock of Moroccan workers that the Moroccan authorities had sent

abroad grew by almost 20 percent annually (Belgendouz 1987; Frennet 2004; see Graph 3.1). Morocco sent the lion’s share of its workers to France: between 1968 and 1974, the share of registered Moroccan workers in France hovered at about 65 percent, with Belgium coming in a distant second with about 15 percent of Moroccan workers (GERA 1992: 18; See Table 3.2 – please see end of chapter for comprehensive data on Moroccan emigrants).

Graph 3.1: Cumulative number of Moroccan registered emigrant workers sent abroad, 1918-1978



Registered labor emigration was amplified by unregulated flows of Moroccan “tourists,” who traveled to Europe on temporary visas and stayed to work. While definitive data on the numbers of Moroccan workers who traveled to Europe in this fashion is not available, the evidence that does exist suggests that these flows were substantial. In France, where the majority of Moroccans laborers sought work, the National Office of Immigration was granting far more immigrant worker contracts to “tourists” who had been hired on-site by local factories or mining enterprises than to

immigrants it had recruited in their countries of origin; by the early seventies, the proportion of immigrant worker contracts that the French authorities rubberstamped after the fact mushroomed to 80 percent (ONI in Tapinos 1975: 65). Similar trends were also occurring in Belgium and Germany (Frennet 2004).

These growing emigrations of Moroccan workers, whether state-sanctioned or not, were made visible by to the state by its interventions to direct and manage their movement (see Chapter 2). The state initiatives that made labor emigration conspicuous established Moroccan emigrants as a population that could be targeted and manipulated with policy. State interventions to measure and control migration also, inadvertently, made them visible as a group, with common traits and common needs, to members of the Moroccan opposition who fled the Kingdom during the political crisis and repression of the mid-sixties. Both Moroccan state and non-state actors reached out to Moroccan emigrants in the 1960s to further their own agendas. The Moroccan state engaged with Moroccan emigrants in an interpretive conversation in order to capture their remittances for national economic growth plans. The Moroccan opposition cultivated an analogous relationship with Moroccan emigrants to foster their base of political support. In the process, however, the outreach initiatives of both the state and the opposition were transformed. Their engagement with emigrants, and the interpretive conversations that their engagement held, produced unanticipated policy innovations and institutional change that would alter not only the way the state and the leftist opposition saw migrants, but also how migrants saw themselves.

Capturing water and remittances

During the 1960s, the Moroccan government doggedly pursued the ambitious agricultural development policy to which it had turned in the early 1960s to secure the support of rural elites (see Chapter 2). Already responsible for approximately 60 percent of all investment in the national economy in the early 1960s, the government pledged in the 1965-1967 and 1968-1972 National Development Plans to increase its share of investment dramatically and to devote huge sums to foster the productivity of large-scale commercial agriculture. In a national development scheme that was emblematic of the era, the state launched a project in 1968 to build twenty new dams to irrigate an

additional 1 million hectares (2.5 million acres) by the end of the millennium. The high dams would supply large estates with a reliable supply of water, and finally make the colonial vision of Morocco as the California of Africa into a reality (Swearingen 1985; White 2001). Hassan II officially declared the high dams project a national objective, asserting that if Morocco “stop[ped] precious rainfall from rushing into the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, or the Sahara desert,” the Kingdom would become “an enormous reserve of food, a veritably granary” (Hassan II qtd. in Hughes 1968). The much-touted “politique des barrages” quickly attained “mythic proportions” (Swearingen 1987, qtd in White 2001: 125) with the King “personally directing” public events to promote it (White 2001: 125).

However, despite the regime’s economic grandstanding, existing public investment, along with the capital flight of former colonists, the costs of waging war with Algeria, and the outlay to rebuild a southern port destroyed by an earthquake had already emptied the state coffers. In 1964, the state was running a deficit that amounted to about a third of its operating expenditures, and its shortfall continued to grow throughout the remainder of the decade (World Bank 1966 & 1981). To close this gap, the state launched a campaign in the mid-sixties to promote private savings and investment, and made bank purchases of treasury bonds equivalent to no less than 30 percent of deposits compulsory (BCP 1987; World Bank 1981). The initiative was successful, doubling domestic savings in five years, between 1968 and 1974, and increasing the number of treasury bonds purchased in equal measure (World Bank 1981).

Extending this initiative to Morocco’s migrant workers, who were already sending noticeable sums of money to their country of origin, seemed promising. In 1964, migrants remitted an estimated 93 million Dirhams; by 1967, that sum had doubled to 208 million Dirhams, or a little over 1.3% of the country’s GDP. (Bossard 1979; World Bank 1966, 1981). However, emigrant remittance flows largely bypassed formal financial institutions. For the most part, remittances were either brought back upon the migrant’s return or were sent through informal channels (Interview, BCP, Paris Delegation, February 2004). Ethnographer Bossard observed this arrangement in the Moroccan Rif: “‘they are playing postmen – *Ils font de la poste*’ people in the villages would say. One man, [for example], a former emigrant from a prestigious and well-off

family, dedicated himself to that occupation, traveling through a number of European countries. He would bring back the amounts necessary to support migrants' families during their stay in Europe....These people enjoyed the trust of the migrant workers but also of the local authorities, and earned a certain profit from the services they rendered" (Bossard 1979: 127).

For emigrant workers, the cost of these informal arrangements was relatively high. Formal money transfer services were either unavailable or not accessible to the vast majority of migrant workers, and the facilitators of this informal system of financial transfers extracted the equivalent of monopoly rents. Both the carrier middlemen and authorities regularly took a cut of the remittances sent back to communities of origin. (Interview, BCP, Paris Delegation, February 2004). Moreover, as Bossard notes in his study, migrant workers often paid a premium when they exchanged their remittances into domestic currency. Many migrants changed their European currencies on the black market, rarely using formal banks, even when the rates they received were less favorable, simply because bank branches were hard to find or non-existent in rural Morocco, and when they were, migrants of peasant stock found them less than welcoming. The hotel lobbies and the back rooms of stores where migrants changed their francs into dirhams were everywhere and were socially accessible. (Bossard 1979).

Banking for the Masses: La Banque Centrale Populaire

The state selected La Banque Centrale Populaire du Maroc (henceforth BCP), a state-owned bank based on a network of credit unions, already a main implementing institution of private savings and investment initiative, to provide migrant workers with a formal --and better -- alternative to expensive informal transfer networks. It tasked the bank to bring migrant workers into the formal banking system. In 1968, the Ministry of Finance, in a letter to the BCP, ordered the bank to complete, "the elaboration of a very refined system such that the repatriation of savings the workers [abroad] no longer escape state control" (qtd. in Laftasse et al. 1992: 39) and then to implement it (Laftasse et al. 1992). The state -- and the Ministry of Finance in particular -- chose the BCP to carry out this mission because it was the only bank in Morocco whose services seemed to correspond to the needs of emigrant workers, as the state perceived those needs.

Moroccan emigration policy featured certain traits of emigrant workers: heavy state-organized recruitment from rural areas and its careful tabulations of the employment for which migrant workers were contracted brought both emigrants' rural background and their relatively elevated income levels into relief. Moroccan emigrant policy projected migrant labor as a new rural middle-class, and the middle-class, in rural as well as in urban areas, was the BCP target client base. A brief review of the BCP's early history illustrates why, and reveals how the state initially conceptualized services for emigrants.

The BCP was created by the colonial administration in 1926 as a network of state-supported credit unions to provide loans to colonists for agricultural investment. After independence, the credit unions were ceded to the Moroccan state and consolidated into the BCP by royal decree in 1961. When it appropriated the credit unions, the Moroccan state also adopted the credit unions' rhetoric, defining the institution as a renewed expression of "a banking model ... based on conceptions of mutuality and cooperation" (BCP 1986) suited to economic needs and political identity of a newly independent Morocco. During the national savings drive, the bank's mission became, as a one director-general of the BCP put it, the "bancarization of the masses" (Interview, January 2004).

The BCP continued to target rural landowners, serving estate holders but also began serving an emergent class of smaller farmers, many of whom had purchased land from colonists when they left. Moreover, the bank also expanded its client base to include the urban middle and lower-middle class, placing a special emphasis on small business owners and artisans. The BCP tailored its services to the "low-end" clientele it pursued, often offering a "hands-on" introduction to banking for clients that were using a bank for the first time. It extended its network of branches, already the largest in the Kingdom when the bank was incorporated, and deployed several mobile branches—called "*camion-guichets*" or "van-branches" because they literally operated out of refurbished vans—to regional centers that did not yet have a branch or to areas where there was insufficient clientele to support a permanent office. The BCP also developed a specialized information-system that enabled the institution to keep track of the large numbers of small transactions that the bank handled because of the profile of their clientele while at the same time reducing the costs associated with processing them.

(Interviews, BCP, Paris and Casablanca, January-March 2004; BCP 1986; Dahir 1-60-232, 1961, BCP mimeo).

Because of the bank's developed capacities in "bancarizing" new clients -- what today's management literature would call the bank's core competencies (Hall 1993; Peteraf 1992)--, including emigrants into the BCP's drive to increase domestic savings and bank use seemed consistent with the bank's mission. The emigrants, predominantly rural in origin, fit the bank's client profile on several counts. First, they were an extension of the rural sphere that the bank had traditionally targeted; second, the wages they earned in Europe propelled them into Morocco's middle- and lower-middle classes; and third, they were already engaging in the small financial transactions that the bank had made it its specialty to manage. The bank was to provide the same basic financial services, combined with basic instruction on how to use them.

Nevertheless, many at the bank viewed the project as outlandish, even ludicrous in its impracticality. They were skeptical for two main reasons. First, despite its rhetoric to "bancarize the masses," the BCP would never have extended its services to emigrants had they remained in Morocco. Before their departure, emigrant workers belonged to socio-economic strata that did not attract the bank's interest. They were poor, illiterate or marginally literate laborers that earned subsistence wages. According to one state study, almost 80 percent of emigrants had fit this profile before they left Morocco: Hamdouch et al., in a household survey of three migrant sending regions in Morocco found that only 23 percent of migrants any formal schooling at all, and only 7 percent were more than marginally literate (Hamdouch et al. 1979: 79). The bank would not have considered them bankable, not only because their income was too low to make extending banking services worth the bank's while, but also because they were viewed as coarse peasants who did not have even the basic level of actual and cultural literacy necessary to use a formal institution like a bank. So, while emigration had catapulted emigrants in to the BCP's client base, and while the state and the BCP aspired to exploit the emigrant market and ensure that remittances "no longer escape state control," the bank had little sense of how to design services for a demographic group the staff view as inherently "unbankable." Second, the BCP also did not have a conceptual understanding of what it meant to offer financial services to people whose everyday financial practices were

stretched across national borders. They had little notion about how to create financial instruments for clients who worked in Europe but whose family lives and more importantly, family expenditures were in Morocco. As one veteran BCP director recalled, when the Minister of Finance charged the bank with serving emigrants, “[e]veryone thought he was crazy! No one—no one!-- at the bank or anywhere else—thought it could be done. People said the minister was out of his mind” (Interviews, BCP, Paris, February 2004).

Initiating a conversation: Bringing the bank to emigrants

Despite its reservations, the BCP sent an exploratory delegation to Paris to investigate the possibility providing banking services to emigrants and to come up with prototype of financial tools to capture remittances. The bank set up shop in the Moroccan embassy in Paris and in the city’s suburban consulates, and set out to discover how emigrants’ informal networks for money transfer operated. As the BCP staff in Paris described it, the BCP set out to “map out the circuits” through which migrants moved their money from Europe to Morocco. The institution also strove to identify the obstacles that dissuaded them from using the formal channels of money transfer that did exist. In the 1960s, formal channels meant postal money-orders. According to the Moroccan authorities, postal money-orders accounted for almost 80 percent of formal transfers in 1969 (Office des Changes, Kingdom of Morocco, n.d.).

To discover this information, BCP delegates forged relationships with emigrant workers in Paris. In what the bank staff now describe as a kind of ethnographic research, the BCP staff engaged emigrants in repeated social interactions and on-going conversations about money transfers but also about the various aspects of their lived experience as migrant workers in France. BCP staff spent time with migrant workers, earning the trust necessary for migrant workers to discuss financial issues with Moroccan state bureaucrats. They visited migrants at the worker dorms and factory trailers where they lived, they prayed with them in “basement” mosques and prayer rooms, they had lunch with them at the factories where they worked, and they relaxed with them in Arab teahouses where migrant workers gathered to socialize after their shifts. Officials at the BCP in Paris recall stories told by senior colleagues who had participated in that initial

mission about their work: “they had running competitions over who had drank the most glasses of Moroccan tea during the course of the day” (Interviews, BCP, Paris, February 2004).

In the process of forging solid social relationships with migrants, BCP staff began interpretive conversations about migrant’s financial and social needs, and about how to create a transnational banking system that would respond to them. Ultimately, rather than providing a means of gleaning existing information—of discovery, the relationships opened a space for interpretive exchange that produced *new* understandings about why Moroccan emigrants used informal networks, and did not use formal channels, for money transfer. They produced insights that neither the migrants nor the bank staff could have conceived of on their own, in the absence of the interpretive exchange between them. Specifically, the conversations brought to the surface two barriers to entry that kept migrants from using formal money transfer channels: illiteracy and a socio-cultural disconnect between formal institutions and migrants. The BCP had previously recognized these two obstacles as general problems for the provision of banking services to emigrants, but it could not discern the specific ways that they complicated migrants’ use of formal transfer channels. Through the interpretive conversations between migrants and BCP staff, these became clear to the BCP, but they also became clear to the migrants who articulated them as collective challenges for the first time.

Collaborative articulation: Specifying challenges to formal remittance transfer

The problem of literacy had to do primarily with illiteracy in French, or rather in a Latin alphabet. Although data on migrant levels of literacy and education is not available through the Moroccan Ministry of Labor, composite data from a variety of surveys conducted from the mid-1970s through the early 1990s indicate that almost half of all Moroccan workers who migrated to Europe before 1974 had received minimal or no schooling (INSEA 1976 qtd. in GERA 1992; Hamdouch et al. 1979; Garson 1981). Among those that had received schooling, it is likely only a small proportion, less than 20 percent (Courbage 1996; INSEA 1976 qtd. in GERA 1992), would have been even functionally literate in French, or in a Latin alphabet. Sending money through a postal money order required that the postal form be completed in the language of the receiving

country, generally French, and that the address of the recipient be written correctly and in a fashion that was intelligible in both the host country as well as in Morocco. Given the fact that a vast majority Moroccan migrants in Europe during the 1960s and 1970s were from isolated rural communities, this last detail posed significant problems: addresses in rural Morocco were often approximate in any case, and even if the postal workers in the area could decipher them, it is not clear that they would have been able to pinpoint the exact physical places or households that the addresses indicated. Bossard confirmed the obstacle that this represented for money transfer: “[e]rrors in the addresses were frequent and it created great inconveniences” (1979: 126). (Monnet 1998; Interviews, BCP, Paris, Casablanca, January-March 2004).

The social and cultural distance between the institutions that moved money (post offices and to a far lesser extent, banks) and the migrants and migrants’ families who would use them was the second factor that hampered formal money transfer. In France, where the vast majority of Moroccan migrants resided, migrants felt intimidated in postal offices (Interviews, BCP, Paris 2004): migrant workers from the Maghreb were systematically segregated from other workers—including other migrant workers-- and the larger community, housed in dedicated lodging, and were subject to various forms of racial discrimination (Valabregue 1973; Granotier 1970; Benguigui 1997). Entering a French government institution at a time when North African workers were often barred from grocery stores was daunting for many Moroccan migrants (Interviews, Casablanca, Paris, January-March 2004). In Morocco, collecting the money sent was also complicated by the dissonance between institutional regulations and social conventions. The recipient indicated on the postal money-order form was generally the migrant worker’s wife. Save a legal procuration or power of attorney, the postal worker could only disburse the funds to the person named on the form. Gender norms in many parts of rural Morocco at that time made it difficult, if not impossible, for women to leave their houses to go to the post office in regional centers, which were often at some distance from their home. Furthermore, the administrative processes for establishing someone as a legal substitute were prohibitively convoluted and lengthy. As a result, many postal money-orders were returned without ever being disbursed. (Bossard 1979; Benguigui 1997; Bennoune 1975; Interviews, BCP, Paris and Casablanca, January-March 2004).

The social engagement and conversations that surfaced those two obstacles grew into the framework through which the BCP resolved them. The BCP embedded formal solutions to the problems migrants faced in using formal transfer mechanism into the relationships BCP staff had forged with Moroccan workers in France. The bancarization of migrants expanded from the provision of banking services to the cultivation of a relationship of which banking services were only a part. The way the BCP conceptualized banking services was revolutionized.

Institutionalizing the conversation: *Stratégie d'accompagnement*

At the core of BCP's response was a banking approach built around assisting migrant workers transfer money through the postal system in what the bank literally termed "a strategy of accompaniment" – *une stratégie d'accompagnement*. Formally launched in 1969 as "Operation Moroccan Workers Abroad" (*Operation Travailleurs Marocains à l'Etranger*), the financial service the bank offered basically consisted of going to the post office with migrant workers and filling out the money order form for them. Migrants with rudimentary literacy only had to sign their name; "in the early years, sometimes they just signed with an 'x' or a thumbprint," explained a BCP staff member in the Paris office (Interviews, Paris, February 2004). Instead of sending the money to a specific person, the money was wired to a general BCP account in Casablanca. The funds were then transferred to individual migrants' personal accounts at BCP, which they or whoever else was a signatory on the account could access at will, at the BCP's extensive and growing network of bank branches in regional centers or from mobile "van-branches." The entire transfer took only a couple of days, which, given the technology available at the time, was considered extremely efficient. By linking transfers to deposits, the bank also fulfilled the mandate with which the Minister of Finance charged it and ensured that those migrant funds that passed through the institution "no longer escape[d] state control." The BCP's innovation was simple, but it was critical to resolving the very specific literacy and social constraints that deterred migrants from using formal financial channels.

The BCP continued to foster the social engagement on which this strategy of accompaniment depended. Extension officers continued their outreach efforts, visiting

migrants at their homes and workplaces, and traveling throughout France and Belgium to meet groups of Moroccan workers. Building on the mobile branch model developed in Morocco, BCP outreach staff “carried a branch in their briefcase” (Interviews, BPC, Paris, January 2004), with all the necessary materials to open an account for migrant workers on the spot. Acting as quasi-social workers, BCP staff also helped migrant workers with various day-to-day tasks, like going to the doctor, reading or writing letters, or filling out administrative forms related to their employment. This engaged style of banking outreach became a mainstay of BCP’s approach, even as the services the bank offered evolved over time. As late as the mid-nineties, three decades after the BCP began targeting migrant workers, a BCP delegate general remarked that the functions that BCP staff performed were “not exclusively commercial. They are often called upon to provide a whole menu of other services. They are called upon to write a letter or resolve an administrative problem” (Belqziz qtd in Monnet 1998). Benaces Lahlou, director of the department for emigrant services at the bank, added: “We are not satisfied with opening branches. We bring the bank to the emigrants. We follow them all the way to their homes” (qtd. in Ikram et al. 1997). (Interviews, BCP, Paris and Casablanca, January-March 2004, Monnet 1998; Garson et al. 1981; ATMF 1984; 63-65).

The BCP cemented their informal rapport with emigrant clients with concrete documentation of their banking services. The bank consciously and proactively provided emigrants with evidence of the institution’s credibility in order to cultivate the trust required to maintain the relationship on which the BCP’s strategy of accompaniment hinged. “The migrants were extremely distrustful of this system at first...Suspicious of anyone who wanted to handle their money” recalled one officer at the BCP Paris offices. “We were as much in the business of banking as in the business of building trust – *c’était un travail de confiance.*” (Interviews, BCP, Paris, February 2004). Before relying on BCP postal transfer system, migrants would test its reliability with a token amount of money. “They would sent just 100 dirhams at first and they’d have their wife or [the co-signatory on the account] check to make sure that the money actually went through, that it was there and that they could withdraw it” (Interview, BCP, Paris, February 2004). To demonstrate its trustworthiness, the bank provided its emigrant clients with one receipt per transaction, regardless of the number transactions completed – a practice that it still

maintains to this day. The receipts also served as a tangible symbol of the BCP's relationship to individual migrant clients, and bank officers often personally delivered them to emigrants' homes. The bank statements papered the tie – and the interpretive exchange that it held -- between the BCP and migrant clients, in a practice that reified it and protected it against dissolution. (Interviews, BCP, Paris and Casablanca, January-March 2004).

Doing the unimaginable: Results of the strategy of accompaniment

The BCP's personalized "strategy of accompaniment" showed remarkable success in a very short time. By the end of 1969, within less than a year of the launch of "Operation Moroccan Workers Abroad," transfers through the bank reached 13 million Moroccan Dirhams a month, and amounted annually to close to a quarter of all remittance transfers to the Kingdom. Moreover, an impressive 16,550 migrants had opened accounts at the BCP in the first year of the initiative, and their accounts represented 9% of the bank's deposits. Over the next several years, the expansion of "Opération TME" continued apace: by 1970, the number of migrants the institutions counted among clients had doubled to 35,000 and by 1975, the number had increased five-fold to 159,000 at a time when the total population of migrants workers in Europe was estimated at only slightly more than 300,000. By 1976, the BCP handled 72 of all remittance transfers to Morocco. With remittances representing close to 5 percent of GDP, the BCP moved close to 3.5 percent of the nation's income by banking – through its "strategy of accompaniment" -- on those that had been previously been considered plainly unbankable. (see Table 3.1). It had also extended its activities into Belgium, with a planned expansion into the Netherlands and Germany. (BPC 1986 & 2003; Safi 1990).

Over time, the formal banking services held more of the relationship between migrants and the bank; the social tie between migrants and BCP staff did not require the same level of support with intensive social exchanges. In fact, soon after the BCP's program of accompanying migrants to the post office became widespread, discussion between BCP staff and migrants revealed that the extension officers could not keep pace with migrant demand. BCP staffing constraints were creating a bottleneck for remittance transfer that was frustrating, even alienating, to the bank's migrant clientele. The

emigrant workers had grown familiar and comfortable using the post office transfers and accesses their BCP accounts: they had graduated into independent users of formal banking services. To respond to migrants' concern, the bank negotiated an agreement with the French postal service in the early 1970s that would allow the financial institution to provide migrants with money orders that were pre-printed with the necessary information, save the amount to be sent and the migrant's signature. This allowed migrants to go the post-office alone to send money using the BCP system if they chose. ((Interviews, BCP, Paris and Casablanca, January-March 2004).

Table 3.1: Remittances and BCP Results, 1969-1976

	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Remittances (in millions of Dh)	302	316	480	640	1020	1557	2159	2417
% of GDP	1.6	1.6	2.2	2.8	4.0	4.6	6.1	4.7
Proportion of transfers through BCP (%)		22.3				49		72
Number of BCP migrant-held accounts	16,550	35,000					159,000	
Number of migrant workers in Europe	143,397	170, 835	194,296	218,146	269,680	302,294	322,067	347,984

Sources: BCP in Bossard 1979; World Bank 1966 and 1981; BCP 1986.

Although the relationship between the BCP and their emigrant clients became more institutionalized as "Operation Moroccans Living Abroad" took hold, the quality of the rapport, and of the interpretive conversations that it held, continued to determine the success of the BCP's initiatives. Innovations that did not grow out of conversations with migrants fell flat and were discontinued. In the early 1970s, for example, the BCP began a policy of opening branches in various cities throughout France, incorporated under the name "Banque Achaarbi," in a strategy that was an extension of the bank's actions in

Morocco where it opened multiple new branches every year. The European branches were not popular with migrants who preferred to use postal offices, which were conveniently local and which were places where migrants felt socially safe and at-ease. By 1976, the effort to open European branches was abandoned, and all but three of the at least eight that were set up have since been closed. (Interviews, BCP, Paris and Casablanca, January-March 2004; BCP Annual Reports 1979-2002).

Emigrants and Exiles: Conversations for political interpretation

In addition to marking the beginning of Morocco's large-scale labor export program, in the early 1960s the Kingdom also saw another important emigration flow. During the political retrenchment and roundups of opposition activists that began in 1963 and continued for years, scores of Moroccan leftists fled to Europe. Most of them landed in Paris, which quickly emerged as a center for the Moroccan opposition. Mehdi Ben Barka, the exiled leader of the Union Nationale du Front Populaire, the main opposition party in Morocco, founded the Association of Moroccans in France (AMF) as a clearing house for Moroccan opposition activists. Moroccan students became active participants at the Association, congregating at the organization's headquarters in a tiny apartment in the Latin Quarter.

The students, many of them former members of the outlawed Moroccan Communist Party, began to take note of the conditions under which Moroccan workers, arriving in growing numbers, labored and lived. "In Paris," writes Daoud in her monograph on Moroccan labor activism in France, "they discovered those people that called themselves 'the tunnel people,' those that never see the light of day" (Daoud 2004). Over the next decade, student engagement with the workers would transform how the Moroccan left conceived of its resistance to Hassan II's rule. From an association of exiled political parties determined to dislodge the King's authoritarian chokehold on the Moroccan government, it began to consider, albeit somewhat dismissively at first, the needs of Moroccan emigrant workers as part of its agenda. The engagement between migrants and activist students also transformed the workers' view of themselves, and their possibilities for collective action. From "tunnel people," they became workers with legal rights, who could mobilize "in the light of day" to demand them. The engagement

between leftist students and emigrant workers supported interpretive conversations that generated new conceptual connections between the priorities of urban-based leftist parties and the concerns of Morocco's displaced-peasantry-turned-urban-proletariat. Morocco's political sphere began to expand past the political events the Kingdom to include events in Europe's factories and mines.

Reaching out to emigrant workers

Moroccan student concerns about the situation of their compatriots were well-founded. Firm and industry studies from the period indicate that Arab workers in France, and Moroccan workers in particular, were slotted for tasks generally below their skill level. Furthermore, often based on arguments that they lacked proficiency in French, they also were promoted in grade at a much slower level than their French counterparts: Granges' survey of Renault's employment practices during the 1960 and early 1970s, for example, documented that it took twice as long for equally qualified Moroccan workers to receive a promotion as their French counterparts, but also as their Spanish and Portuguese colleagues (n.d. circa 1982). The wage discrepancy between Arab and French workers in the same job classification was also significant, although studies disagree about how significant, with some analyses noting that wages for Arab workers were on average no more than 60% those of French workers (Granotier 1970).

Historical accounts also note that Arab, and more pertinently Moroccan, workers were assigned the most physically-trying and dangerous jobs, both in factories and in mines, leading to a disproportionately high incidence of occupational injury (Blanchard et al. 2003; Daoud 2004). Numerous instances of intimidation and degrading and racist treatment were also recorded (ATMF 1984; Daoud 2004; Granotier 1970). Because workers' right to stay on French territory was based on their employment contracts, underreporting of mistreatment and injury was chronic, as workers feared that it would lead to discharge and deportation. Employers also compelled workers to join "house unions" under management control, and Moroccan workers reported seeing Moroccan authorities providing employers with guidance on how to control Moroccan labor in what one analyst has termed a "colonial" style of labor control (Vidal 2005; Daoud 2004). Additionally, the housing that companies and the French state extended to their Arab

employees was seriously substandard, often lacking in basic amenities, like running water and functioning heat. The lodging arrangements for migrants were a de facto means of segregating them from the French population, and more importantly, from their French co-workers. (Deridian 2004; Malet et al. 1996; Dubet et al. 1992)

Moroccan student activists broke that isolation by reaching out to Moroccan workers, in a strategy of social outreach that bore striking resemblance to the BCP's approach to Moroccan emigrants. They organized literacy classes in French and Arabic. In an embryonic version of a Popular University they set up at Genvilliers, an industrial suburb with a concentration of Moroccan workers, they also provided the workers with courses in economics, history, and politics. They spent time in worker hostels, celebrating traditional feasts and holidays with the emigrant laborers. They investigated the legal and political possibility of unionizing Moroccan workers, though they received only a lukewarm response from French unions. They also managed to enter factories, and document some of the transgressions of French labor law that workers endured. (Doaud 2004; Interviews, Paris, February 2004).

The same pattern of engagement between Moroccan students and Moroccan workers also would also emerge in Belgium, West Germany and the Netherlands – countries that at the time directly or indirectly recruited Moroccan labor (Berwatt 2004; Van der Valk 2004; Daoud 2004). In Belgium, the second most important recruiter of Moroccan workers after France, Moroccan students began to mobilize in 1966 in response to the needs they noticed among Moroccan workers. Although Belgium was a heavy importer of Moroccan labor through formal channels, the majority of Morroccans traveled to Belgium on their own initiative, entering as “tourists” who secured a work permit after arriving in the country (Ouali 2004). Mohamed El Baroudi, Moroccan student in exile at the time, recalls how student activists initiated their relationship with these Moroccan “tourists”:

Myself and a group of friends who were also in exile, we quickly noticed that Moroccan workers who arrived in Belgium to work found no structures to receive them. ...Except for workers who were contracted by the mines [and transported directly to their place of work] the workers who arrived did not have a single point of reference—other than La Gare du Midi [the main train station in Brussels]. Starting from [the station], they would start venturing out into the neighboring streets.... Nothing existed to help orient

Moroccan workers either administratively or socially, Belgium had not put in place a system to receive the workers... Faced with this observation, we [found] a space to set up a reception area [for Moroccan workers] where we offered various services... (qtd. in Berwart 2004: 13).

Student activists provided services that included everything from literacy classes and letter-writing to the collection of funds for the repatriation of bodies when workers died in the Belgian coal mines, a tragedy that Baroudi noted “happened all too often” (Belwart 2004). The nascent organization, which would eventually evolve into the largest Moroccan opposition organization in Belgium, the Moroccan Democratic Association (Regroupement Marocain Democratique – RDM), reinforced the casual connection that the students had established with the Belgian union movement, and in the process, made Moroccan workers visible to the labor organizations that had ignored them as beyond the scope of their organizing activities. The group of student leftists also enlisted the help of Belgian doctors to care for injured workers and of Belgian lawyers to advocate for them, linking migrants to Belgian social service networks in this way. (Belwart 2004; Ouali 2004).

Interpreting across a divide and the “hot seasons” of 1968

The historical evidence, though fragmentary, documenting the relationship between Moroccan students and Moroccan workers in receiving country, suggests that the class differences between them complicated their engagement. In France, only with some difficulty were students and emigrant workers able to span the class and cultural divide between Morocco’s urban-based middle class exiled political opposition and the displaced peasants turned workers, and engage. Moroccan workers viewed the students as elites and regarded their outreach with suspicion. The leadership of the Moroccan left in exile dismissed the needs of Moroccan emigrant workers, needs championed by students leftists, as marginal to their endeavor of creating regime change in Morocco. When, at national conference of the AMF, Moroccan students presented a resolution for the creation of a “Committee for the Defense of Moroccan Students in France,” a proposal for which they had forged a thorny working alliance with the General Confederation of Workers (CGT), a French socialist union, they were sidelined by UNFP party leaders. (Daoud 2004).

Nineteen sixty eight changed the situation dramatically. During the explosive student protests of that spring, Moroccan students occupied a pavilion at University City in Paris, formerly named after a Moroccan colonial industrialist, and proudly renamed it the Morocco House. They set up a committee of Moroccan activists in France and appointed philosopher/activist Jean Paul Sartre²² as president. The Morocco House become a center for Moroccan leftist organizing of all kinds, and UNFP leaders, students, and workers all gathered there, using the space to hold assemblies, meeting, and planning discussions. Additionally, students on modest scholarships and workers temporarily homeless for a host of reasons spend nights there, sleeping on the dilapidated sofas and on the floors. The interactions, even the collisions, in the chaotic space created new bridges between exiled leftist opposition, the students, and the workers (Daoud 2004).

The conversations, the joint activism and social exchanges opened an interpretive space where students and workers developed new ways of understanding themselves and each other. Students began to view their solidarity and organizing on behalf of workers in France as an extension of their struggle against the Moroccan regime. “Very focused on Morocco in its work, [the AMF] in its structure began to defend the interests [of workers] in addition to its pursuing its political positions” recalls one activists of this period (Daoud 2004: 32). Moroccan workers began to interpret their situation differently as well. As one worker’s memory of this period illustrates, these interactions allowed workers to conceptualize their experience in new ways:

I was dazzled, overwhelmed, I went to meetings, I didn’t understand anything, but the activists spoke well, they analyzed the events. We had good times, it was convivial, we organized together, we distributed tracts, we hung posters, we spend time together in cafes, we cruised together. I owe everything to the [AMF]. I was born in it, I was educated in it. I learned everything I know through it. [The AMF] opened my eyes to the world...I learned how to think. (qtd. in Daoud 2004:52)

Many others echoed this sentiment (Daoud 2004; Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004). For Moroccan emigrant workers, the space and the discussions that took place there fostered the beginning of their labor mobilization. Under the roof of the Morocco house, Moroccan workers and students together established embryonic worker

²² Michel Foucault was also active in pro-immigrant and pro-Arab mobilizations during this period. Throughout the 1970s, he set up and participating in a number of commissions investigating the working and living conditions of Arab workers. (Zancarini-Fournel 2001)

committees; the collectives would serve as the organizational backbone for strikes by Moroccan emigrants that would jolt French employers and the Moroccan state that provided them with labor. (Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004).

Largely excluded from the large-scale labor mobilization of France hot summer and autumn of 1968 by French unions who gave immigrants the cold shoulder, Moroccan migrant workers actively participated in the migrant labor protests swept through France in the early 1970s. Given that they made up only a relatively small proportion of immigrant workers in France, at less than 15 percent of new entrants between 1966-1974 (Tapinos 1975; Ministère du Travail, Royaume du Maroc), Moroccans were disproportionately represented in the wave of the migrant wildcat strikes that stunned both the French establishment and French unions. At many work sites, Moroccan workers were the driving force behind the work stoppages and plant takeovers (Lloyd 2001; Zancarini-Fournel 2002). Douad, in her monograph, chronicles the sweep of Moroccan involvement in immigrant labor mobilization in the early 1970s:

The protest movement involved 52 Moroccan immigrants in the recycling factory in Nanterres, then moved to the line workers at Girobell at Bourgets, all the plants belonging to the Pennaroya group, and then one after the other, the automobiles plants in the Paris metropolitan region, the Chasson at Montbéliard, those at Carbone Lorraine, at Marjolaine, at Câbles de Lyon, as well as a number of smaller firms mostly in the Paris region (2004:33).

In all of these strikes, Moroccan workers mobilized to demand better working conditions; they wanted contractual benefits and protections that matched those of their autochthonous co-workers, as well as living conditions that met minimal standards. AMF worker's committees supported them in this effort. AMF activists camped out outside the factories; they walked in picket lines; they provided strikers with logistical aid, supplying food and blankets; they organized collections of donations for the workers; and they acted as a relay between Moroccan workers and French left-of-center unions that, belatedly, offered migrants their backing. (Daoud 2004; Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004)

Emigrant labor protests: The view from Morocco

The Moroccan state regarded the spreading worker protests with alarm. The incipient alliance between the Moroccan left and the Moroccan workers who were largely of rural origin, from areas that the crown had still not fully subjugated, was a particular source of concern for a regime once again in crisis. While Moroccan workers were mobilizing in France with the support of Moroccan leftists, the King just barely survived two successive and very nearly successful coup attempts. The first occurred in 1971, when 1,000 cadets from a supposed loyal army descended on the summer palace. After the King narrowly escaped with his life, he conducted a purge so sweeping of the armed forces that it was “rendered virtually leaderless by firing squads” (Giniger 1972). The second attempt to dethrone the monarch was initiated thirteen months later by General Oufkir, King’s trusted Minister of Interior Defense. Oufkir commanded the King’s plane shot down, and Hassan II survived only through a ruse: he grabbed the radio, saying “this is the mechanic speaking” and told the attackers that the King had been mortally wounded and hold their fire to spare the lives of the other passengers (Giniger 1972). After the coup attempts, the King ordered indiscriminate round-ups of all potential opposition, including leftist leaders, student activists and state-controlled union leaders and labor organizers. As he made clear in a 1972 speech to the Moroccan public, he considered few measures to extreme to preserve his seat on the throne:

God has placed the king on his throne to safeguard the monarchy and to do this the Maliki school of Islam stipulates that he must not hesitate, if necessary, to eliminate the third of the population infected by evil ideas to protect the two-thirds not so infected. (qtd in White 2001).

Within the year of his successfully thwarting the last coup attempt and the brutal repression that followed, an armed uprising in the countryside challenged the regime once again. In response, the crown ramped up its offensive against the political opposition in all forms. The press was further censored; political parties, including the relatively conservative Istiqlal party, were reined in, and their space for legal activity was drastically reduced. Police tactics such as house-to-house searches and identity checkpoints became widespread. However, the crown’s harshest measures were reserved for the Moroccan left. The rural unrest was pinned on the UNFP, which was promptly outlawed in March 1973. Over the next few years, hundreds associated with the party or

with underground Marxist-Leninist organization were tried for sedition. Many of those who had fled to Europe were tried in absentia. Furthermore, student unions, perceived as possible advocates of leftist positions, were banned, and as the Middle East Research and Information Project reported, “repression against students [was] extremely brutal, as schools [were] summarily closed, students beaten and arrested.” (MERIP 1977).

In this context, the militancy of Moroccan student leftist and migrants workers in Europe was viewed as an extension of the unrest the regime faced domestically, and as such, was considered a potential threat to the King rigid by friable hold on power (Belguendouz 1998; Daoud 2004; El Houdaigui 2003). The regime’s pre-occupation with the mobilization Moroccans abroad was augmented by a concern of “political contagion.” As observers of the Moroccan political economy during this period have noted, the state was concerned about political mobilization spreading back to Morocco, and was specifically unsettled about the prospect of leftist views, especially those critical of the government, extending from Moroccan emigrant workers to the larger Moroccan labor pool once those workers returned (Belgendouz 1992; Baroudi in Berwart 2004; Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004). Abdalla Fraggi, a Moroccan assembly line worker at the Talbot factory astutely captured Moroccan regime’s worry: “It is clear that if our level of political consciousness improves, we will look at Moroccan policies with a different eye” (qtd. in Kutschera 1984). (Indeed, many Moroccan workers did: after one of the coup attempts, when the political attack seemed to presage the downfall of the regime, a group of emigrant workers had a barbecue to celebrate (Daoud 2004)).

Two rationales fed into this fear. First, while emigration was projected to continue for an extended period (see Chapter 2), individual emigrants were expected return to Morocco after some period in Europe. This had in fact been the pattern of emigration for much of the 1960s: migrants worked in Europe for several years and then returned, with another male family member taking the relay (Garson 1981). Indeed, the state counted on their return as a part of its long term development strategy; as specified in the Morocco’s 1968-1972, National Development plan, migrants were to come back to Morocco after a period abroad “having acquired the professional qualifications and attitudes favorable to entrepreneurship” (qtd. in Belguendouz 1992:34) to act as catalysts for Morocco’s economic modernization. Second, even though Moroccan emigrants

abroad, they were viewed as arm of the Moroccan national economy, part of the larger Moroccan national system, an inclusion the state had buttressed through its deployment of the BCP to Europe. The Moroccan state was actively working to integrate the system, and streamlines the movement of resources within it, even across national borders. The danger to the regime was that political ideology and mobilization would move through that same system with equivalent ease. In wake of coup attempts accompanied by a resurgence of popular unrest, the possibility of large numbers of Moroccan workers with leftist perspectives on labor relations, and with direct experience in labor organizing, providing the opposition with a mobilized constituency raised a specter of political opposition that demanded pre-emptive action.

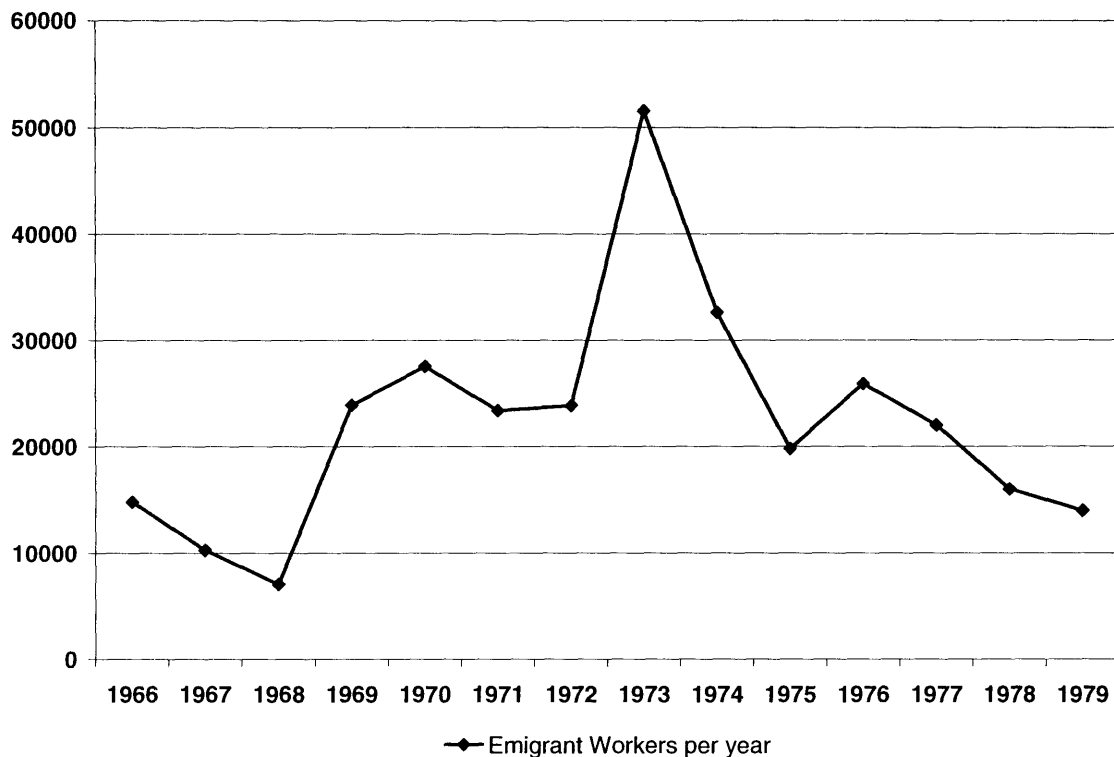
2. Deterritorializing the National Economy: 1974-1989

“Now the doors are being shut”: Europe’s change in immigration policy

In 1974, Europe radically changed its immigration policy, and in doing so, voided all of the Moroccan state’s assumptions about who emigrants were and whether they would return. Throughout the 1970s, European importers of Moroccan labor had begun to tighten their controls over immigration as the overheated industrial expansion that the continent had experienced after the war began to cool (Hollifield 1992; Garson 1987). The petroleum shocks of 1974 brought an abrupt end to what the French called, in a appellation that could have been applied to much of the continent, the “thirty glorious years” (*les trentes glorieuses*) of meteoric economic growth. In rapid succession, European importers of labor began to close their borders to immigration, putting an end to labor flows that political commentators had begun to deride as “*l’immigration sauvage*” – immigration gone wild (Hollified 1992; Garson 1987; Ouali 2004; Basfao et al. 1994). All of the countries with whom Moroccan had signed migrant labor conventions not only stopped issuing labor contracts for its nationals, but they also sealed their borders to Moroccans who migrated to Europe on their own initiative. For the first time since the Great Depression, Europe’s labor importing countries, and France in particular, took forceful measures against undocumented migration, enforcing legislation that prohibited the employment of foreign workers who did not have a valid permit

(Garson 1984; Basfao et al. 1994). The change in European policy had an immediate effect on Moroccan labor emigration: the annual number of Moroccan workers who departed for Europe plummeted between 1974 and 1975, dropping from 30,500 to 9,900 (GERA 1992: 13). The numbers for worker emigration would never recover, and would continue to fall to a little under 4,000 in the mid-1980s (see Graph 3.2; GERA 1992: 13).

Graph 3.2: Number of Registered Moroccan Workers per Year, 1966-1979



Source: Ministry of Labor, Kingdom of Morocco, 1966-1979

When European importers of Moroccan labor effectively discontinued their large-scale worker immigration policies in 1974, Moroccan workers stopped returning to the Kingdom for fear that they would not be able to secure another emigration contract. The circular pattern of familial relay migration ended; migration that Moroccan emigrants and the Moroccan state viewed as temporary became permanent. Workers began to bring their families under European family reunification policies. Importers of Moroccan labor were mandated under the terms of the labor conventions that they ratified to allow for

migrants to bring their families to join them (Khachani 2004; **Conventions, mimeos**)²³. European economies initially expressed some reticence at systematic family reunification, with France and Belgium in particular erecting a series of legal barriers to the immigration of family members, including minimum income and housing requirements. However, after domestic political pressure from migrant advocates and migrant employers, all of the major importers of Moroccan labor eventually ceded, permitting wives and children to join husbands, and siblings to join brothers. (Garson 1987; Khachani 2004). Moroccans living abroad went from being unaccompanied men, working abroad temporarily to send money home to their family, to families that needed the incomes earned to raise children on site, in host countries many would adopt as their own.

The demographic profile of Moroccan communities in countries that were former importers of Moroccan labor illustrates the magnitude of this transformation. Data from France, host to three quarters of Moroccan emigrants throughout the 1970s and 1980s, convey the significance of this change most distinctly: in 1975, 73 percent of Moroccans living in France were male. By 1984, that share had dropped to 61 percent, and would fall even further to 55 percent in 1990, as female migration from Morocco increased. The change in absolute numbers of Moroccan women living in France is even more striking: 69,000 Moroccan women lived in France in 1975. By 1984, that number had more than tripled to 194,500 and by 1990, it had reached 290,000 (El Mansouri 1996: 86, based on data from INSEE, France, 1990 and the Moroccan Ministry for Moroccans Living Abroad, 1990). Couples and the children that lived with them would represent over sixty percent of all Moroccans in France (Courbage 1996). Similar trends could be observed in Belgium and Germany: the proportion of men among Moroccan emigrants dropped from almost 70 percent in 1971 to 55 percent in 1981 in Belgium (National Institute of Statistics, Belgium in Morelli 2004), and from about 80 percent in the mid-

²³ Article 11 in the Franco-Moroccan convention on migrant labor is typical of the provisions for family reunification in the other conventions that Morocco negotiated with Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. While it allows for family reunification, it also opens a loophole for the French government to insert legal caveats at will. It reads: “The families of Moroccan workers can join them and the French government will afford them all the facilities necessary for them to do so, provided that it occurs within the legislation and regulations that are in force at the time” (Convention 1963—mimeo).

1970s to 45 percent in the mid-1980s in Germany (Moroccan Consulates in Germany; in Berriane 2003.)

The change in the demographic profile of Moroccan emigrants, and the change in their economic profile that it reflected, had profound consequences for Moroccan state policy toward its nationals abroad. As Moroccan emigrants were transformed from workers who would eventually return to the Kingdom to workers with families who were likely to remain in Europe indefinitely, the Moroccan state, eager to maintain remittance flows amounting to 5 percent of GDP, strove to develop policies that reflected this shift. Not all of the state's policies emerged out of an interpretive engagement with the changing Moroccan emigrant population, but those that did revised the way the Moroccan state conceptualized its national economy. They deterritorialized it in more permanent fashion, creating dense institutional supports to divorce it from a strict correspondence with geographic borders and extend Moroccan economic space into Europe in a more enduring way.

The change in the economic function that Moroccan emigrants played in the European economies that had recruited them so enthusiastically had an equally profound effect on Moroccan state policy toward Moroccan nationals abroad. After the oil-shocks of 1974 left European heavy industry imploding under its own weight, employers of immigrant labor began quickly shedding a workforce that had, almost overnight, become redundant. The Moroccan emigrants that had, through their engagement with Moroccan leftists and through their participation in the strikes of the early 1970s, developed their capacity for political mobilization and for political critique fought the lay-offs tooth and nail. Through their labor activism of the late 1970s and 1980s, they challenged the notion that they were an expendable workforce that, unlike their French counterparts, came with no political or social strings attached. But they also developed a sophisticated class analysis of how Moroccan state policies conjugated with European state policies to subjugate Moroccan workers, and confine them to employment relationships where they had few rights and little ability to defend those that they did have.

The sustained labor activism of Moroccan emigrant workers transformed the Moroccan leftist movement in Europe, especially in France, and redefined the status of labor within it. From being an addendum to an exiled leftist opposition to an

authoritarian monarchy, the concerns of Moroccan emigrant labor and Moroccan workers took center stage. Opposition to Moroccan regime was increasingly articulated in terms of the rights of labor and human rights in general, rather than in the language of nationalist leftist challenge rooted in the history of Morocco's independence struggle. The increasingly labor-centric opposition movement forged collaborative ties with Moroccan labor unions and with an underground human rights-based resistance to the monarchy's repression of critics. So, although the monarchy's fear that large numbers of politicized emigrant workers would return to wreak havoc in Morocco, their political critique and the momentum of their political activism did, traveling along the networks they established with Moroccan labor and resistance movements. Just as the Moroccan state had extended Morocco's national space through its policies, Moroccan emigrant labor activists expanded the space of political contest, bringing the opportunity for organized opposition that was afforded them in Europe back into Morocco. The Moroccan state, shaken by the reverberation of the political energy that traveled back across the networks, took a series of measures to undermine and control Moroccan labor activism. In the process, the state opened an interpretive space with Moroccan emigrants. Steeped in conflict and mistrust, the interpretive engagement nevertheless allowed for the emergence of new understandings about the potential of emigrant workers to act as transformative agents. The state quietly began to recognize the individual and collective ability of migrant workers to effect change in the economic and political sphere in which they participated.

Boom and bust: Phosphates and emigration

The timing of Europe's change in immigration policy could not have been worse for Morocco. The closure of Europe's border coincided disastrously with Morocco's spectacular bust of the mid-1970s, which followed directly on the heels of equally spectacular boom. Thanks to a dramatic rise in worldwide phosphate prices in early 1970s, the Kingdom found itself temporarily flush with cash and ramped up its public spending dramatically. As prices for the mineral peaked in 1974, quintupling from \$14 to \$68 a ton in a matter of months (Lalutte 1976: 8), the Moroccan government revised its 1973-1977 five-year plan to treble public expenditures in capital intensive parastatals and

in basic infrastructure. The state also increased financing for its new “Moroccanization” campaign, launched in 1973 ostensibly to promote majority Moroccan ownership in major enterprises and agro-business outfits, but designed primarily to placate urban industrialists and large commercial growers who were emboldened in their resistance to the regime by the successive coup attempts in the early 1970s.

The rise in state spending on the economy was matched, and at times even surpassed, by a sharp escalation in military spending. In 1975, the Moroccan state initiated a military operation to lay claim to the Western Sahara, an area to the south of Morocco internationally recognized borders that had been a Spanish protectorate until that year. Although the campaign to annex phosphate-rich territory began with an unarmed expedition – the infamous “Green March” in which 350,000 Moroccan conscripts and volunteers crossed into the Western Sahara armed only with Korans, it quickly escalated into a war with the Polisario independence army and the Algerians who were backing them. Although Saudi Arabia bankrolled a large proportion of the expense, the military engagement cost the Kingdom between 20 and 30 percent of its annual budget for the duration of the hostilities, which lasted well into the 1980s²⁴ (World Bank 1981; Layachi 1998). (Lalette 1976; Entelis 1980; World Bank 1981; Layachi 1998: 20)

Within a couple of years of their dizzying rise, phosphate prices underwent a radical correction. By 1976, the Morocco’s receipts from phosphate exports had fallen by half, and thereafter saw a gradual decline. As its income from phosphate exports dropped, the cost of the petroleum it imported quadrupled after the 1974 oil shocks. Faced with a serious liquidity crisis, the Moroccan government borrowed unprecedented sums, both domestically and internationally, to complete the economic and military projects that it had started. State borrowing skyrocketed from 516 million Dirhams in 1973 to almost 8 billion Dirhams only five years later, in 1978, with two-thirds of the funds sourced from abroad (World Bank 1981). Morocco became so overstretched that the World Bank and the IMF required the North African country to embark on a structural adjustment program as a condition for any further loans. The program was highly unpopular, and widened already stark economic inequalities (Layachi 1998).

²⁴ Some observers of Morocco’s political economy have revised the World Bank estimate for government expenditures on the Western Sahara military engagement upward, arguing the cost represented close to 45 percent of the government’s annual budget. (Layachi 1998)

The conjuncture of Europe's change in immigration policy with the Kingdom's liquidity crisis posed a serious challenge to a state that had grown increasingly dependent on financial transfers from migrants. In the mid-1970s, Morocco could not afford to see the 5 percent of GDP that migrants sent home or the third of national savings that they represented reduced in any way.

Innovating financial institutions

The Moroccan responded to this liquidity crisis by developing a series of policy instruments and products to continue attracting migrant remittances to Morocco. State interventions fit into one of two broad categories: either the initiatives responded to the strictly financial needs of migrants, extending various monetary incentives to encourage Moroccans to remit their earnings, or they cultivated and addressed a set of socio-economic needs that were specific to migrant workers and their families. In both types of interventions, the main organ through which the state developed policy was the BCP. However, the process of policy formulation that underlay the two classes of policy was very different. For the first group of policies, the state used an analytic model of policy making, whereas for the second set of policies, the state relied on interpretive exchange with Moroccan emigrants to produce new needs, new insights, new solutions, and ultimately, new Moroccan economic spaces.

The divergence between the two processes emanated from the kinds of knowledge that the BCP's "strategy of accompaniment" produced about Moroccan emigrants. Over the first five years of its operation abroad, the BCP had generated two types of knowledge about Moroccan emigrants: it had produced hard data tracking the transfer and deposit practices of emigrants, but it had also developed the bank's "organizational intuition" about possible trends and directions that would motivate interpretive conversations with emigrants in the future. Stated differently, the BCP's engagement with migrants had made various aspects of emigrant economic and social behavior and values visible in different ways, and the bank responded to those behaviors and values depending on the way that it was able to perceive it. How the bank, and the state on whose behalf it acted, "saw" emigrant remittance practices shaped how it tried to manipulate them.

Analyzing remittance transfers

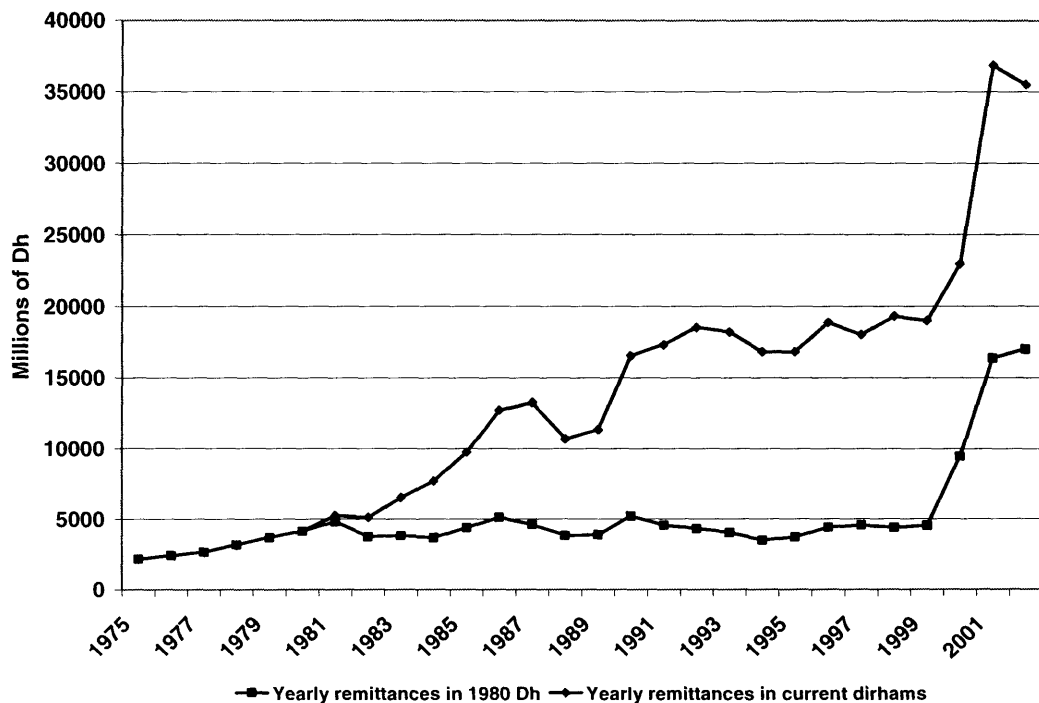
The BCP's success in drawing Moroccan emigrants into the formal banking system made their transfer and deposit practices conspicuous to the state. Through the BCP, the state was able to compile literally hundreds of thousands of data points documenting emigrant transfer and deposit behavior. Moreover, thanks to its virtual monopoly over the Moroccan remittance transfer market, the state, through the BCP, was able to gauge with a high level of validity the factors that affected emigrants' propensity to transfer their earnings to Morocco, as well as to deposit their money in Moroccan accounts. Compiled, this information provided the state with clear picture of the problem it needed to address – a picture that conveyed vectors of causality with exceptional resolution: the data indicated that emigrants were extremely cost sensitive. They responded rapidly and significantly to shifts in costs, regardless of whether those costs were generated by fluctuations in exchange rates or by the transactions involved in sending money. With the causal relationship between costs and transfers unequivocal (“We discovered a correlation coefficient very close to 1” remembered a BCP director (Interviews, BCP, Paris, 2004), the state was able to design instruments to manipulate it. It extended a series of financial incentives and cost reduction measures that acted like levers in a well-defined system to promote formal financial transfers and deposits of remittances.

The state began issuing incentives and reducing costs as early as 1973, when the government upped its public investment and needed cash. That year, the Moroccan treasury offered a 5 percent bonus on all emigrant transfers to foster the use of formal venues for sending funds. The policy had an immediate effect: emigrant remittances doubled between 1973 and 1974, from 640 million Dirhams to 1020 million Dirhams.. In late 1974, the government supplemented the bonus with a 3 percent interest rate on all savings kept in Moroccan banks, which at the time meant the BCP almost exclusively. Emigrant savings also responded quickly to the measure: migrant deposits as proportion of GDP jumped from 2.8 percent in 1972 to 5.7 percent in 1975 (See Graph 3.4).

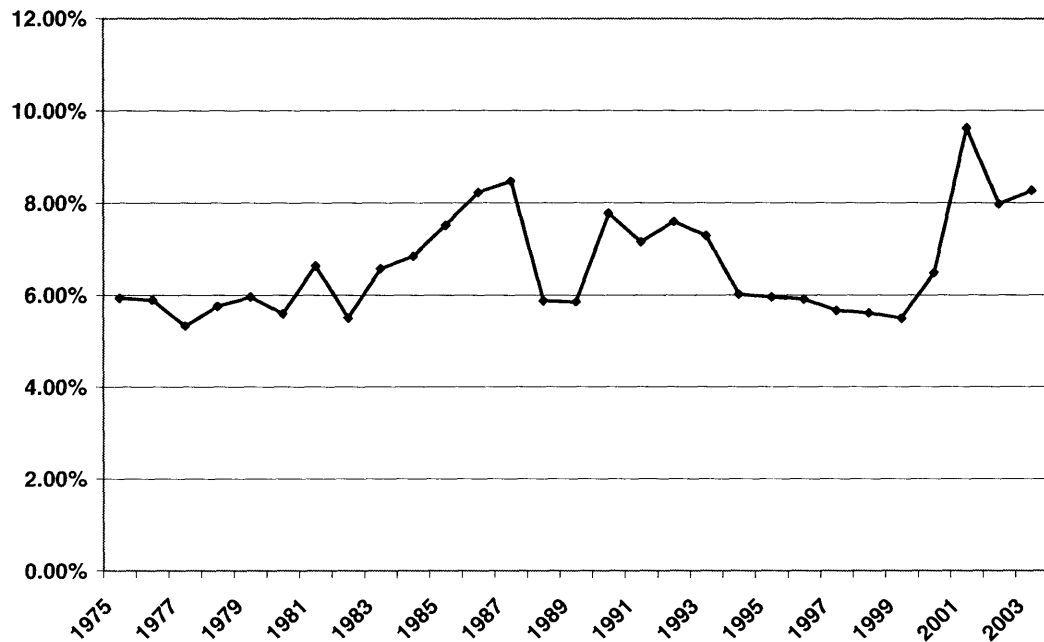
The state complemented these incentives with compensation for variable gaps between Europe currencies and the Moroccan Dirham. When the French Franc began to

slip in relation to the Moroccan Dirham in 1978, the Moroccan state began to cover the difference and mandated banks, primarily the BCP, to extend a 3 percent “fidelity bonus” to their emigrant clients. It also softened the impact of fluctuations in exchange rates between the Dirhams and other European currencies. In 1981, struggling with a serious budget deficit, the Moroccan government rescinded the 5 percent bonus on transfers, but maintained parity with the French Franc. Remittances in currencies other than the French Franc dropped precipitously the following year. Until 1987, when the government had cleared the worst of its liquidity crisis and all bonuses were discontinued, the Moroccan state engaged in a complex balancing act between its budget constraints, the value of the Dirham relative to other currencies, and its need to increase its currency reserves. It raised and then rescinded bonuses, then offered them again. At times, it compensated for shifts in exchange rates; at others, it let the disparity between currencies stand. Based on the information it collected through remittances transfers that passed through its institution, the state managed to calibrate relatively successfully: remittances remained steady throughout Morocco’s economic crisis, rising mildly in real terms between 1973 and 1990 (see Graph 3.3).

Graph 3.3: Annual Recorded Remittances to Morocco, 1975-2003



Graph 3.4: Annual Recorded Remittances to Morocco as a Percentage of GDP, 1975-2003



Sources (Graph 3.3 and 3.4): Office des Changes, Kingdom of Morocco; IMF Country Statistics

Finally, the BCP implemented several measures to reduce transaction costs for emigrants: the bank shaved a day or two off of financial transfer time; it offered services of financial convenience, allowing workers, for example, to have their European pensions and social security allocations for family members direct deposited into their accounts in Morocco; and it multiplied its branches throughout rural and urban Morocco, doubling them from 100 to 200 between 1977 and 1987. (Moroccan Office des Changes 2004; GERA 1992; Garson 1981; BCP Annual Reports, 1978-1988).

“Relational Awareness”: The BCP’s interpretive engagement continued

Alongside the analytical style of seeing and acting on which the state financial interventions were based, the BCP developed new services through its interpretive engagement with migrants. The experience the state institution had acquired in fostering and sustaining interpretive conversation with emigrants produced what can most closely

be described as “relational awareness” (Jordan 2004). Through their engagement with migrants, BCP staff developed a capacity – often tacit – to sense where the interpretive conversations were charged and generative, and where they might lead to new insight. That is not to say that they could perceive the direction in which the conversations were heading, nor that they could predict the new understandings they would produce. The conversations were as ambiguous and as murky as they had ever been: with the profile of Moroccan emigrant changing so radically after 1974, neither who the participants were nor what priorities they had was at all clear. However, the BCP, with the Moroccan state in tow, nevertheless developed a “hunch” about where to linger in the conversation, and what areas to explore with greater commitment (Peattie 2000).

In an illustration of the mutuality of “relational awareness,” the maintenance and support of the interpretive conversations depended as much on Moroccan emigrants as it did on the state bank. Through their engagement with the BCP, Moroccan emigrants also developed a sense of when to compel the financial institution and the Moroccan state to lend a more concentrated form of attentiveness to their contributions to the conversations, when to introduce new concerns that may not have seemed related to financial services at all, and when to protect the ambiguity that this generated against an analytic response.

The interpretive conversations between the BCP and emigrants allowed for the mutually creation of new meanings, and in particular, the collaborative articulation of new needs that the changing population of Moroccan living abroad was beginning to experience. The needs articulated and the policies drafted to fulfill them not only did not pre-exist the conversation, but they could not have been anticipated. They were innovations. Moreover, the policies extended by the BCP, as well as various ministries in the Moroccan government, had results that were unexpected, as migrants appropriated, and re-invented the state policies in an on-going process of interpretation.

Relational awareness and innovation: Emigrant mortgages

The BCP’s “emigrant mortgages” program exemplifies the policies produced thanks to this “organizational intuition” and the interpretive engagement that it supported. Moroccan emigrants tended to invest heavily in housing in their communities of origin: a

study conducted in 1975 indicated that 71 percent of emigrants surveyed had invested income they earned abroad in housing for their immediate families (Hamdouch et al 1979: 102). The housing was often constructed by the emigrants themselves (with the help of extended family) during periods of return to Morocco. They built their homes in stages, adding rooms and amenities as they could afford to do so; in this, they were no different than their non-emigrant neighbors (particularly in rural areas, but also in urban centers) who also built their houses in phases, treating their homes as changing living spaces that could expand to reflect an increase in wealth or to accommodate new members of the family (Berriane 1998; Mohamer 1998; Interviews, Taroudant, January 2004). In conversations between the BCP and emigrants in Europe, in the context of the bank's "strategy of accompaniment," the construction of housing in emigrants' communities of origin emerged as a compelling topic. Emigrants' aspirations to build a family home pulled the conversation in that direction, but the BCP's "relational awareness" kept it there. The BCP staff returned to the theme of housing over and over again, in an "organizational hunch" that the area represented an opportunity for the bank.

In 1978, the BCP launched a program to offer Moroccans living abroad subsidized mortgages to construct or purchase housing in Morocco. The bank used emigrants current deposits as collateral, and their history of transfers as a means to predict emigrants' creditworthiness. The program represented a significant departure from the way emigrant workers had typically conceived of housing investment, and housing *tout court*. Instead of incremental investments stretched over years, the mortgages allowed migrants to acquire a house immediately, all in one go. The product was an instant hit; within a couple of years, the bank had provided close to 8,000 emigrant mortgages, a number that corresponded to 85 percent of the loans the bank made for real estate investments (BCP, Annual Reports, 1979-1982). The reason for the program's success is that the interpretive conversations between the BCP and emigrants revised the Moroccan workers' views of housing and real estate investments. The BCP cultivated a need for mortgages that did not exist in an articulated form before the bank engaged with emigrants. As one director of the BCP put it, "we created that market out of nothing. Nobody, [none of the emigrants living in Europe were] interested in

mortgages or in houses that had already been built until we got involved. There was no market before us” (BCP, Paris, Interview, February 2004).

Just as the BCP had amended emigrant perceptions of housing and real estate investment, the emigrants appropriated state programs designed to encourage them to invest in housing in Morocco, and re-interpreted them to meet their own needs, even when those were at cross-purposes with government priorities. The Moroccan Ministry of Housing, confronted with grave housing shortages in urban areas, joined forces with the BCP to draw migrant investors into state schemes for housing construction in Morocco. The effort focused on the Kingdom’s ever more densely populated cities, targeting large metropolitan areas like Casablanca where slums expanding and growing increasingly crowded. From the late 1970s through at least the late 1980s, representatives from the Ministries of Housing, Finance, Labor and Foreign Affairs traveled to Europe a couple of times a year to meet with emigrants. In conjunction with the BCP, they promoted real estate investment through public and semi-public ventures. Referring to the houses constructed by the state in Morocco, BCP director described the collaboration in the following way: “the state built it and we sold it” (Interview, BCP, Paris, February 2004). At one point, the state reserved 20 percent on all lodging built with government credit for emigrant clients. However, emigrants were, on the whole, not interested in buying public housing in Morocco’s large cities. Because migrants were still generally keen on buying or building housing in their communities of origin, they deflected the program to small emerging semi-urban centers in the predominantly rural areas from which they heralded. As a result, the effect of migrant participation in the initiative was geographically concentrated in emigrant sending areas, far removed from the Kingdom large cities. In migrant sending regions, emigrant clients represented a respectable 15 percent of all participants in public housing programs. (Charef 1995; GERA 1992).

Relational awareness: relating banking and cultural identity

What emigrants’ “relational awareness” brought to their interpretive engagement with the BCP is best illustrated by the connection that emerged between banking with the state institution and Moroccan cultural identity. The BCP initially forged the relationships

with Moroccan emigrants that would allow for the creation of an interpretive space by asserting a shared cultural background with the workers. While in actuality the social and cultural distance between BCP extension officers and the emigrants was quite large, the BCP's engagement with Moroccan workers was swaddled in signifiers of Moroccan identity: BCP staff spoke with their emigrant clients in Moroccan Arabic and invoked common cultural and religious points of reference; they engaged in practices that were manifestly, even stereotypically, Moroccan, like drinking Moroccan tea or sharing a Moroccan meal eaten with the hands from a common plate (Interviews, BCP, Paris, Casablanca, Brussels, January –March 2004).

From the mid-1970s onward, as the Moroccan state became more determined to augment the flow of remittances, the cultural allusions evolved into a clear marketing strategy and concrete financial services that equated banking with the BCP with maintaining a Moroccan identity, in much the same way conversations about the use of remittances produced “emigrant mortgages.” The BCP began to distribute marketing materials that explicitly evoked themes of national belonging: on the BCP's posters, for example, people were drawn wearing Moroccan traditional dress, and images of trees, with pronounced roots, appeared over and over again, in a clear trope that likened banking with the BCP to returning to one's cultural and national roots (see Illustration 3.1). Similarly, the BCP extended various forms of insurance that cemented migrant ties to Morocco: these included insurance for the travel between Morocco and Europe, insurance to cover the costs of emergency trips to Morocco should a relative fall ill, and insurance for the repatriation of bodies. “Even if the emigrants are less certain about returning home to live, many, instead, want to be buried in the region of origin. A new demand emerges, therefore, for repatriation of the body in case of death,” reflected a former delegate general for Moroccans living abroad at the BCP (qtd. in Monnet 1998). The BCP also funded regular Moroccan cultural events in Europe, including the annual “Fête du Trône” to celebrate the anniversary of the King's ascension to power, and established a foundation dedicated to cultivating the lived cultural identity of Moroccan emigrants and of their children. The foundation's first major project was to open a school in 1984 in Agadir, a major port city in the Moroccan Souss, for the children of emigrants who had decided to return to Morocco, a project it has since duplicated in Tangier (BCP

1986; BCP 2003; BCP Annual Reports 1979-1990; Interviews, BCP, ATMF, Paris, February 2004; Garson et al. 1981).

Illustration 3.1: Sample of BCP Marketing Material: “My Future, My Roots, My Bank”



**MON AVENIR
MES RACINES
MA BANQUE**

30 ans de partenariat ont scellé entre la Banque Populaire et ses clients, Résidents Marocains à l'Etranger, des relations avantageuses faites de confiance, de fidélité et de qualité. Assurément, la Banque Populaire a réussi ce pari parce que, très tôt, elle a fait le choix résolu de servir ses clients établis à l'Etranger. Elle est depuis, demeurée toujours très attentive à leurs attentes, anticipant l'évolution de leurs besoins et participant activement à la réussite de tous leurs projets. Cette alliance exceptionnelle entre la Banque Populaire et ses clients est le meilleur garant pour des relations d'avenir faites de proximité des préoccupations et de symbiose des solutions.

البنك الشعبي
banque populaire

Source: Rivages 1991

However, the type of national and cultural identity that the BCP, as state institution operating out of Moroccan embassies and consulates, promoted amongst Moroccan emigrants was politically-loaded and was a direct expression of state policy. It endorsed a form of national subjectivity that was based on individual allegiance to the King and to the Kingdom as a whole of which Hassan II was the steward. The cultural identity the BCP promoted was a deterritorialized version of Moroccan subjectivity, explicitly delinked from any sense of political belonging to regions within Morocco and to the political claims on behalf of those areas that a regional identity might support. The marketing material and the cultural events the BCP produced generally did not make reference to any particular area in Morocco, even though the origins of the stock of Moroccan emigrants in Europe were still quite regionally concentrated, with an overrepresentation of migrants from the south and north of the country. The identity fostered was also Arab, as opposed to Berber. In keeping with a state policy to repress expression of Amazight, or Berber, identity and to suppress the use of Tamazight, the language of Amazight peoples, BCP materials were presented either in Arabic or in the language of the European migrant host country, never in Tamazight languages, even though emigration was particularly strong from Morocco Berber regions and many migrants spoke Arabic only as a second language. (BCP 1986, 1991, and 2003; Berber article; Interviews, Brussels & Paris, February 2004)

Just as with “emigrant mortgages,” however, the Moroccan identity that became associated with the BCP was modulated and transformed by the migrants themselves through their engagement with the BCP. Moroccan emigrants appropriated the spaces and services that the BCP provided, both in Europe and in Morocco, and used them as material in the construction of identities that were profoundly transnational and uniquely expressive of their experiences as migrants and as workers in Europe, but at the same firmly rooted in their communities of origin and in specific regions of Morocco. For example, during the summer months, when Moroccan emigrants returned to their communities of origin for their vacations, they turned the BCP bank branches in Morocco, located in rural centers throughout the country, into gathering areas. Migrants converted BCP’s bald rural offices, some of which were set up temporarily, into festive spaces, where they not only completed their bank transactions, but where they caught up

with friends and neighbors from the region who had also migrated to Europe and who were also there doing their banking. For a few months each summer, they transformed the BCP offices into places that were theirs. Bank branches became transnational spaces in communities of origin, where emigrants' economic success was recognized (and paraded) and where the unspoken trials of their experiences as migrants workers in sometimes less than hospitable European working and living environments were understood by friends and kinfolk who had also left in search of work. An anecdote recounted by a BCP director who in the mid-1980s supervised several rural branch offices illustrates this well:

The lines were always really long during the summer. The branches would be full of migrants who had returned home for the "vacances." The lines were out the door. Migrants brought their kids – kids would screaming and playing as their fathers stood in line. And you know, people would catch up, talk about what they had been doing, how things were going for them in France, in Belgium, or wherever they had gone. At a certain point [in the mid-1980s], other banks started to try and penetrate the MRE [Marocains Residant à l'Etranger -- Moroccans living abroad] market. [One of our competitors] opened a branch right next door to ours, and they had this guy standing right in front of our entrance. The guy spend the whole day trying to poach our clients, telling him that service at him was better, faster, cheaper; that the lines were shorter. Finally, he convinces one of our clients to follow him. When the man walks into [our competitor's] branch, he turns right around and leaves. And I overhear him yelling back at the [other bank's] guy that he's not banking there, that the place is empty, there's no one there, and that he's no fool, he's not going someplace where he's the only one. (Interview, BCP, Casablanca, January 2004).

The director's description also captures the understanding that the BCP developed over the course of the 1980s that emigrants' appropriation of BCP spaces served the bank's business interests. It reflects the realization that the bank occupied a privileged position in remittance banking as an institution emigrants viewed as a place where their experience as emigrant workers with lives "on both shores [of the Mediterranean]" – experiences that were fully seen neither in Europe nor in Morocco – were perceived and where the financial and social needs that grew out of that transnational existence were addressed. Marketing material from the 1980s promoted the sense of "being seen" by the bank – a sense that emigrants had created in part through their *own* appropriation of BCP: "Our long experience serving Moroccan workers abroad is the strength that allows us to

execute your banking operations better and help you realize your dreams” read a poster distributed in the 1980s (BCP 1991: 21). “We want Moroccans living abroad to know that the bank is theirs,” added the director later in the interview (Interview, BCP, Casablanca, January 2004).

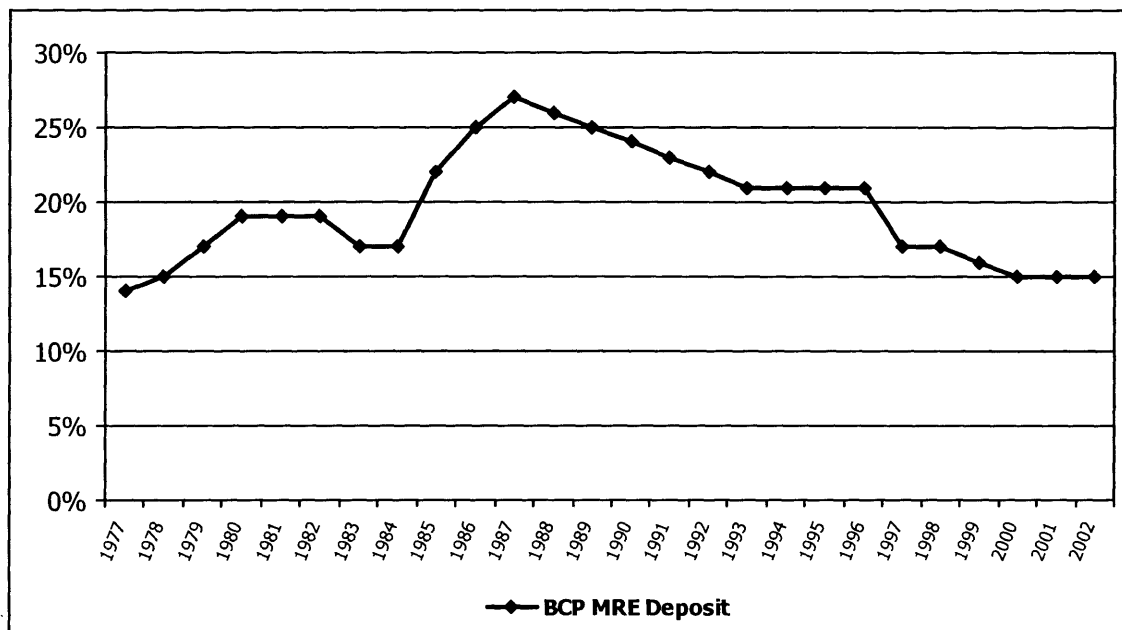
Seeing results: Interpretation and liquidity

The efforts of the BCP, and of the state to which it belonged, to promote and expand emigrant banking after Europe closed its borders showed results that were outstanding by any measure. Through straightforward financial incentives combined with a host of services tailored to emigrant socio-economic needs, the BCP and the Moroccan state extended the Moroccan national economy into Europe. The BCP brought huge numbers of Moroccan emigrants into the Kingdom’s banking system, even as emigrants were increasingly settling permanently in Europe. In 1990, when the total population of Moroccans living in Europe was estimated at 1 million -- a number that included men, women and children-- the BCP had an astounding 400,000 emigrant clients. The BCP continued to handle most remittance transfers that, to the institution’s credit, remained steady in real terms through the 1980s even after migrants brought their families to live with them. This accomplishment seems all the more remarkable when considered in the light of prevailing theories on migrant remittance behavior which predict that as emigrants settle abroad, and especially after they call their families to join them, remittances drop off precipitously. Remittance transfers grew as a proportion of GDP, expanding from 5 percent in 1975 to somewhere between 6 and 8 percent throughout the 1980s. Even more significant that the remittance transfers were the deposits that migrants held in the Moroccan banking system. During the 1980s, the emigrants deposits that the BCP held represented an average of 20 percent of the *total deposits* in Moroccan banks, peaking at close to 30 percent in 1987 (see Graph 3.5). (BCP Annual Reports 1977-2002; IMF 2005; Office des Changes, Morocco, 2002).

Another indicator of the effectiveness of Moroccan state policy and of the BCP’s success with the emigrant market is the high proportion of Moroccans that used formal channels for remittance transfer. In 1981, the French National Foundation for the Political Science published a survey on immigrants’ financial behavior, with a particular

focus on monetary remittances to migrants' countries of origin. The study found that not only did Moroccan emigrants as a group transfer significantly more money than any other migrant group surveyed (which included immigrants from Portugal, Italy, Spain, Tunisia and Algeria), sending an average of 20 percent more money than the Tunisians who came in second, more Moroccans remitted their earnings than any other immigrant group, with a low 14 percent transferring none of their income to their country of origin compared to an average of 31 percent for all groups surveyed. Moroccans were also twice as likely as any other immigrant group to be aware of financial institutions that enabled them to place their savings in accounts in their country of origin (Garson et al. 1981).

Graph 3.5: BCP Moroccan Emigrant Deposits as a Share of Total National Deposits, 1977-2002



Source: BCP Annual Reports, 1978-2002; IMF Annual Reports, 1977-2002

In and of themselves, the vast sums of money migrant send home would have had an important impact on the Moroccan economy, particularly at a time when the Kingdom was in desperate need of foreign currency. However, representing at least one third of the nation's financial sector from the 1970s and 1980s, the BCP was also one of the Moroccan state's main financiers. By extension, so were the migrants who held the lions share of the banks deposits, and whose millions of dollars in yearly transfers the bank

held for at least a day or two as they passed through the BCP system. While definitive data on exactly where and to whom the BCP tendered its funds is impossible to obtain, press reports suggests that the BCP played a dominant role in the Kingdom's Moroccanization program and underwrote not only the war in the Western Sahara but also capital intensive investment for public, semi-public, and to a lesser extent, private enterprises in Morocco's coastal cities (AND 1993; Interviews, Banque Al-Maghrib, March 2004). In addition to supporting their families, Morocco's emigrant workers bankrolled the development of heavy industry and agri-business – development that for the most part bypassed the communities from which most migrants came and where many of their families still lived.

From workers to organizers: Interpretation in conflict

As the Moroccan government built more institutions to extend the nation's economic space past the Kingdom's frontiers and to include emigrants who were settling abroad, the regime also tried to extend its political control to Moroccans who looked increasingly likely to remain in Europe indefinitely. It attempted to exert the same political dominion over Moroccan economic and social spaces abroad as it did within the boundaries of the Kingdom. However, over the fifteen years that elapsed after Europe closed its borders to labor immigration, the Moroccan regime's political approach to Moroccans living abroad changed significantly. The Moroccan state went from the crude application of state violence to more nuanced and insidious forms of intimidation that played on nationalist themes to attempts to co-opt Moroccan emigrant labor movements that, in the ensuing decade, had grown increasingly organized and sophisticated in their political analysis.

The evolution of Moroccan state tactics to control the political activities of Moroccans living abroad grew directly out of its engagement with emigrants. Through its interactions with Moroccan emigrant workers, the Moroccan government opened up interpretive conversations that, over time, transformed state perceptions of who Moroccan emigrants were and of what their capacities for collective political action meant for the regime. Through those same interactions, Moroccan emigrant workers and organizers also developed new critiques of the Moroccan regime, linking their

exploitation as workers in Europe to Moroccan state actions, and appropriated a new vocabulary, couched in language of human rights, to challenge Moroccan state attempts to control their activities.

Significantly, the engagement of the Moroccan state with emigrant labor activists generated new insights for both migrant and the state *even though the conversations were highly conflictual*. The conversations were riddled with confrontation and bitter recriminations, and the Moroccan state's heavy hand-handed attempts to silence emigrant activists made the conversations jagged, proceeding in fits and starts. And yet, contrary to what the theories on interpretive conversations and on the amicable conditions necessary to perpetuate them would predict, the conversations between the Moroccan state and Moroccan emigrant labor organizers remained a durable source of new understandings about the relationship between Moroccan communities abroad and their country of origin. The reason for this is that the Moroccan state and Moroccan emigrant activists were compelled to remain engaged with one another, and more importantly, to discover the understandings that drove their respective actions. For Morocco, losing political control over a segment of the population that pumped a hefty portion of the national income into the Kingdom each year and whose deposits bankrolled state investments and military expenditures was inconceivable. Moroccan emigrants were forced to engage with the state in order to resist state maneuvers to defeat their labor mobilizations and to suppress their criticism of the Moroccan regime, and of the King in particular.

The jagged quality of the conflictual conversations was due to the lag between the emergence of the insights the engagement produced and the state's implementation of them. The new understandings about political and cultural changes in the Moroccan emigrant population that emerged out that engagement contained implicit challenges to the monarchical hegemony in Morocco and to the methods the crown used to enforce it. As a result, the state resisted acting on those insights as long as possible responding to them only when not acting would have severed the engagement between the state and Moroccan emigrants. In a reflection of this heaving and uneven pattern, shifts in the relationship between emigrants and the state surfaced at three separate historical moments. The first was during a resurgence of Moroccan labor protests in the mid-1970s,

a last fulmination of the labor mobilization over working conditions that began in the early 1970s; the second occurred during labor protests of the early 1980s, as Moroccan, and other immigrant, workers mobilized against massive layoffs by European heavy industry restructuring to cope with an economic downturn; and the third took place during Moroccan emigrant strikes of the late 1980, as Moroccan workers protested the conditions under which they were discharged when Europe closed down many of its primary resource extraction outfits, mostly coal mines. While these three moments of intense labor mobilization were roughly synchronous in the four major countries that used Moroccan labor, their correlation with the articulation of new understandings about the relationship of the Moroccan diaspora to the political and economy trajectory of the Kingdom was clearest in France, where the majority of Moroccan emigrants lived and worked. As a result, the description of the evolution of the interpretive engagement between the Moroccan state and Moroccan emigrant workers presented here is based primarily in France.

Controlling labor: Moroccan state tactics

In the mid-1970s, in the midst of the wave of immigrant labor protest that was sweeping through France's industrial areas and in which Moroccan workers featured prominently, the Moroccan government extended to Moroccan workers in Europe the same repression it applied to labor organizers within the Kingdom. For a brief period in the early 1970s, the crown had afforded the Moroccan trade union movement, embodied in the Moroccan Workers' Union (Union des Travailleurs Marocains – UMT), some restricted latitude for action to counterbalance opposition to the monarchy from the urban bourgeoisie and from dispossessed peasants who had organized armed rebellions. Although kept on a tight leash by the state, the UMT was able to lead several hundred strikes in 1971 and 1973, though virtually all of them defensive, and its membership grew by a fifth, between 1970 and 1973, swelling to about twenty percent of workers in the formal private and public sectors. However, by the end of 1973, the effort to co-opt segments of the opposition through minimal concession and drive a wedge between rural peasants and urban workers was abandoned; the iron fist of the Sultanate came down unexpectedly hard on Morocco's organized labor. By the time the Kingdom had

embarked on its Sahara campaign in 1975, labor protests were deemed a form of treason. As observer of Moroccan politics, Jean-François Clément, remarked: “Beginning in 1975, the country was sunk in a state of hysteria and war. At a time when strikers were condemned as traitors, neither workers nor unions could risk a militant stance” (1984: 24). In its determination to snuff out labor protest activity, the crown made no distinction between Moroccan workers in Morocco and Moroccan workers in Europe; a Middle East Research and Information Project dispatch from 1977 reported that: “Moroccan workers are subject to arrest for even restricted expressions of militancy and those who emigrate to France are regularly turned over by the French to the Moroccan police for political or trade union activity” (1977: 17). (Clément 1984; MERIP 1977).

To control Moroccan workers in Europe, the Moroccan regime complemented the shadowy “management consultants” it sent to European enterprises that used Moroccan labor with a network of so-called “Friendship Societies” or “*Amicales*.” The first “Friendship Society of Moroccan Workers and Traders” was established in Paris in 1973, but others quickly cropped up in cities throughout Europe that had large concentrations of Moroccan workers. The Friendship Societies’ official mandate was to “establish contacts with the consulates, with the administration of both countries [e.g. Morocco and the migrant-receiving country], and in a more general fashion, with all the organizations that concerned with the situation of Moroccan workers and traders and their families” (Belbahri 1994: 306). Their unofficial role was far less communitarian. The Friendship societies were set up as extensions of Moroccan embassies and consulates (as well as, some argue, with the Moroccan Secret Police), and in that capacity, they acted as agents of the Moroccan state in labor disputes that involved Moroccan workers. They acted as state-sponsored organizers of gangs who would physically intimidate workers who engaged in any sort of labor mobilization, including anything from distributing pro-labor and pro-union literature to participating in work slowdowns (“working to rule”) or strikes. (Daoud 2004; Baroudi 2005; ATMF 1984; Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004).

Their primary function, however, was to serve as informers, providing the Moroccan government and employers with lists of Moroccan workers who were either labor organizers or who had simply refused to join management unions. Those workers

who were identified as labor agitators were routinely fired. The workers were either dismissed directly by their employers, or the Moroccan government revoked their passports and national identification documents, which foreclosed the legal renewal of employment contracts. The Moroccan government also confiscated documents of suspected labor organizers at the Moroccan border, which made their return to Europe impossible. In a number of cases, the Moroccan authorities resorted to measures that were more drastic and took labor organizers into custody. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, literally hundreds of labor organizers were arrested or disappeared when they returned to Morocco during their vacations. “The Moroccan authorities wanted to rope in the Moroccan community abroad, which is why they created the Friendship Societies, [that were] directed by the Moroccan police,” remembered Mohamed El Baroudi, Moroccan leftist activist in Belgium, in a recent interview. “[These were] associations that terrorized, informed on Moroccan activists... [They] waited for them at customs to denounce them as labor agitators! Also, worth noting is the disappearance of Moroccan activists at that time....” (Baroudi 2005). (Daoud 2004; Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004; ATMF 1984; Belgendouz 1999).

The 1975 strike at the Chausson automobile factory near Paris was, as one labor organizer put it, Moroccan workers’ “first real response” to the Moroccan government’s tactics (Vidal 2005). Moroccan workers had been organizing at the Chausson factory under the guidance of the CGT and with the help of the AMF since 1971, but in 1975, they joined forces with immigrant co-workers from “Italy, Spain, North Africa, and sub-Saharan African” to stage a major labor protest that brought production at the large automobile plant to halt for several months in the spring (Traversian 2004). As part of the mobilization, the Moroccan workers, in conjunction with the AMF, ran a campaign to have representatives of the local Friendship Society – “pigs in the plant – *des flic dans l’entreprise*” that were “connected to the embassy” (Massera, qtd. in Traversian 2004) -- excluded from worker meetings and expelled from the plant premises. As part of this effort, labor activist uncovered documentation proving the working relationship between the Friendship Societies, the Moroccan embassy and consulates, and the secret police apparatus Ministry of Interior. The Moroccan strikers named names (ATMF 1984: 10). In response, the Moroccan authorities orchestrated an aggressive round-up during

summer of 1975, incarcerating a hundred and five Moroccan emigrants who had participated in the labor protests. At summer's end, the CGT organized a rally at Saint-Ouen near Paris for the missing Moroccans. With the French national press reporting on the event, thousands demanded their release. The Moroccans were eventually freed and allowed to return to France, but all of them, without exception, found that they had been laid off during their enforced absence²⁵ (Daoud 2004; ATMF 1984). (ATMF 1984; Daoud 2004; Vidal 2005; Traversian 2004; Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004).

Controlling labor: Emigrants articulate the role of the Moroccan regime

The Moroccan state's crude repression of Moroccan labor activists in Europe continued, and over time, changed emigrant workers' analysis of the factors that led to their exploitation as immigrant labor. The state's tactics re-opened up old fissures in the alliance between Moroccan emigrant workers and the Moroccan leftist opposition in exile: under Moroccan state pressure, the healed fractures broke open once again, debilitating the coalition between Moroccan leftist and workers. In France, emigrant workers began to feel that the Moroccan oppositions' attention was trained principally on events in the homeland, often at the expense of attention to the concerns of Moroccan workers in Europe. This difference in priorities began to widen into an estrangement during Hassan II's Green March into the Western Sahara in 1975: for many leftists, maintaining an appearance of national unity overrode the defense of Moroccan emigrant workers against the repression they endured at the hands of their home government. Many Moroccan workers in the AMF experienced this as a profound betrayal: "To see comrades marching alongside those that cried "Long live the King!" and alongside the Friendship Societies disturbed me deeply. It's one of my worst memories," recalled one worker member of the AMF (qtd. in Daoud 2004: 43).

The divide between the leftists and the workers became definitive in 1981, after the popular uprising in Casablanca. In May of that year, the Moroccan government had announced rollbacks on subsidies of basic foodstuffs, as mandated by the terms of its loan agreement with the IMF. In response, the UMT called for a general strike in

²⁵ So scandalized was the French labor movement by the incident that a short documentary on the subject was produced. (Daoud 2004; Vidal 2005)

Casablanca on June 18th; two days later, the enormously successful strike exploded into a mass popular uprising against a regime perceived as authoritarian and corrupt. The Moroccan army advanced on Casablanca and other cities to which the uprising had spread (Paul 1981). By the time the military had put down the rebellion, over six hundred protesters were dead, thousands more wounded, and reports of between 2,000 and 5,000 arrested, among them at least 200 prominent union and political leaders, were issued by the palace and by opposition groups (Slyomovics 2005: 109-113; Paul 1981). Leftist opposition groups in Europe, the AMF among them, organized widespread demonstrations against the Moroccan government's violent actions. However, those protests never made the link between the monarchy's harsh measures against labor leaders and workers in Morocco and those that it deployed against Moroccan workers and organizers in Europe (Daoud 2004).

Frustrated with the leftist opposition singular concern with political events in Morocco, Moroccan workers in the AMF split off from the mother organization in 1982 to form the ATMF – Association des *Travailleurs* Marocains en France, literally the Association of Moroccan *Workers* in France. As its name indicated, the association focused much more centrally than the AMF on the concerns of Moroccan emigrant labor. One of the founders of the new organization explained, “We felt there needed to be a coherence between what we defended, what we fought for and the realities that we faced as immigrants, and for us, those realities were primordial” (Interview, ATMF, Paris, February 2004). The new organization made explicit new perceptions of the Moroccan government that the emigrant workers had developed through their interactions with it. Specifically, the ATMF articulated the connections that emigrant workers saw between Moroccan state repression of labor activism in Morocco and in Europe, and between Moroccan state actions against them and the exploitative conditions under which they worked. The founding platform of the ATMF codified these new understandings and featured them as the driving *raison d'être* of the organization: “As immigrant workers, we are the victims of capitalist exploitation by our country [Morocco] and of the collaboration of the reactionary Moroccan regime with imperialist interests...in France, we are the scapegoats; since the 1970s, over and above [the] exploitation [of our labor],

we have lived under repression and under conditions of constant insecurity” (qtd. in Daoud 2004: 53).

Escalating engagement: Moroccan state tactics and the Citroen strikes

During the labor protests against widespread immigrant layoffs in European heavy industry in the early 1980s, the Moroccan government proved the emigrants’ analysis correct. Just as it had in Morocco after the Casablanca uprising, the Moroccan state ratcheted-up its stratagems against Moroccan labor mobilization in Europe. It intensified its practices of nullifying passports and national identification documents, and of taking Moroccan emigrants into state custody upon their return to Morocco for family visits. However, the Moroccan regime also added to its arsenal myriad new forms of bullying and intimidation, most of them applied through the increasingly infamous Friendship Societies. These displayed two new traits: first, they used more intimate forms of persuasion, with members of Friendships Societies or representatives of the government engaging with emigrants in an intensive BCP style, lacing the social niceties of everyday interactions with chilling threats to emigrants and to their families. Second, they played on notions of cultural belonging, stressing that participating in labor protests ran counter to emigrants’ identity as Moroccan. Both of these features emerged prominently in the Moroccan government’s attempt to smother the major strikes in the French auto industry in the early 1980s. These strikes were unprecedented in their magnitude, and the sight of tens of thousands of immigrant workers, Moroccans well-represented among them, taking to the streets and occupying the country’s larger auto plants profoundly unnerved both the French establishment and the Moroccan regime, which was still trying to reassert control over the Kingdom’s rebellious poor (Oakes 1984).

The Moroccan emigrant strikes targeted the Citroen group, which after acquiring Peugeot and Talbot, became one of the largest auto producers in the world during the 1980s and a symbol for European heavy industry use of migrant labor (Lewis 1986). The group produced over half of all the autos turned out in France (ATMF 1984: 58). It was also one of the largest employers of immigrants, especially Moroccans, in the republic: two-thirds of its 12,000 strong workforce at Citroen factories was immigrant, and of that

group, Moroccans numbered 5,000, followed by other North Africans (primarily Algerian and Tunisian) at a distant 1,300 (ATMF 1984: 58). Immigrant workers called Citroen, “the factory of fear – *l’usine de la peur*” (ATMF 1984: 59; Daoud 2004: 61; Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004). They drew a strong analogy between the conditions they faced there and those in force in Morocco: “At Citroen, there’s repression, just like in Morocco,” commented one worker (qtd in Daoud 2004: 48). Workers compared the factories of the Citroen group to prisons, complaining that they were shuttled by company vans directly from the plants where they worked to worker dormitories; unauthorized visits were not permitted, and workers were fired for any suspected labor mobilization activity.

The working conditions, already difficult, were becoming intolerable to workers. Labor leaders claimed that the company engineered line-speed-ups with cadences that were impossible to maintain, as a pretext for firing workers—in essence, a way to get around some of the French state regulation that tempered, if only slightly, the massive layoffs of immigrant labor as the auto industry underwent a profound restructuring (Valentin 1996; Kutschera 1984). (“You have to pick up a piece that weighs up to 6 kilos, put it down, press it, pick up again; the cadence varies from 500 to 550 an hour...you just can’t finish” recalled one worker of the speed up (Abdel Razzak qtd in Kutschera 1984)). In April of 1982, 1,500 workers at a Citroen plant stage a slow-down and then a strike to protest the increase in line speed. Within a week, the strike spread to other plants, and mushroomed to close to 10,000 workers. Over the next two years, the Citroen group saw repeated labor unrest and strikes disrupt production at its factories: the strikes that began at Citroen plants spread to the Talbot factories it had acquired (Bernstein 1984; ATMF 1987). Moroccan workers, with the ATMF at their side, were leaders of the labor mobilization (Daoud 2004).

Faced with labor mobilizations by its nationals that were shutting down production in major segment of the French automobile industry, the Moroccan government took strong measures. It resorted the usual physical intimidation (workers also reported the torching of cars and homes (Daoud 2004)) and bureaucratic harassment through the confiscation of passports. In advance over the tactics of the 1975, however, the Moroccan blended persuasion with duress. Consulates dispatched members of

Friendship Societies to talk workers out of participating in the strike. The diplomatic service funded a host of cultural and social events nominally sponsored by the Friendship Societies, and at these barbecues, concerts and prayer sessions, emigrant workers were informally advised against participating in the escalating strikes. In particular, workers reported that they were told that the labor conflict was French problem that did not concern Moroccans (*ça nous regarde pas*), and in an informal misinformation campaign, were assured that participating also invariably resulted in deportation (Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004; Interviews, Taroudant, January 2004; Interviews, Mohamed V University, Rabat, March 2004; Kutschera 1984). Workers also remember visits to their homes when they were told to stay out of the labor struggles; the exhortations followed a common refrain:

You came here to work, not to do politics...You should be satisfied with what you have and thank God for what he has given you. What would happen to your family if you lost your job? Citroen can replace you at a moment's notice, they are millions of arms waiting for the opportunity...And don't forget how we deal with hotheads at home (ATMF 1984: 63)

These chats was not infrequently closed with a recommendation to Moroccan workers that they “think of [their] family back in Morocco” (qtd. in Canard Enchaîné, in ATMF 1984: 103), a thinly veiled threat. Friendship Society members also offered to facilitate loans from the BCP (they also threatened to impede loans as well as access to personal funds), suggesting a less than ethical affiliation between the BCP and the Friendship Societies, and by extension, between the BCP and the Moroccan Ministry of Interior's police services (Kutshera 1984; Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004; Daoud 2004).

The Moroccan government backed up these informal “social calls” with consular visits to factories and worker meetings. The consular officials stressed repeatedly that participation in the strikes was un-Moroccan. During the Talbot strike, for example, the ambassador and the social affairs counselor at the Moroccan embassy in Paris summoned migrant workers in small groups to “give them a lesson”: as workers reported, the ambassador attacked them, saying, “For two years [the duration of the labor mobilization leading up to the Talbot strike], we knew the socialists and the communists would lead you to this point where you are today...A Moroccan worker worthy of his nation know how to fight [such pressures]” (Le Canard enchaîné, January 25, 1984, reprinted in

ATMF 1984). Workers were also informed that the dues they were paying to French unions were “destined to finance the enemies of [their] country in the Western Sahara,” and that the Moroccan government “concerned about their future,” insinuating that their participation in the strike might be considered a form of treason against the state, with all the ensuing consequences, which, under the repression that earned that period of Moroccan history the moniker “the leaden years,” were predictably dire. The consular message were reinforced with royal admonitions in which the King counseled them to “remain Moroccan, remain Moroccan always” and ready to obey the political mandates of their homeland²⁶ (Belgendouz 1998). The King’s directives were reiterated through numerous letters that workers received at their homes or in their lockers in the factory, from groups such “Africa Express—*Afrique Express*” and “the Association of the Green Star (symbols of Islam and Morocco)—*Association de l’etoile verte*” urging them to preserve the reputation of Moroccan workers, to refrain from labor unrest in the name of their faith, and to send any “confidential” information they wished to an address in Casablanca (Sans Frontières 1983, in ATMF 1984).

Escalating engagement: Identifying oppression and Moroccan identities of resistance

Moroccan workers responded in two ways to the escalation of Moroccan state pressure on their labor mobilization. First, they organized. To break the intimacy of the state’s style of engaged intimidation, the ATMF began to document systematically the practices of the Moroccan government and its affiliates. The goal was to make the seemingly “social” practices transparent as political bullying and strike-breaking, and

²⁶ The full passage of this excerpt from the speech that Hassan II delivered on 29 Nov. 1985, to representatives of the Moroccan community in Paris, in the presence of Francois Mitterand (president at the time), was full of allusions that were have been interpretive clearly and powerfully by the Moroccan community abroad. It reads as follows: “I do not want to end this speech without exhorting you to remain authentically yourselves, even while opening yourself to your current situations and the future of your world; you live alongside a certain number of foreign communities, and you have surely noticed that you are at once light and anchored because you have an authenticity that is real, that you radiate et that you communicate and that demands that you be respected. Well, remain Moroccan, remain Moroccan because always, be it in peace or in strife, myself or those what will succeed me may one day need to take up another Green March. Well, I want for you, in the name of all Moroccans living abroad, not just in France or in Paris, to take a vow that all the young Moroccan that are born in foreign lands with be dedicated, even in their cribs, to the marches that history will ask of them.” (qtd. in Belgendouz 1998)

therefore, subject to organized challenge. The organization compiled lists of people whose travel documents had been docked or who had been arrested. It recorded incidents of intimidation by Friendship Societies and by the consular staff. It collected accounts of the rhetoric with which members of Friendship Society plied workers during their visits, and it tallied instances of implied threat, like suspicious correspondence or being followed. The information was then passed on to French unions that supported workers in their strikes and to the French press. In Belgium, Holland, and Germany, the chief labor-supportive Moroccan organizations²⁷ carried out similar resistance activities to respond to the tactics of the Moroccan government against labor protests in those countries (Ouali 2004; Van de Valk 2004; Daoud 2004). In the early eighties, they finalized a compact – the Common Charter for the Coordination of Moroccan Democratic Associations in Europe – to share information and synchronize their efforts to “confront the repression imposed on Moroccan communities abroad and on Moroccans as a whole by the repressive apparatus of the Moroccan regime” (ATMF et al. n.d. circa 1982-4: 16). (ATMF 1984; ATMF correspondence 1982-85, ATMF archives; ATMF et al. n.d. circa 1982-4; Interviews, ATMF, Paris, 2004; Interviews, Brussels, February 2004).

Second, Moroccan workers and labor activists asserted their identities as Moroccans, independent of Moroccan state approbation. They did this both in the context of their labor protests and in the context of their communities. Even though the workers on strike were not exclusively Moroccan, the Citroen/Talbot strikes took on a distinctly Moroccan flavor. The recollections of an ATMF activist organizer who joined the workers at the Aulney Citroen factory in a 1982 strike illustrates this well:

The workers from the Atlas Mountains and from the Souss, from the extreme south, with their Sahroui turbans, turned to their old guerilla reflexes: ...workers threw hot oil on the doors to close them off, machine tools were used to fight management militias, helicopters flew over [the] Aulney [Citroen factory] to bombard the occupants...Deprived of food, the workers had to rely on the factory cafeteria. Some Soussis worried, “is it *alouf* [meat not slaughtered according to the precepts of the Koran and therefore forbidden]? Others answered, “Say *bismillah* [in the name of God] and eat!”...[The workers] invented a language made of up a mix of French, Arabic, [and]

²⁷ In Belgium: Regroupement Démocratique Marocain en Belgique ; in Holland, Association de Travailleurs Marocains en Hollande ; in West Germany, Union des Travailleurs Marocains en Allemagne.

Berber. Those were very important and meaningful times – *des moments très forts*. (qtd. in Daoud 2004: 62)

Outside the factories, the ATMF organized cultural activities that expressed Moroccan identities and artforms. The most important of these were the yearly *moussems*, days-long festivals that the ATMF organized with other Moroccan organizations throughout Europe. These “grand festivals of humanity” as one organizer called them were held yearly in different cities throughout Europe, and invited performance groups from Morocco to participate. They also served as means to publicize Moroccan emigrant labor strikes throughout Europe. In 1982, at the height of the Citroen strike, the *mousssem* was held in Amsterdam, and over a thousand Moroccans from France traveled north to join the festivities but also to broadcast information about the struggle of Moroccan workers with the auto manufacturer and the Moroccan government (Daoud 2004: 64; Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004; ATMF archives, 1980-1990).

By the end of 1984, it had become clear the Moroccan workers lost their labor fight against Citroen. The strikers were forced to accept massive layoffs: over the next several years, the Citroen group, facing chronic profit shortfalls, would dismiss over half of its immigrant workforce (Daoud 2004; ATMF 1984; Lewis 1986; Berstein 1984). The message of the strikes’ denouement was clear: immigrant layoffs would continue despite workers protests. “We were defeated,” concluded an ATMF organizer (Interview, Paris, February 2004).

The Moroccan state, however, profoundly unsettled by the sheer magnitude of Moroccan emigrant worker protests, was not reassured by this outcome. The capacity to mobilize toward an end that the Moroccan government viewed as seditious was enough to unnerve the regime (Interviews, Mohamed V University, Rabat, March 2003). The wave of popular uprising that swept through Morocco in 1984, after the state announced yet another rollback of subsidies for food and other services, undoubtedly made the regime more sensitive to the threat that emigrant worker mobilization might represent. On January 5th, a protest by high school students in Marrakech over a hike in school fees turned violent as the students clashed with police, and scores of youngsters were injured and taken into custody. (Months later, in reference to the injury of student protesters, the prosecutor in Marrakech would tell their parents of the teenagers, still languishing in jail:

“your children have declared war on the state, we declare war on them” (qtd. in Demir 1990). With food prices having jumped 70 percent the previous year even before the removal of subsidies, the unrest quickly escalated and spread, and by month’s end, the government had dispatched the armed forces to quell large rebellion in cities throughout Morocco, including Rabat, Casablanca, Tetouan and El Hoceima. In rural areas in Morocco’s northern Rif region, protestors stormed police stations and seized arms to defend themselves against the regime. In towns throughout the north, slogans and wall signs railed against the King, targeting his person with their critiques, an act that in Morocco was – and still is – considered a crime of treason punishable with long prison sentences. Army troops airlifted in to put an end to the unrest themselves pillaged local food stores before angrily and indiscriminately firing into the crowds. When the smoke cleared at the end of the month, hundreds were dead and well over ten thousand Moroccans had been taken into custody. Hassan II was uncharacteristically forced to cede to public will, and reinstated the subsidies. (Sedden 1984; Paul 1984; Clement 1984; Oakes 1984)

The Moroccan government saw disturbing connections between the mobilization of emigrant workers in Europe and the popular rebellion on its territory. The King identified their source as same: the regime blamed the Moroccan labor protests in France on “Marxist agitators” (ATMF 1984), and when calm had been restored in Morocco after its turbulent January of 1984, the King appeared on television and declared that the uprising had been instigated by “the Marxists,” who in this case were in cahoots with “Iran and the Zionists”(Paul 1984). More troubling to regime was the fact that the rebellion against the state in Morocco had been boldest in the areas from which Moroccan emigrant workers disproportionately heralded: the semi-rural and rural regions of the Rif in the north and of the Souss in the south. This was no coincidence. The closure of Europe’s border to labor migration in 1974, and with the elimination of the only real alternative for employment and income, had begun to weigh heavily on these areas in the early eighties. A combination of factors, including a severe drought in 1980-81 and a drop in already pitiful levels of state investment, economically devastated the poor in those regions and heightened already dramatic income inequalities (Sedden 1984; Paul 1984; Clement 1984). The specter of Moroccan emigrants, whom the state had

taken pains to sever politically and culturally from their communities of origin, supporting rural mobilizations against the crown was not once the state was willing to tolerate.

From conversation to co-optation

The Moroccan state, viewing the increasingly organized Moroccan resistance as a clear threat to national security, changed its strategy in dealing with emigrants. To its practices of intimidation, it added a concerted effort to co-opt emigrants, and to channel their political mobilization into an institutional vehicle that it could control. This shift in approach was an extension of the strategy of political normalization that the regime deployed internally to reclaim enough legitimacy to avoid a revolution. The broadening of its political intervention to include its emigrant communities was consistent with the fact that the state continued to view Moroccan migrants as a branch of its national economic system. However, the specific way it applied its attempts at co-optation were built on the familiarity the regime had developed with emigrants by engaging with them.

The centerpiece of the crown's strategies for political normalization after the riots of the early eighties was to allow parliamentary elections in 1984, for the first time in almost a decade. In an unprecedented move, the King reserved five seats for representatives of the Moroccan community abroad. The constituencies the delegates were to represent were nonsensically broad and geographically dispersed: aside from the two delegates allotted to France, a third delegate represented Moroccans in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and the Soviet Union, a fourth was charged with Moroccans living anywhere in the entire Arab world, and a fifth delegate was assigned to Moroccans living in Spain, Portugal, England, Italy, the Americas and sub-Saharan Africa (Belgendouz 1999). In theory, the delegates were to be elected, with voting held at the consulates. In practice, however, with serious irregularities characterizing the elections, already problematic in their design, the consular authorities hand-picked them (Belgendouz 2003; Interviews, Paris & Belgium, February 2004).

As a general rule, the Moroccan government chose emigrants who assumed leadership roles in labor movements of the 1980s, but whose politics were relatively

moderate and who could thus be brought around to the Moroccan regime's position on emigrant labor mobilization. (Belgendouz 1999; Interviews, AMTF, Paris 2004; Interviews, EMIM, Brussels 2004). A prime example was Akka Al-Ghazi, chosen as one of the two delegates to represent Moroccans living in France in the Moroccan parliament. During the Citroen strike, Al-Ghazi had been a major labor leader, representing the CGT at the Aulney factory and encouraging workers to go on strike because it was the "only way to break the chains of oppression" (qtd in Kutschera 1984). Soon after he was instated as delegate in 1985, he began to parrot the Moroccan regime's line on emigrant activism, and was dispatched to labor disputes in which Moroccan workers were heavily represented to check the protests.

In 1987, Al-Ghazi was sent to Nord-Pas-de-Calais in France to meet with Moroccan miners who had gone on strike to protest the conditions under which they were being laid off. The mines in which they had worked, many of them for over fifteen years, were slated for closure in 1992. The miners had labored under temporary contracts that were periodically renewed. Charbonnage de France was simply going to refrain from renewing Moroccan miners' labor contract, depriving them by the same token of the legal right to remain in France. The workers demanded severance packages on par with French workers, including full medical care to treat the silicosis that many had incurred on the job, and the right to remain in France, if they so chose (Voix du Nord, October-November 1987; l'Humanité, October-November 1987, Liberation, November 1987) The strike, which lasted over eight weeks, made the headlines of major papers for much of its duration, and drew attention to the difficult conditions under which immigrant, and especially Moroccan, workers had labored. It also captivated members of the state-supervised, if not completely state-dominated, Moroccan union (Confédération Démocratique du Travail) that represented phosphate miners. A high-ranking member of the union traveled to France in a show of support for the Moroccan coal miners: "We follow this strike very closely in Morocco. All of the opposition papers are writing about this strike" (qtd. in Voix du Nord, October 18, 1987). To defuse a situation the Moroccan government perceived as a threat to its control both in France and in Morocco, Akka Al-Ghazi was charged with making it clear to the Moroccan strikers that their action had no legal basis. "My mission is to explain to my compatriots who are miners, regardless of

whether they are members of the CGT, the terms of their contract; because the most of them don't know what the terms are" (qtd. in Liberation, November 18, 1987) (Voix du Nord, October-November 1987; l'Humanité, October-November 1987, Liberation, November 1987; ATMF Archives: 1986-1988).

From co-optation to the end of a conversation

The Moroccan government's co-optation of someone who had represented the struggles of Moroccan workers, who had become a public symbol of their labor fight and even a martyr for their cause after he was beaten by anti-labor thugs, was received as an action that debased Moroccan workers and their concerns (Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004). Organizers of the strike responded forcefully to Al-Ghazi visit, accusing the Moroccan delegate of "having applied intolerable pressures on the strikers...designed to break the unity of the movement" (qtd. in Liberation, November 18, 1987) Additionally, the ATMF filed formal complaints with the French Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Labor about the tactics of the Friendship Societies. The missives detailed the actions of the Moroccan associations, and cautioned the French authorities that if they wished to obviate "disturbances that [were] likely to have grave consequences," they should "dissolve" the Friendship societies and put an end to the "dangerous and systematic practice" of labor repression that they embodied (ATMF 1987). The engagement between Moroccan labor activists and the Moroccan government that had lasted for fifteen years, even though it had been defined by conflict and power struggle, broke down. The space for interpretative exchange, even if contested and acrimonious, had closed.

Moroccan labor activists remembered that period as a time when they "grieved for [their] country and let it go – *on a fait le deuil de notre pays*" (Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004; Interviews, Paris, February 2004; Interviews, Brussels, February 2004). "In the 1970s, we thought that if democracy came to Morocco, everything else would follow," remembered one worker. "But as time passed, we saw that nothing was changing, that there was no real hope" (Daoud 2004: 76). "The hand of the government was too heavy...we knew we would not return," reflected another (Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004). After years of eschewing the adoption of French citizenship, the

ATMF began to advocate for naturalization. The association also began to work on questions of bi-cultural identity, lending its support to anti-racist activism and to the “Movement Beur,” a movement that asserted the cultural, religious, and political rights of first, second, and third generation Arab immigrants (Deridian 2004). The ATMF sister organizations in Belgium, Holland, and Germany made similar shifts, turning away from an engagement with the Moroccan government and turning instead to issues of political and religious rights and cultural identity of Moroccan immigrants and their descendants. (Daoud 2004; Ouali 2004; Van Der Velk 2004; M’hammed 2004).

The breakdown in the engagement between the Moroccan state and Moroccans living abroad began to show in remittance transfer levels. Yearly remittance transfer levels (adjusted for inflation) dropped by 20% percent between 1986 and 1988 (Office des Change, Morocco, 1977-2003). Furthermore, Moroccan emigrants deposits in the BCP as a percentage of national deposits fell steadily after 1987 and would never recover their previous levels (BCP Annual Reports, 1977-2003; International Monetary Fund, 1977-2003). Coupled with a reduction in bonus on transfers, Moroccan state policy toward emigrant workers had, in effect, begun to undermine the BCP’s longstanding “strategy of accompaniment.” The collapse of one area of interpretive engagement was eroding the other.

The Moroccan state was gradually beginning to take note of this effect. As early as December 1985, Hassan II remarked that he was “disappointed” by the Friendship Societies because of their lack of inclusiveness, and by 1991, the government issued a statement noting that Friendship Societies “were not longer adapted to the current situation” (Haddaoui qtd. in Belgendouz 1999: 261). The palace combined these sheepish acknowledgements that its strategy to control emigrant worker political activity may have been have been alienating with firm condemnations of emigrant integration of any sort in receiving countries. Hassan II pronounced stern critiques of the movement for naturalization and electoral rights, in what seemed almost a panicked effort to tether Moroccan emigrants back to the Kingdom²⁸. In an interview broadcast on French

²⁸ The King sentiments on integration come across even more clearly in the remainder of the excerpt. About intergration, Hassan II said:

Hassan II: I am against it...for the simple reason that for me, there is no distinction between a Moroccan born in Morocco and raised in Morocco and a Moroccan born in France and raised in France.

television, for example, the King was forceful in his condemnation of emigrant integration into receiving countries. In response to a question about integration, Hassan II unequivocally answered: "I am against it...for the simple reason that for me, there is no distinction between a Moroccan born in Morocco and raised in Morocco and a Moroccan born in France and raised in France. I told them [Moroccan emigrants]: you shouldn't fill your head and your spirit, at night before going to bed, with electoral problems that do not concern you, that are not yours. Because you are definitely not French" (Discours et Interviews de S.M. le Roi Hassan II. Ministère de l'Information, March 3, 1989-March 3, 1990).

But Moroccan emigrants were not listening. They either simply disregarded the monarch, dismissing him increasingly irrelevant to their lives in Europe, or they sharply challenged the right of the Moroccan government, and of the King, to intervene in their affairs in any way. As one Moroccan labor organizer summed up at a plenary meeting of Moroccan worker and community organizations in 1989:

The maneuvers of the Moroccan authorities weigh heavily on us. They don't help us....They isolate the Moroccan community in France [from society in Morocco and in France] by trying to prevent it from organizing and integrating in France. By compelling us to work here and not return to Morocco, they want us, oblige us to remain more that loyal; a complete loyalty to the Moroccan regime. I think that everyone feels that. It weighs heavily on us and we need to make an effort to free ourselves from it (Mohamed 1989: 68).

They are both Moroccan. When I told the Moroccans, march! and they marched and ...when I told them stop and they stopped...

Interviewer: You are referring to the Green March.

Yes, and I want, in the centuries to come, that we be able to recover this same national fiber, and it gets diluted outside the Motherland. I am against integration, in any sense of the term...I am against it. I said it in front of the president of the republic himself, M. Mitterand, and in front of the Moroccan community here.

Interviewer: Now, it's in front of all of the French.

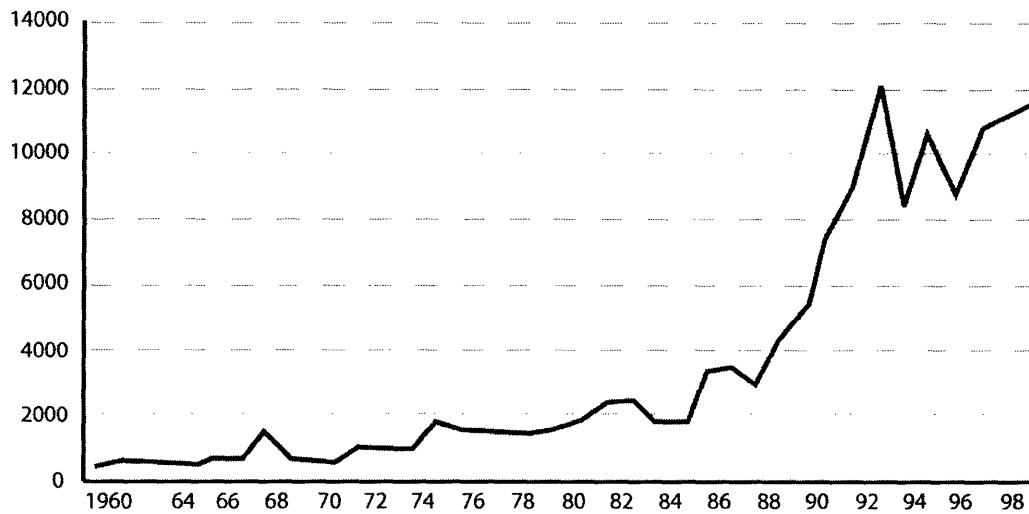
Hassan II: I told them [Moroccan emigrants]: you shouldn't fill your head and your spirit, at night before going to bed, with electoral problems that do not concern you, that are not yours. Because you are definitely not French. They'll always court your voices but then they'll always forget you afterwards. You won't even dare to...I know the Moroccans, they are very humble and modest (*puisque*). They won't even go ask for the few crumbs that are due them the next day. So it's not worth it, it won't work and it's not worth it. It will just lead to underhandedness, and I don't want that. The relationship between the French and the Moroccans has always been what it has been. We confronted one another, we embraced one another, but it never became underhanded. And I want it to stay that way.

(Heure de Verité, Antenne 2, December 17, 1989, Discours et Interviews de S.M. le Roi Hassan II. Ministère de l'Information, March 3, 1989-March 3, 1990)

More tangibly, naturalization rates of Moroccan emigrants for all the major receiving countries already on the rise picked up noticeably at the end of the 1980s (see Graph 3.5; Fondation Hassan II 2003). Moreover, Moroccan emigrants and their children were increasingly creating institutions based on their Moroccan heritage, developing and celebrating their identities as “Beurs” – French citizens of North African origin, and advocate for their cultural and political rights in the European countries to which they began to claim political and social membership. These associations were completely independent of the Moroccan state, and did not identify in the least with the Moroccan regime, even oppositionally (Boussetta 2003; Charef 2003; Dumont n.d.).

Graph 3.5: Moroccan naturalization rates in France, 1960-2000

**Moroccan emigrant acquisition of French nationality
Total per year**



Source: Chattou et al. 2002

3. Merging two conversations: 1990-1996

In 1990, the Moroccan state took a series of bold institutional steps to reweave the ties that were fraying between Moroccans living abroad and the Moroccan state, and to revitalize the engagement that was slowly dying. The new policy initiatives were designed to draw emigrants back into the economic life of the Kingdom. However, in a significant departure from previous policies toward Moroccan emigrants, the state explicitly linked to those economic initiatives to policies that addressed the political

existence of emigrants in Europe and in Morocco. It merged policies to encourage emigrants economic participation in Morocco with initiatives that gave Moroccans living abroad unprecedented political visibility and institutional weight in the Moroccan government. It reversed the logic that linked economic involvement in the Moroccan economy with a Moroccan cultural identity, and instead of merely reinforcing remittance transfers by associating them with being Moroccan, it began with the cultivation of Moroccan cultural identification amongst emigrants in order to foster the economic benefits of emigration for the Kingdom. In 1990, the Moroccan state brought together two policy areas -- and more importantly, two interpretive conversations -- that it had kept separate since it ratified the labor export conventions of the early 1960s.

Morocco's institutional innovations in the 1990s reflect an understanding gleaned through the state's difficult interaction with emigrants throughout their labor struggles of the 1970s and 1980s. The policies recognized emigrants as actors who were able to change their economic and political contexts, and they were designed to capitalize on that transformative capacity for Morocco's economic development. However, despite the fact that the policies of the 1990s were built on an explicit acknowledgement of Moroccan emigrants as political and economic actors, the way the Moroccan state implemented them evidenced a profound ambivalence about this very quality; the same institutions that were set up to exploit emigrant initiative for Morocco's growth were eventually deployed to contain and restrict it.

The state's equivocal implementation of its new policies stemmed in part from an uncertainty about who Moroccan emigrants were and where the emigrant initiative it supported might lead. By the 1990s, the Moroccan emigrant population in Europe had grown more diverse than it had ever been before. The children of Moroccan emigrants began to come of age, and the Moroccan government began to talk about outreach to large numbers of second and third generation Moroccan emigrants, which the state considered Moroccan regardless of where they had been born and raised. Additionally, Moroccans began migrating to new destinations in Europe, primarily Spain and Italy, in emigration flows that were unregulated by the Moroccan state and where undocumented immigrants were heavily represented. In Spain, the documented Moroccan population alone rose from a little over 15,000 in 1990 to about 200,000 in 2000 (Khaldi 2003), and

in Italy, the number of Moroccan emigrants with legal permits underwent a similar expansion, from a little under 15,000 in 1987 to almost 160,000 in 2000 (Schmidt de Friedberg 1994; Blangiardo 2003). Furthermore, the profile of emigrants from Morocco was changing: more and more of them were of urban origin; they had education levels that were significantly higher than emigrant workers contracted under the labor conventions of the 1960s (60 percent of them had completed a secondary education or higher compared to under 20 percent in the 1960s and 1970s); and a growing proportion of them were women who were migrating in search of work and not primarily to join their spouses (AMERM 2001; INSEA 2000).

“Your compatriots wait for you impatiently” (Hassan II, June 1990)

After Hassan II gestured at the need to create an institution to strengthen the connection between Moroccans living abroad and the Kingdom in the late 1980s, announcing to them that he envisioned an institution that would “ensure the permanence of the ties between you and your country and especially between your children and your country,” (qtd in Belgendouz 1999: 51), the Hassan II Foundation for Moroccans Living Abroad was established in 1990. As specified by the law that mandated its creation, the mission of the Foundation was to “preserve the fundamental ties that [Moroccans living abroad] maintain with their homeland and to help them overcome the difficulties they encounter as a result of their emigration” (Dahir 1.90.79, July 13, Article 2). The institution was charged with tending to relationships with emigrants in “the cultural, religious and social domains” in a manner that was “in keeping with the orientation of the government and His Majesty the King” (Dahir 1.90.79, July 13, Article 2). More specifically, the foundation was tasked with organizing and financing social and cultural activities for Moroccan emigrants, with offering national, religious, and language education to second-generation emigrants, and with providing emergency social services and financial assistance to emigrants in need. (Dahir 1.90.79, July 13; Brand 2002; Belgendoux 1999).

Although the foundation was established to re-engage with Moroccan emigrants, the Moroccan government designed it to maintain firm control over the shape and tenor

that reconnection would take. The Moroccan state named all twenty-seven members of the executive committee, which by law, had to have at least thirteen representatives from Friendship Societies as well as at least one delegate from the Professional Association of Moroccan Banks. Funding for the institution, estimated at around 15 million USD a year (Boukima 1999), was generated through a diversion of the bonuses on deposits that had previously been offered to emigrants. (A leader of the ATMF called the move “the biggest hold-up in history” (Interviews, Paris, February 2004).) However, the foundation was exempt from all government audits of its activities and was ultimately only answerable to the King. (Dahir 1.90.79, July 13; Brand 2002; Belgendoux 1999; Interviews, Fondation Hassan II, September 2003, December 2003 –February 2004).

The same July that the King established the foundation, he also created a ministry to deal with the political relationship of Moroccan communities abroad with the Kingdom, and named Rafik Haddoui as minister-delegate to the prime minister charged with that portfolio. In his speech nominating Haddaoui, Hassan II declared that the Moroccan regime could not safeguard Moroccan emigrants’ loyalty to their country of origin simply by managing migrants’ contractual relationship to their employers in Europe:

[t]he representatives of the Moroccan community asked Us to put in place a governmental institution or organ charged with dealing with their affairs outside the realm of employment. Given that the problems of our Moroccan communities have nothing to do with the Ministry of Labor [which had until then managed emigrant labor contracts], that We are bound by the act of allegiance to Our subjects abroad in the same way as we are to their brothers in Morocco, that We have a paternal, religious and moral responsibility to them – Our subjects abroad deserve more attention than their fellow citizens living in Morocco whose needs are looked into day and night – We charge you with these sons that are Ours....The objective of this mission is to safeguard this bond and the act of allegiance... (July 31, 1990, Discours et Interviews de S.M. le Roi Hassan II. Ministère de l’Information, March 3, 1990-March 3, 1991)

The ministry was to “safeguard” the bond of allegiance through a political version of the BCP’s “strategy of accompaniment.” The ministry was charged with conducting outreach to Moroccan communities abroad, and with developing an understanding of their political needs and concerns in much the same way the BCP was dispatched to Europe to come up with a plan to “bankarize” emigrant workers. More over, just as the

government had ordered the BCP to ensure that migrant remittances “ no longer escaped state control,” the ministry was charged with re-asserting state influence over emigrants and reinforcing their loyalty to the Kingdom and its King. (See Brand 2002 for a detailed list of tasks assigned to the ministry).

Nineteen-ninety was also the year that state finally launched Bank Al-Amal, a new bank for emigrants that the it had nominally created in 1989. Bank Al-Amal (roughly translated as “bank of work” or “worker’s bank”) was established as a vehicle to encourage emigrant investment in the Kingdom. In actuality an organization that managed a fund pooled from a consortium of Moroccan banks rather than a bank strictly defined, the financial establishment offered subsidized interest rates on long-term loans as well as equity participation for emigrant investment projects. The bank embodied a significant shift in the state’s view of emigrants, casting them as economic actors that could have a transformative impact on the Moroccan economy. Indeed, the King had grand aspirations for the bank and for the emigrant investment it would draw into the country. Hassan II commented at length about the bank in his nomination speech for Haddaoui and made his ambitions for the bank and the view of emigrants on which it rested explicit:

Every Moroccan working abroad should return to his country as a professional so that he may transmit what he has learned to others.

If he has saved an amount of money and wishes to invest it or build a house, he has every right to do so because those are legitimate aspirations. We now have a new vehicle [for this], Bank Al-Amal, which, if it functions in accordance with the way We have conceived of it, will become the largest bank in Morocco within two years....[The bank] is a means for our citizens to act, even those that have settled as far away as Australia or other far off regions. (July 31, 1990, Discours et Interviews de S.M. le Roi Hassan II. Ministère de l’Information, March 3, 1990-March 3, 1991).

In addition to manifesting the state view of emigrants as transformative economic actors, the bank also epitomized the Moroccan government’s new combination of its economic and political policies toward emigrants, in this case to an effect that was ultimately insalubrious: Bank Al-Amal’s board of directors was stacked with Friendship Society presidents (Belgendouz 1999). (Belgenouz 1999; Kaioua 1999; Interviews, Bank Al Amal, Casablanca, March 2004).

While the three institutions were formally established as separate organizations, they functioned in practice as a single institution. Haddoui, named Minister for Moroccans Living Abroad, was also named president of the Hassan II Foundation. Additionally, the ministry and the foundation were housed in the same building, used the same amenities, and with no government oversight of the foundation's expenditures, the budgets of the two institutions tended to merge²⁹ (Brand 2002; Interviews, Hassan II Foundation, Rabat, December-March 2004). Furthermore, during the multiple outreach visits of its directors, the foundation/ministry recruited (and vetted) potential emigrant investors for Bank Al-Amal, suggesting investment projects to Moroccans living abroad and directing them to the banking institution for funds and guidance (Interviews, Bank Al-Amal, Casablanca, July 2002, March 2004). Through their coordinated actions, the three "institutions-in-one" further blurred the distinction between the political, economic, and cultural aspects of emigrants lives, both in Europe and in Morocco, that the Kingdom had maintained in the past. "Our objectives," said Haddoui, "is to create a synergy amongst all of the forces that act, from close up or from afar, to foster relationships with Moroccans living abroad" (qtd. in Kaouass 1992: 7). The coordinated institutions brought together the two streams of conversations that the Moroccan state had worked so hard to keep separate. (Lettre d'information, Ministère de la Communauté Marocaine à l'Étranger, October 1992-September 1995).

Comprehensive conversations : Interpretation revived

Under the charastimatic leadership of Haddoui, the state organizations re-opened a space for interpretive exchange with emigrants, one that was pioneering in its inclusiveness. They did this by recreating the two conditions that had made previous conversations with Moroccan abroad generative of new insights about emigration and the implication it had for Morocco. First, they made the changes that Moroccan emigrant communities had undergone visible to state. The Ministry and Foundation commissioned a number of studies on Moroccan communities abroad, and published a series of reports

²⁹ The fungibility of the funds allocated to the two institutions would lead to accusations of corruption and the misallocation of funds. The accusations were backed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose bureaucrats felt encroached upon by the new Ministry. The Ministry and the Foundation were audited, and the Foundation was re-organized in the mid-1990s as a consequence of the investigation. (Brand 2002; Interviews, Hassan II Foundation, Rabat, December-March 2004).

on Moroccan emigrants. The Foundation forged a working partnership with the International Organization of Migration to train Foundation staff to conduct research on emigrant communities. The IOM also assisted the Foundation in setting up a library that had grown into a modest clearing house of data on Moroccans living abroad.

Second, they engaged without defining all the terms of the engagement. Within the first three years of his appointment, Haddaoui and his senior staff made literally dozens of trips to Europe. There, they met with representatives of Moroccan emigrant communities and displayed a degree of attentiveness and openness that many emigrant groups found unprecedented. “Haddaoui met with everyone,” recalled an ATMF activist. “He met with the Friendship Societies, he met with the associations that supported Morocco’s actions in the Western Sahara, he met with associations of Sahraouis, that were against Morocco’s action in the Sahara, he met with associations of young people, he met with associations of women. He even met with us, even after we had a demonstration where we burned a photo of the King” (Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004). “Haddaoui was the era of openness of the Moroccan state,” remembered another worker activist. “He didn’t just want to hear prayers for the health of the king, and speeches of allegiance. He wanted to hear what your concerns were” (Interviews, ATMF, Paris, February 2004). Haddaoui himself mirrored this perception; in describing his outreach, he observed, “as soon as we said ‘we’re here’ *–nous voici* –it’s as if the floodgates had opened. We got so many comments, so many complaints....I think our most important accomplishment was to build a capacity for dialogue and for listening” (Interview, Rabat, March 2004).

In addition to meeting with emigrants, the Ministry/Foundation organized a series of conference on emigrant concerns, and more pertinently on ways to integrate emigrants into Morocco as actors for economic development. The Foundation/Ministry sponsored the Totken conference in 1993, for example, to which it invited prominent emigrants scientists and scholars to reflect on questions of knowledge transfer back to the Kingdom (Rivages, September 1993). The institutions also organized a number of events on emigrant investment in Morocco, focusing on migrant investment in their communities of origin and in the Moroccan state’s large privatization drive of the early 1990s. (Lettre

d'information, Ministère de la Communauté Marocaine à l'Etranger, October 1992-September 1995)

The emergence of new insights and political consequences

The interpretive engagement that the Ministry/Foundation fostered allowed for the emergence of new conceptual links, many of which were extremely controversial in the Moroccan political context. The Totken conference, for example, produced a clear articulation of the relationship of knowledge transfer and the promotion of research centers in Morocco with the free speech, a right that was compromised in Morocco of the early 1990s (Rivages, August 2003, September 1993, Summer 1994). Discussions with emigrants about their economic participation in Morocco made explicit how bureaucratic red tape and arbitrary corruption discouraged Moroccans living abroad from investing in their communities and country of origin (Rivages, June-July 1993, October 1993, Winter 1994). Even more disquieting to government authorities, perhaps, was the rapport that surfaced between rural development projects for the provision of basic amenities like water and electricity sponsored by emigrants and the state neglect of rural areas that generated the need for them in the first place (see chapter 4 -- Rivages, June-July 1993).

New conceptual connections were not the only thing to emerge out of the interpretive exchanges: the conversations generated nuanced but sharp critiques of Morocco government policy toward emigrants. To the extent possible, Haddaoui chose not to deal with Friendship Societies, which he later characterized as “empty shells” not representative of Moroccan communities abroad and made up of a handful of people more interested in cultivating patronage ties than serving their communities (Interview, Rabat, March 2004). Furthermore, Haddaoui and the institutions he headed broke with royal policy on undocumented immigration. Whereas as the King reiterated his categorical opposition to undocumented immigration of any kind, Haddaoui made a subtle but important distinction between recent illegal emigrants, whose choice to emigrate he deplored, and Moroccans who had lived in Europe without proper documentation for some time, often with their families, whose plight he felt deserved fair attention (Berhoumi 1993). The Foundation/Ministry also published oblique critiques of

the harsh conditions that Moroccans faced when they emigrated illegally (Rivages, April 1993.)

The conceptual link and challenges to government policy articulated through the interpretive exchanges ultimately led the Moroccan regime to narrow those generative spaces of engagement. The threat the new insights posed to the Moroccan state combined with turf battles between different ministries led to the total or partial demise of the institutions the King had created in 1990. Within a few short years of their inauguration, the Moroccan government began dismantling them. In late 1994, Haddaoui was replaced as Minister and President of the Hassan II foundation with Ahmed El Ouardi, a much more pliant bureaucrat than his predecessor. A year later, the Ministry was been downgraded to an undersecretary attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and by 1997, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, chafed by the criticism of its Friendship Societies, succeeded in its push to have the Ministry for Moroccans Living Abroad abolished. Some of the Ministry staff were integrated into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as were many of the amenities and resources that both the Ministry and the Foundation had relied on.

Around this time, the BCP and other banks also began to withhold their contributions to the Foundation, depriving the institution of the financial means to carry out its outreach and maintain its library and database. Moreover, the BCP, apprehensive about competition in the emigrant market, hobbled Bank Al-Amal, fatally delaying disbursement of funds for the loans that the “workers’ bank” had promised for emigrant projects. The liquidity shortage this created combined with emigrant complaints that the criteria for selection of projects was not based solely on economic viability ensured that the bank never grew to any more than a symbolic gesture (Interviews, AMERM, March 2004). (Belgendouz 1999; Brand 2002, Interviews, Fondation Hassan II, Rabat, December 2003, January 2004, March 2004, Interviews, former staff of the Ministry for Moroccans Living Abroad, March 2004).

Dividing to neutralize: Splitting of interpretation into two familiar conversations

In dismantling or weakening the institutions that promoted interpretive exchange between emigrants and the state, the Moroccan regime divided its policies toward

emigrants once again into two familiar streams, one that dealt primarily with emigrants' economic relationship to Morocco and the other that deal with political relationship to the Kingdom. Just as before, the state sought the conceptual insights necessary to construct institutions that would facilitate the transfer of those resources back into the Moroccan economy and their direction toward state development priorities. As a result, it kept its conversations about emigrants' economic participation in Morocco open-ended and extended ample room for interpretive engagement. The government's political engagement with Moroccans living abroad fell back on restrictive patterns of the 1970s and 1980s. It engaged with migrants in an effort to control them and enforce the characteristics with which it had marketed them to European employers: that they were hardworking, docile, and obedient. Hassan II, during a visit to France in the mid-1996, expressed satisfaction that the state had accomplished these twin objectives. He praised Moroccan emigrants for their hard work and thriftiness, and paternalistically announced that he had received positive reports on Moroccan behavior from the French authorities. "My questions [about Moroccans in France] were always the same...How have they behaved? How have they acted with you? The answer to these questions, may God be praised, always filled my heart with joy... The answer was always: we have no complaints, they are excellent" (1996: 116).

Despite the King's sanguine and strangely disassociated and anachronistic assessment, the government's control of emigration as a source of resources for the Moroccan economy, and its hold on emigrants as a arm of the Moroccan national system of production was disintegrating. They were being corroded by the regime's political reluctance to implement the insights that its engagement with emigrants had generated. The regime would not tolerate institutions built around the recognition of Moroccan emigrants as national actors that could not only have a transformative effect on the national economy (and did) but that could also levy sharp and destabilizing political critiques at the government (and did). The government began to ignore and suppress emergent insights when they challenged the legitimacy of the state's, and especially, the King's methods of ruling. The acid of political authoritarianism began to dissolve the relational awareness that the Moroccan state had fostered over decades of engagement

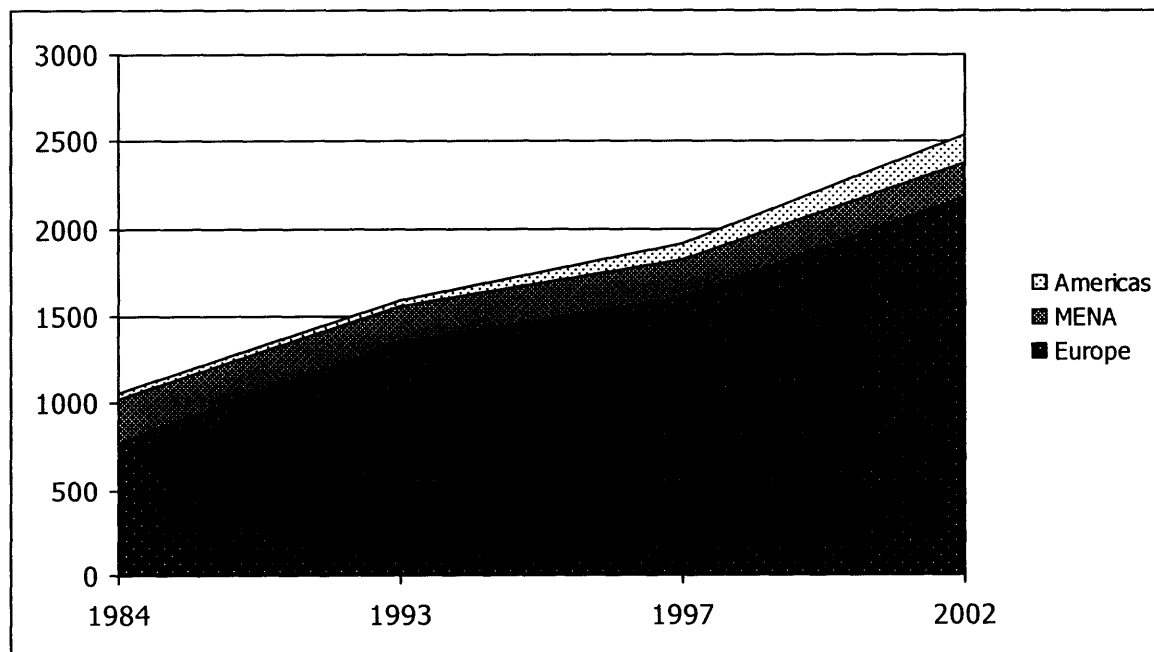
with migrants, and the innovative institutions that had grown out of the interpretive conversations that were its medium began to show ominous signs of erosion.

Table 3.2: Numbers of Moroccans Living Abroad as Recorded by Moroccan Government, 1968 -2002, in thousands

	1968	1975	1984	1987	1993	1997	2002
France	84	260	500	615	690	722	1,024
Belgium	21	65.9	119	120	172	199	214
Germany	18	25.7	46	50	78	104	99
Holland	12	32.2	106	117	157	274	276
Italy			15	30	96	146	287
Spain			32	70	115	119	222
Total EU	135	383.3	818	1,002	1,308	1,564	2,122
MENA			248	N/A	206	219	197
Americans			40	N/A	37	84	159
Sub-Saharan Africa			10	N/A	2	3	6
Asia			0	N/A	0	1	4
Total	270	767.1	1934		2861	3435	4610

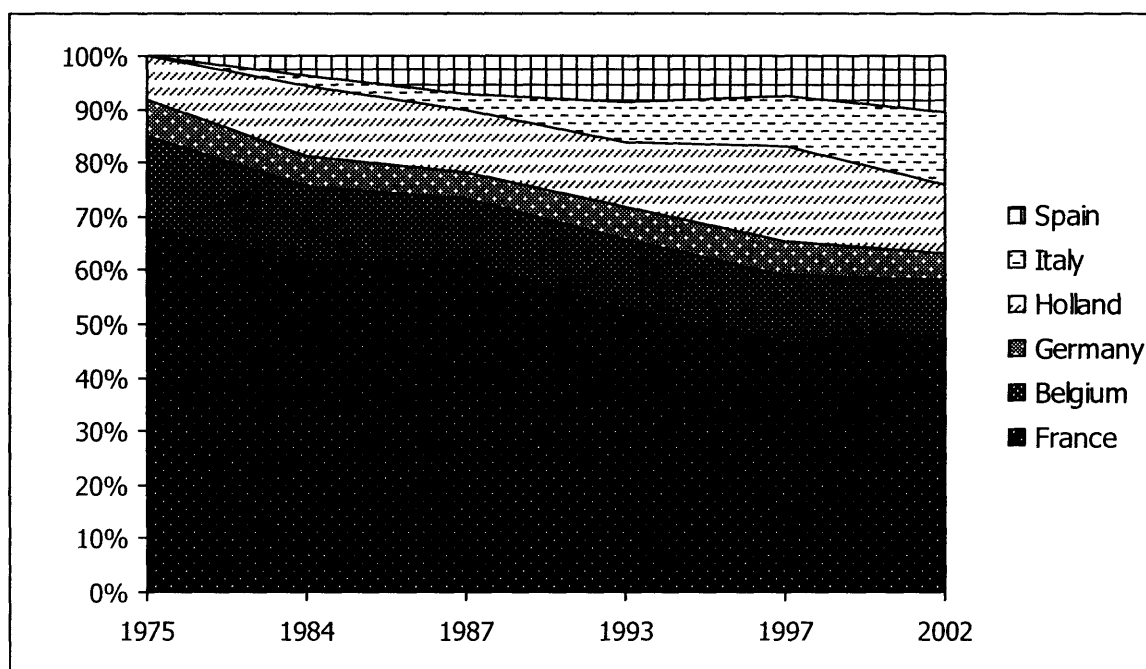
Source: Kingdom of Morocco, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1993 &1997; GERA 1992; Fondation Hassan II 2004

Graph 3.6: Moroccan Emigrant Population Worldwide (in thousands)



Source: GERA 1992, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Morocco 1975-2002

Graph 3.6: Proportion of Moroccan Emigrant Population in Europe, by Country



Source: GERA 1992, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Morocco 1975-2002

Chapter 4
Practice and Power:
Emigrants and Situated Development in the Moroccan Souss

Introduction

From 1963, when it began signing labor export conventions with European nations, through the mid-1990s, the Moroccan state viewed Moroccan emigrant workers as an arm of the Moroccan economy. The government explicitly considered them part of the national economic system, and factored the resources they would produce -- remittances in the present and skills and “entrepreneurial attitude” they would bring back in the future -- into its national development planning. To achieve the economic aims that it set for emigration, the Moroccan state engaged with migrants to create institutions that would channel emigrant resources to state development priorities, but also to make sure that they remained the docile and hardworking workforce that Moroccan authorities had promised foreign employers.

In keeping with its view of emigrants as a national economic resource, the Moroccan state always engaged with them as Moroccans, and blanketed them with a generic identity that was national and was based above all on their allegiance to their King. They were stamped with the characteristics that theorists of the nation argue are essential to creating its residents: they were homogenized and made anonymous except for the role they played in the furtherance of development -- in the melioration of what Anderson called the “imagined community” of the modern Moroccan nation (Anderson 1983). In their dealings with the state, emigrants’ cultural identities as Amazight -- or Berber, and their regional identities as Soussi from the Souss valley in the South, as Rifains from the Rif mountains in the North, or Marrakshi from plateaus near Marrakech were never acknowledged. Emigrants’ ties to their communities -- to their rural hamlets or to the neighborhoods in the slums of Morocco’s larger cities -- were ignored and censored.

The state’s imposition of a national identity on Moroccan emigrants was bound up with its use of the resources emigration generated for the Moroccan national economy.

In its development planning and policy from the late 1960s onward, the Moroccan state heavily favored industrial projects in Morocco burgeoning urban areas and large agribusiness outfits in the country's fertile plains, directing any resources leftover after its military expenditures in the Western Sahara to these endeavors. This development strategy reflected a cynical economic and political cartography, initially drafted by the French colonialists but later embraced by Moroccan policy makers. This political map carved out "*le Maroc utile*" – literally the useful Morocco of the Kingdom's coastal cities – from the rest of the country, which was cast as useless and irrelevant to the nation's future. Emigration was disproportionately from regions located outside the geographic and economic spaces included in the "*le Maroc utile*," but the remittances the state captured, primarily through the BCP, were directed toward development projects in "useful" areas. Meanwhile, emigrants' communities of origin more often than not suffered egregious policy neglect, a trend that the nationally-based identity the state imposed on migrants, and the allegiance to a model of national development that it presupposed, conveniently plastered over.

The Moroccan Souss, a narrow valley pinched between the two chains of Morocco's jagged Atlas Mountains, had been subject to this pattern of state treatment since independence. In Morocco's political cartography, the Souss was placed squarely outside the boundaries of "*le Maroc utile*." For decades, this region was sidelined in a policy framework that dismissed the subsistence agriculture of the Kingdom's Amazight heartlands, and marginalized its independent rural peasantry which from time to time leveled serious challenges at the monarchy (White 2001). Compounded by geographical isolation, a highly inequitable land tenure system that concentrated the richest tracts in the hands of a few, and the slow strangulation of a drought that was becoming endemic, the Souss' predicament had produced some of the worst human development indicators in the Arab world. The dismal economic prospects of the area combined with the government's direction of European labor recruiter the valley made out-migration a structural feature of the local economy. Soussis—as locals are called – emigrated to Morocco's burgeoning cities as well as to Europe's industrial areas, and in numbers so large that political commentators in the 1970s and 1980s warned that entire swathes of the region risked being depopulated (Daoud 1990).

In the mid-1980s, in the wake of French industry's massive layoffs of Maghrebi workers, a group of emigrants from the Souss began to discuss the possibility of returning to their villages of origin. They began an interpretive conversation about what their return would mean for themselves and for their families. In particular, they addressed whether or not they would be able to survive economically in the isolated hamlets in the mountains they had originally left because of the lack of economic opportunities available there. They determined that they could not return, unless they took it upon themselves to equip the villages with at least the very basics in infrastructure – electric power, sanitation systems, schools, and roads, and their discussion turned to the provision of basic public works. They soon expanded their conversations to include community members in their villages of origin. Through their process of interpretation, the migrants and the villagers together generated a new model of economic development, one that was distinct both conceptually and politically from the national development planning dictated by the Moroccan state. They produced an understanding of economic development that, unlike the central government's model, did not aim to transcend local realities or marginalize them through deliberate neglect, but rather privileged local context, local knowledges, and local practices. They arrived at a concept of development as being situated: as anchored in local villages, in their histories of enduring political and economic oppression, and intimately shaped by villagers' identities as Amazight people, with their own linguistic and cultural traditions, who had bravely resisted the co-optation and domination of the French colonial power and then of the modern Sultanate.

However, the notion of development they creates was not local in the strictest sense. Rather, it was situated in the experience of emigration that had deeply marked local communities as well as the migrants themselves, transforming both Soussi villages and those who left. It was rooted in the complex identities of migrants who viewed themselves as industrial workers but also as labor organizers who could mobilize to change their working conditions, as village members and peasants but also as rising elites in the village who questioned tradition and challenged entrenched village social hierarchies. Moreover, it was informed by the economic resources and political assets that migration – and more specifically, emigrants' trajectory as workers and as labor

organizers— offered Soussi villages as they imagined their possibilities of development and created ways to implement their visions.

Not only did Soussi migrants and villagers elaborate a situated understanding of development through interpretive processes, but they also fashioned innovative organizational and technological models to carry it out. They devised solutions to technological obstacles the state claimed made it complicated and prohibitively expensive to provide basic amenities like electricity, plumbing, and roads to villages in the Souss and in the Atlas mountain ranges that cut off the valley from metropolitan networks. In doing so, the Soussi belied the state assertions, and implicitly called into question the state's justification for its policy dereliction toward the region. Instead of challenging the authoritarian regime head on, the Soussi drew the state into their interpretive conversations about infrastructure provision and, more specifically, about the technological recombinations to address the difficulties of supplying basic services to geographically remote and socially isolated areas. As one migrant activist trying to secure basic infrastructure for villages in the region told me, “we want to take the state by the hand and bring it here. We don't have the resources the state does; we can never accomplish what the state can. What we want is for the state to do the work of the state *here*. Once the state takes responsibility for something – like providing electricity – there is no need for us to continue [doing that]” (Interview January 2004).

The state's involvement in Soussi initiated interpretive conversations led to the revision of the technological models that the state relied on in its provision of fundamental infrastructure to the Souss, as well as to rural areas beyond the confines of the valley, in rural and isolated areas throughout Morocco. However, it also entrained the amendment, though subtle, of the state's conceptualization of development. No longer was a seemingly technological and apolitical pretext for the state's neglect of large areas of the country easily available. The state found itself compelled to begin connecting rural Morocco to elementary infrastructure services like electricity, potable water, and roads on a large scale.

Moreover, as the villages in the Souss were connected to basic services, they quickly began to emerge as diminutive but disproportionately dynamic poles of economic growth. Sustained interpretive conversations continued to generate new possibilities for

economic and social development: they produced new approaches to irrigation; new organizational visions for cooperatives that began cultivating high-end crops for export; a new appreciation of the relationship between adult, and especially female literacy, to economic opportunity and family health, as well as innovating pedagogical strategies and village schools to implement those understandings; and the envisioning of new potential vectors for economic development, like boutique ecotourism and the processing of organic ingredients, like argane oil, for cosmetic products. The economic vibrancy of the Souss as the rest of the country's rural areas were shriveling under drought and facing crushing poverty, and as even the Kingdom coastal cities struggled to rise above chronically sluggish performance, began to test the regime exclusionary political and cartography. The results of Soussi's situated model of economic development, and the interpretive conversations on which it depended, made clear that the boundaries of the "*Maroc utile*" were in pressing need of revision.

Practice and power

In addition to posing a significant challenge to the regime's chronic neglect of whole regions of Morocco under its national development strategy, the transformation of the Souss and the resulting change in state patterns of infrastructure provision illustrate the relationship between interpretive practices and power. The Souss communities' ability to reshape state practices shows that interpretive processes have the capacity to alter power structures so entrenched that they are seem invincible or so enduring that they have been made to seem natural. More specifically, it demonstrates how the relationship between interpretive practices and power is mediated by knowledge – or more accurately, "knowing" – and meaning.

The connection between practices and the generation of knowledge is well theorized. Numerous observers of work practices in organizations, for example, have shown that everyday ways of completing tasks lead to innovations, new solutions to problems, and new inventions that are tacit and not easily encoded (Prichard 2001; Schon 1983; Seely-Brown 1991). This realization has opened up a field dedicated to "knowledge management," defined as the ability to foster and capitalize on this everyday

knowledge production for the growth of an organization³⁰. However, analysts of knowledge production through practice soon pointed out that the “informal activities” that lead to “improving, inventing [and problem solving] remain mostly invisible since they do not fall within the normal specified procedures that employees are expected to follow or managers are expected to see” (Seely-Brown 1996 qtd in Prichard 2001: 181) and that as a result, firms had to rely on ethnographic techniques to “harvest local innovation” (Seely-Brown 1996) from their office workers. Development scholars have made similar observations, noting the value in using knowledges encoded in local community practices (Scott 1998) or in those improvised by street level bureaucracy for economic development endeavors (Moore 1991, Tandler 2001).

Others scholars of knowledge production have countered that “harvesting knowledge” is an impossible endeavor, not just because the knowledge produced is tacit and “sticky.” Rather, it is impossible because knowledge is inseparable from the actions that express it, and that, as a result, “knowing” is a more accurate way of describing knowledge as embodied in practice. As Schon pithily remarked, “knowing is *in* our action” (1983: 49). Moreover, as Polanyi notes, it is only by participating in the practices that people can integrate the “knowing” that is fused into the practice: “We may said to interiorize these thing or to pour ourselves into them. It is by dwelling in them that we make them mean something on which we focus our attention (Polanyi 1969: 183 qtd. in Prichard 2001). Furthermore, as practices change, so does the “knowing” embedded in them (Orlikowski 2002; Bechky 2003). As Orlikowski observes, “[w]hen people change their practices, their knowing changes. From such a perspective, people learn to know differently as they use whatever means, motivation, and opportunity they have at hand to reflect on, experiment with, and improvise their practices” (2002: 253).

Knowledge, and its close kin “knowing,” are never neutral. They are always imbued with meaning that give those knowledges and acts of knowing significance in the contexts in which they are expressed and enacted. The meanings with which they are infused determine their visibility, their legitimacy, and the degree to which they are subject to control and censorship. Moreover, just as practice and knowing are

³⁰ See Chumer et al. (2001) for a historical discussion of the emergence of the field of “knowledge management”

inseparable, the meanings attached to knowing are closely bound up with the meanings attached to practice. Those meanings, and the practices and knowing they allow, are the source of political power, and can be used to subjugate or to resist. (Gramsci 1994; Saldana-Portillo 2003). As practice changes and reshapes knowing and knowledge, the meanings with which they are vested are also amended. As those meanings are transformed, the power structures they legitimate are also changed. This, in turn, allows for the emergence of new practices and new forms of knowing.

As this chapter will show, the Moroccan state's participation with the Soussis in interpretive conversations about methods of providing basic infrastructure to rural communities changed their technological and policy practices for the connection of villages to basic services. However, as this process changed the state's infrastructure practices, it also changed the meanings associated with them. As the state participated local interpretive conversations and "dwelt in" the techno-social practices for infrastructure provision they generated, state understanding of development were also amended. State infrastructure providers moved from the abstractions and simplifications of national development plans (Scott 1998) to consider the specificities of local context, and to acknowledge a role, if limited, for local communities in their own development. Moreover, participation in the practices caused a re-examination of the economic dismissal of rural Morocco that the political marginalization of rural Moroccans had legitimized.

State practices, and the "knowing" that they held, were not the only things altered through this encounter. As Soussi emigrants and villagers engaged with the state in shaping the development prospects of their own communities, they began to see themselves as protagonists in their history. Emigrants in particular began to view themselves as local actors, and began to assert their identities as villagers who were also emigrants, and who could contribute to a situated project of economic development as agents of community-defined directions for change. They began to define themselves explicitly and forcefully as more than mere purveyors of remittances.

Soussi emigrants began their work in their valley with a focus on rural electricity provision, and this chapter follows their lead. The chapter is divided into three parts: the first section retraces how Soussi emigrants and villagers engaged in interpretive

processes to imagine, plan and built sustainable electricity networks in villages throughout the Souss. The second section depicts how state participation in those interpretive conversations revamped the state's view of electricity provision. It also show how the new understandings the state assimilated through practice informed a massive rural electricity program the state launched in the mid-1990s, a program that began to erase the thick line that demarked the "Maroc utile" from the rest of the Kingdom. The third section documents how this pattern of interpretive engagement with the state happened over and over again in a recursive cycle, and shows, in particular, how it transformed the provision of water and the construction of roads in the Souss, and then eventually in the rest of rural Morocco.

1. Getting Power

Imagining Electric

The changes that were to emerge in the Souss began in a valley much further north, in the south of France. Argentière-la-Bessée, a small town in the shadow of the French Alps, grew up around a plant of one of France's largest aluminum processing outfits, Péchiney. A major recruiter of immigrant labor during the "*trentes glorieuses*" of France's post-war expansion, Péchiney was by the 1980s suffering the slow decline that had afflicted French heavy industry since the oil shocks of 1974. After trying and failing to cope with successive paroxysms of economic crisis through repeated downsizing, Péchiney was finally nationalized and restructured in the mid-1980s. As part of reorganization, sixteen Péchiney plants were slated for closure, and the Argentière plant was amongst the first to be dismantled. To cushion the massive layoffs this entailed, Péchiney—now a quickly shrinking but politically accountable parastatal -- extended start-up funds to former employees so that they could establish small firms in the region. The idea was to rescue Argentière from economic disaster and to create a small-firm based economy that might become as vital as the small firm clusters in the north of Italy that received so much press at the time. (Daoud 1997)

Among the workers who were laid off in the firm closure were fifty-four North African immigrants. When they lost the jobs that had kept them in France, they decided

to return to their countries origin rather than try and rebuild their lives in Argentière. They approached Péchiney for the funds to start up small businesses in their communities of origin. Pechiney refused, insisting that the funds were tagged for the development of the Argentière valley. The migrants countered that they had equal rights to the aid since the award was in fact a form of severance pay. The immigrants took Péchiney to court, and after a protracted legal battle, Péchiney was forced to disburse the same funds to the immigrant plaintiffs as it had to the rest of its workforce. The North Africans, over half of whom were Moroccans from the Souss, began planning for their return. (Daoud 1997; Mernissi 1997; Interviews, M/D, 2004)

The plans the migrants had were modest: they wanted to make marginal agricultural improvements to family land holdings, open grocery stores and gas stations, and set up small agro-processing firms that produced for local markets. Although small in scale, the migrants' projects were nevertheless impossibly ambitious. Most of the migrants were of rural origin, and would be returning to hamlets without electricity, running water, passable roads, or telephone lines. The disconnect between their plans and infrastructure available in their villages of origin was irreconcilable. (Daoud 1997)

In order to address these obstacles, the returning migrants, already organized because of their legal battle with Péchiney, formed an association under French law. They called it "*Retour et Développement*," – Return and Development. All of the migrants in the group had long contributed to community projects in their villages of origin, sending money for such things as the renovation of the village mosque or the digging of a new well. This time, however, they wanted with to turn their attention to the structural issues that produced the stubborn poverty in their home regions; they wanted to generate a new dynamic of community development. More concretely, they wanted to pave the roads, set up the electricity networks, build the wells, and erect the telephone lines that would turn their plans for return from pipe dreams into projects.

How to accomplish these goals became the next challenge, and *Retour et Développement* served as an interpretive space where possible approaches become clear. In the end, the members of the group decided to pool a portion of the start-up funds they received from Péchiney in order to fund infrastructure and service projects. They also began to draw the villagers living in their communities of origin into their deliberations.

Lahoussain Jamal, the group's founder, remembers urging the villagers to join the migrants of *Retour et Développement* in their efforts: "You have to get involved, the state won't do anything for you. Let's take the initiative ourselves. With your participation and ours, we can breathe life back into our villages" (qtd. in Daoud 1997: 20). (Daoud 1997; Mernissi 1997; Interviews, M/D, 2004)

Because the majority of the members of *Retour et Développement* were from the Souss, and from the province of Taroudant more specifically, they decided to launch their experiment there³¹. Imgoun, a small village hugging the slope where the Souss valley rises to meet the Atlas mountains and Lahoussain Jamal's birthplace, was chosen as the group's first project site. The association -- renamed *Migrations et Développement* (M/D) after it became clear that the obstacles to returning and setting up a profitable enterprise were more intractable than first thought -- conducted an informal assessment of village needs. They asked villages about the problems they faced and found that these were many, each one compounding the last: over-grazing and deforestation leading to desertification, retaining walls for cultivated terraces in such serious disrepair that the steppes were being washed away in the rains, wells briny and dry from overuse and neglect. However, the migrants' questions also revealed that the villagers' top priority was getting electricity. Electric power would enable them to access technologies to address the environmental degradation that was aggravating rural poverty, as well as allow for other significant improvements to their quality of life. As a M/D recalls, "The villagers told us: without electricity, we can't do anything." (qtd. in Daoud 1997:19).

Migrants shared the villagers' desire for electricity, but for reasons that had more to do with the dislocation they experienced as migrant workers in European industrial settings than with the day-to-day conditions of life in the village. When I asked why electricity, the migrants I interviewed told me, "because of our children." When migrants returned home for their yearly vacation, their children, raised in European cities, rebelled at the prospect of spending weeks in an isolated hamlet that had no electricity, and thus, none of the easy entertainment (in the form of televisions, stereos etc.) that they were used to. For many migrants from the rural Souss, the "vacances" became the cause of a

fight, replayed year after year. Through their arguments with their children, the migrants I spoke with said that they saw their villages through their children's eyes, and what they saw made them feel humiliated. They saw villages abandoned by the state for forty years, crumbling under the weight of decades of policy neglect. For migrants who remembered the promise the Moroccan state seemed to hold for all of its citizens in the years after independence, not being able to refute their children's portrayal of their villages as "backward" and "poor" was a betrayal that cut to the quick. (Interviews, Taroudant, December 2003 – January 2004)

Imgoun's was not alone in its predicament and the Moroccan government's track record on rural electrification lent credence to the migrants' sense of having been abandoned. Sixty percent of Morocco's population is rural, and at the time that *Migration et Développement* began its work in the late 1980s, no more than a fraction had access to electric power. While data for the 1980s is sketchy at best, it indicates that rates of electricity access were abysmally low, with rates estimated at anywhere between 4 to 18 percent. The data from the 1990s is more reliable, having been drawn from a series of government and aid agency studies. Although they still display some variation, with the Moroccan National Office of Electricity estimating that only 21 percent of rural Morocco was connected to electricity in 1994, and with the World Bank measuring that access as somewhat higher at 25 percent, they clearly indicate that the rates of electrification for rural Morocco lagged far behind those for similar income countries in the region (ONE 1999; World Bank 1990). By 1990, Algeria had achieved 70 percent coverage and Tunisia was close behind with 60 percent (World Bank 1990). The Moroccan government explained away its poor performance in this area by noting that its administrative structure made the provision of electricity dependent on local revenues (World Bank 1990). In the early 1980s, prodded by the World Bank, the central government embarked on a rural electrification program, but by all accounts, it was a Potemkin-village of a scheme, a half-hearted effort with little impact: between 1982 and 1996, the state hooked up a measly 70 villages to electricity per year on average (ONE 1999). At that rate, it would have taken Morocco over 300 years to provide electricity to its 34,000 villages (Butin 2004 interviews). As the former director of the National Office

of Electricity, Driss Benhima, tersely conceded, “between 1960 and 1990, it [rural electrification] was not a priority.” (Daoud 1997: 40)³².

The approach that *Migrations et Développement* (M/D) took to supply Imgoun with electric power was both experimental and experiential. It was a product of a highly participatory process of “innovation-in-doing” that involved M/D, its migrant constituents, villagers, as well as the European funders and collaborators that M/D recruited for the project. In the process of developing new practices, they developed new types of knowing. As these actors worked together to set up a system to supply Imgoun with electric power, they literally and figuratively felt their way forward in the dark. Out of the ambiguity inherent in a process that was very interpretive emerged a model for electricity provision -- and for community development initiatives more generally -- that none of the actors involved could have anticipated.

This “innovation-in-doing” happened in the way those migrants, villagers, and their international partners engaged with the resources that migration made available to the community. Their interpretative discussion occurred through *practice*: the actions through which they related to the funds, networks, technology and knowledge that migrants channeled back to their douar was the language of their exchange. In the process, they did more than just influence what effects the resources would have on the village; they molded what the resources themselves would in fact be. In doing so, they drew intensively on local assets; they used local materials, local knowledge, local forms of social organization, even local conflicts, to determine what form the resources would take. However, the technological model for electricity provision and the social institutions to support it that emerged as a result were not strictly local: these innovations were situated in the practices that created them-- practices would ultimately span regions, countries, technologies, languages, and most importantly, the boundary between state and society.

³² One bureaucrat at the ONE explained the urban policy bias as regarded electricity provision to a journalist investigating rural electrification in the mid-1990s as follows: “Isn’t it heretical to want to connect isolated douars to electricity, when we don’t even know for sure that they will still be inhabited in 2000? Is it necessary to prioritize dispersed settlements? Cities are growing, urbanization is a dynamic process. Any policy intervention ultimately modifies the human landscape” (Daoud 1997: 41).

Poles and Wires: Technology-in-practice

Through social networks that the migrants who would eventually become M/D established during their mobilizations against Péchiney, M/D contacted the Agence Française pour la Maitrise de l'Énergie (AFME) in 1986 about the possibility of setting up solar-powered water pumps in Imgoun. The leadership of the AFME – a French governmental agency for energy management now called the Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maitrise d'Énergie (ADEME) – had ties to the CFDT (Confédération française démocratique du travail), a federation of labor unions that had locked horns with Péchiney. Members of M/D had been involved in union organizing during the prolonged battle with the aluminum magnate, a struggle that was quickly reduced to successive rounds of concessionary bargaining. By the time the migrants of M/D had lost their jobs and had begun exploring energy options for the village, the union boss of the CFDT, Michel Roland, had been named president of the AFME.

The migrants' project piqued the interest of the AFME because the agency had already been commissioned by the Moroccan National Office of Electricity to study the provision of decentralized solar power to rural areas. For the AFME, Imgoun represented a potential site for a pilot project. In the AFME, the migrants of M/D found an experienced partner to help them capture the energy to reach receding underground water tables cheaply, turn parched terraces into fertile soil, and save, if not reclaim, lands from spreading desertification. (Missaoui 1996, Daoud 1997; Butin 2004).

To investigate the feasibility of a solar project in Imgoun, M/D and AFME conducted an extensive diagnostic survey of energy usage in the village. In the intimate setting of the village, the survey, analytic in design, was interpretive in its process. The people conducting the survey were mostly emigrants from the village, and they went house to house, discussing how people used energy. They talked with people about what they viewed as priorities for energy usage; they discussed how they actually used household resources to secure sources of energy and the financial and work burden with which this saddled families, and particularly the women; they asked about how families would imagine themselves using energy if it were readily and cheaply available. Through these conversations, members of the household reflected on their actual practices, some for the first time. They articulated patterns of energy usage and made

connections between the different types of energy they used and their family expenditures to light their homes, to cook their food, and in some cases, to irrigate their fields. (Interviews, M/D, January 2004).

The study yielded two unexpected findings. First, gas-fueled mechanical pumps did not represent Imgoun's primary energy consumption by any stretch. A popular investment among international migrants, motorized pumps were a lightning rod for some of the socio-economic changes migration had wrought in the village: the remittances that migrants sent home not only dramatically widened disparities of wealth in the small community, but also modified the opportunity structure in the village, so that the ability to invest and cultivate land in a sustainable fashion, without degrading its arability, became contingent on international migration. While families with water-pumps could irrigate their crops with enough regularity to turn a profit, their neighbors without motorized access to water had to rely on fickle seasonal rains and on wells that were being drained by indiscriminate pumping. The noisy machines were widely maligned as the energy gluttons of the douar.

Instead, to the migrants' and residents' surprise, the M/D-AFME study found that the village's largest energy consumption was at the household level, with butane gas and candles used for lighting and audiovisual use, and wood used for cooking. Wood usage represented 80 percent of their energy household consumption, with about a quarter of the wood used scavenged from the local area. The two poorest income deciles of the village, however, relied much more heavily on found wood, harvesting rather than purchasing over 50 percent of the wood they used. The second unanticipated finding was that households were spending an average of 30 percent of their income on energy, or around 80 to 100 Dirhams. (Missaoui 1996; AVEC 1994; Daoud 1997).

The study showed that providing Imgoun with electricity was both more urgent and more viable than anyone had thought. Hooking households up with alternate sources of energy for cooking was the only way to prevent the rapid deforestation that was turning the surrounding landscape into a bald wasteland. Moreover, with households already devoting so much of their income to purchased energy, more in fact than urban residents, the villagers could afford most of the costs involved in setting up and maintaining a local electricity network (Jamal email 2004).

Other villages had done it. Douars throughout the Moroccan countryside had patched together electricity networks based on local generators. In fact, external consultants working for the National Office of Electricity estimated that in 1993, about 2000 villages had set up informal electrification schemes (Butin et al. 1993). However, the networks suffered from two serious shortcomings. First, the community-funded systems used equipment of a quality that was so poor that electricity provision was sporadic, and eventually broke down permanently. Additionally, low-hanging cables, too weak to carry the voltage that passed through them, along with faulty connections and no circuit breakers, created dangerous conditions that were not infrequently fatal. Second, informal electricity networks tended only to serve those who had contributed funds for their construction – between 20 to 50 percent of residents by most estimates (M/D 1993). Poorer families, excluded from service, continued to forage for wood with the same intensity, aggravating already rapid deforestation. (Butin et al 1993; M/D 1993)³³. For M/D and Imgoun, the challenge, therefore, was two-fold: to create a network that was affordable, reliable, and safe, and to ensure that all villagers had access to the electricity it provided, regardless of their ability to pay.

M/D's contacts with French electricity providers enabled Imgoun to overcome the technological hurdles this challenge involved. Through the AFME, M/D forged a relationship with Electricité de France and with a non-profit set up by EDF employees, called Codev and later renamed Electriciens Sans Frontières. EDF provided Imgoun with its extensive technological know-how. M/D had so captivated Codev with the project and technological puzzle it represented that the organization sent 37 volunteers to the Moroccan village to build the electricity network. The idea was that they would donate the tacit knowledge acquired through years of experience to come up with a solution that would fit Imgoun specific constraints. However, that is not quite what happened. Knowledge was not simply transferred to the village, traveling like the electricity that was their trade along the networks the technicians had forged with M/D.

³³ During the nineties, M/D received numerous requests for help from villages that had independently set up their own electricity networks. Within a few years, their networks had fallen into disrepair, and had become non-functioning. They approached M/D for assistance in setting up a new network that was based on the technological and social model that M/D would design in Imgoun.

Instead, Imgoun actively constituted the knowledge the French technicians brought with them. Through its topography, its people, and its bold resistance to state norms, the village shaped and reformulated the technological expertise and concepts of Codev. In concert with the EDF electricians, they arrived at a technological solution that fit the needs of a small hamlet huddling tightly on an arid slope rising to the Atlas mountains.

Even before the EDF technicians arrived, conversations with M/D ruled out a number of technological options. For the M/D-AFME study, villagers identified not only their current uses but also how they would consume electricity were it to be made readily available, making clear that household appliances would represent an ever-greater proportion of electricity consumption. After consultation with Codev, Imgoun abandoned the idea of capturing solar or wind energy, opting instead to rely on a generator, which unlike the more environmentally-sound solutions, could provide an alternating current better suited to household electronics. Once the village had committed to a technological course, an iterative exchange between the technicians and the villagers determined what form the technology would take locally. The conversations occurred in the planning phases, but also continued through the construction when the villagers sweated alongside EDF electricians to erect the distribution network, and in the evenings, when the French visitors' stayed in villagers houses, shared their meals, and followed in their daily rhythms. (M/D, email correspondence, 2004; Taroudant, Interviews, January 2004).

The exchange was powerful for all involved. It reached beyond technological conversations to touch and transform the preconceptions that the French and the Moroccans had of one another. As Lahoussain Jamal, M/D's director, recounts: "At the end of the project, two EDF employees came to see me. They said that, members of the National Front [a French far-right party with a forcefully anti-immigrant platform], they had joined the project to mock it and show it up. But they were so impressed with the reception that the villagers had given them and they understood just how much local families relied on immigrants for their livelihood. [After their stay], they decided to tear up their [party-membership] cards" (Daoud 1997:24). He also recalled that migrants from the village who had spent over two decades abroad without ever entering a non-

immigrant household also crossed new thresholds when they returned to France and were invited to the homes of the EDF volunteers. (Daoud 1997; Mernissi 1997).

Ultimately, the electricity network diverged significantly from both standards set by the Moroccan National Office of Electricity and by the EDF itself. The dimensions of the network and of the physical structures to support it were based on the real and projected electricity use in the village, and were therefore smaller than the norm. Thinner than usual cables were strung on poles that were only six meters tall instead of the required ten. The poles, stripped eucalyptus trunks, were bought locally, and substituted for the mandated concrete columns. Electricity was transmitted along this network at a frequency one-third the intensity of the industry standard. After the project, Jamal reflected on how the perception of what technological options were viable shifted with the Imgoun project: “The standards of the National Office of Electricity were too draconian. They imposed them on the villages. In the end, even EDF found that they were excessive and that they did not take technological evolution into account. Certain technicians argue that poles can be as short as 4 meters, that you can reuse old materials, reduce the size of the transformers, introduce new technical options that are more adapted to a rural setting” (Daoud 1997: 37). The rough poles and slack wires that now wove through the village, rudimentary though they appeared, represented a significant technological advance. They embodied a new way of thinking about rural electricity provision.

Organizing development

While the design of a functioning electricity network that was adapted both to the budget and topographical constraints of Imgoun and villages like it was an impressive feat all on its own, the social institutions that migrants and villagers established to carry out the project had a far greater impact for long-term economic development.

In the initial planning phase of the electricity project, before it was even fully conceptualized, M/D organized a village association in Imgoun. Made up of local villagers, the association played a dual role: it fulfilled the analytic, problem-solving tasks necessary for the construction and maintenance of an electricity network, but it also opened up an interpretive space that supported on-going innovation and ensured that

Imgoun's electricity network would only be the first in a series of creative efforts to promote economic development.

The logistics that the association managed were quite extensive: it participated intensively in the pre-project surveys; it organized the reception and lodging of the French volunteers who came to erect the network; and it collected 40 percent of the costs the project, from households in the village and from their migrant members in Europe and in Morocco's coastal cities. The association redistributed community funds, setting up a sliding scale and no-credit loan scheme amongst village households so that those families that did not have the means to contribute to the network's construction could still be connected to electricity. After the network was put in place, the association also took charge of maintaining the network and collecting fees, which -- in keeping with the principle that all families in the village should have access to electricity, regardless of income -- were based on ability to pay. Additionally, the association trained and employed two semi-skilled literate young people to service the generator daily and to make sure that the network remained functional and safe. (M/D 1993; Daoud 1997: 44; Interviews: Taroudant, January 2004).

However, despite how much the project depended on competent logistical management for its execution, migrants and the local villages viewed the interpretive function of the village association as more significant. They valued it as a vehicle that would set a development dynamic in motion and sustain it over time. The association was designed to provide an institutional space where villagers could take stock of their needs, together imagine a different future for themselves, and then articulate that future and the concrete steps that they had to take to get there. In effect, the village association would provide a setting where the villagers and the migrants could together engage in the conceptual and interpretive processes that underpin development. As the founder of M/D reflected, "It's by acting that we build a pedagogy of development, starting from the motivations of the villagers and not imposing it from outside. Right from the first project, a participatory dynamic is set in motion with the creation of a village association" (Daoud 1997: 26).

Over time, it became a place where a conceptual link between different needs and different projects to address them was discussed. In Imgoun, conversations about the

electricity network led to the envisioning and then planning of an irrigation system powered with the soon-to-be available electricity, which in turn led to the idea and creation of a cooperative for the export of high-quality organic saffron. Discussions about the cooperative for a product harvested by women turned the villagers' attention to women's low literacy levels, and out of that exchange, the idea to found an informal school for adults, primarily for women, surfaced. Out of the interpretive discussions in the association emerged ideas and plans that previously would have seemed unimaginable. These plans, and certainly the conceptual links between them, did not pre-exist the discussions; rather, they grew out of the on-going iterative exchange that the associations held, and out of the practices of bringing project after project into being.

In addition to a forum for conceptual development planning, the association became a tool of self-government through which the village set up the additional institutional mechanisms it needed to carry out the projects it planned for itself. In Imgoun, the institutions the village decided to put in place were quite fundamental. To collect funds for future projects, the village association levied a tax on each household based on the amount of electricity the household consumed. The funds were then deposited in an account that the association would draw on for larger development projects (either with M/D or independently), but also for smaller community expenses, like the village celebrations on feast days.

Although its organization was spearheaded by the migrants of M/D, the village association represented a re-invention of a very local practice. It was, in essence, a new take on the *jema'a* (plural: *jema'at*), a traditional council of elders that had for centuries governed the management of communal resources in Amazight villages in the Souss region. Often celebrated as an indigenous form of proto-democracy, the *jema'a* elected its leader each year and most decisions were made by consensus (Gellner 1969; Mernissi 1997; Haas 2003). Vested with the legitimacy that the participatory process afforded it, the *jema'a* had also acted as the representative of the village as a whole in its dealings with the central authorities. Historically, Morocco's Amazight tribes had always enjoyed a high degree of autonomy from the central sultanic state, which could never bring them fully under its control, despite repeated and often famously murderous raids on Morocco's interior. Outside the rarified setting of the Kingdom's imperial cities, the rule

of the sultan had to be secured through negotiation rather than by force. In the central high-atlas region of Morocco and in the Souss valley at its heart, the sultan bargained with *jema'at* for the allegiance of those they represented, offering self-government, an exemption from tribute, and other concessions in exchange for provisional loyalty. (Hans 2003; Mernissi 1997). In pre-colonial Morocco, this “domestic diplomacy,” as one scholar of Morocco’s political history has dubbed it (A. Radi qtd. in Mernissi 1997), afforded Amazight villages wide latitude in the government of their own affairs. In the more laudatory accounts of the *jema'a*, this very local and independent form of self-government is what allowed the Amazight tribes to survive and profit in a harshly austere natural environment, and maintain a strong cultural and political Amazight identity despite centuries of efforts by the central authorities to “Arabize” them (Mernissi 1997).

By the time M/D began its work in the Souss, however, the *jema'at* of the valley seemed fated to become relics of the past. Socio-economic changes in the valley had seriously eroded their husbandry of natural resources in their villages. In an irony that was not lost on many of the migrants I spoke with, most of these changes were due to the intensive migration from the regions since the 1960s. The remittances migrants sent home, substantial by local standards, upset the local socio-economic hierarchy. The local distribution of wealth, especially in the form of land ownership, was one of the central principles around which the *jema'a* was organized. While participatory in its process, the *jema'a* was not egalitarian in its make-up. Its membership was restricted to male members of land- or water-owning clans, and the council was often dominated by the wealthier families represented (Haas 2003). The decisions the *jema'a* made regarding water and land-usage, as well as the assignment of community labor, often reflected the vested interests of its members, imposing on landless sharecroppers a disproportionate share of the burden of maintaining terraces, irrigation canals, and wells, and so on, without affording them the corresponding usage rights of the resources they kept up through their labor. (Hans 2003; Missaoui 1996)

Starting in the late 1970s, families that had been landless and marginalized for generations began buying land with the income that migration earned them. As new landowners, they pressured resistant *jema'at* for membership, and the ensuing contests damaged the legitimacy of the traditional councils. Migrants complained that the

institutions were “un-democratic” and non-egalitarian, and that they favored a historically landed elite; they began to challenge their authority in ways large and small, through direct confrontation as well as through the quiet disregard for the *jema’at*’s edicts. They circumvented community rules about water use in particular, investing in motorized water pumps to irrigate their lands, many of the tracts newly purchased. They refused to contribute their labor to maintain community infrastructure like retaining walls and irrigation canals, paying others to sweat in their place. Unheeded, the *jema’at*, vital community institutions for centuries, fell into disrepair, and with their decline, the delicate ecological equilibrium they orchestrated was thrown off-balance. In Imgoun, by the late 1980s, hills covered in dense forests only existed in the memories of elders, and with surface streams and irrigation canals parched by the advancing desert, water could only be found deep underground for years at a stretch. (Daoud 1997; Haas 2003; Interviews, Imgoun, January 2004).

In addition to the economic upheavals caused by migration, a series of political events in Morocco’s modern history seemed to presage the end of the *jema’at*’s role as relevant institutions in village governance. After the French brutally defeated the Amazight resistance to their rule in the 1930s, the colonists brought Amazight tribes to administrative heel, firmly incorporating them into colonial administrative structures, dividing up their lands into rural municipalities and taking over the management of some communal resources, especially water. The Alawite King inherited the French colonial governance structures after independence, and deployed them to govern the Berbers regions with as firm a hand as possible. However, the Moroccan tradition of domestic diplomacy between Amazight tribes and the sultanate eventually resurfaced, only under a more provincial and clientelistic form. Negotiations with the central government were replaced, at least in part, with negotiations with local representatives of the central authority, and “domestic diplomacy” veered precipitously toward the reinforcement of self-interested alliances between local elites and municipal bureaucrats. The moral authority which gave the council’s decisions binding weight in the villages was squandered in enough cases to make the *jema’at* of the Souss valley generally suspect. (see Chapter 2; Haas 2003; Mernissi 1997).

The migrants of M/D resuscitated Imgoun's *jema'a* by re-imagining it. In several important respects, the village association was closely patterned on the *jema'a*. It reproduced the *jema'a*'s participatory decision-making processes and its practice of reaching conclusions by consensus. It fulfilled the *jema'a*'s traditional function of communal resource management, which quickly grew to include those resources created through development projects, like the new electricity network, and it served as the village's interlocutor and negotiator with the state in matters pertaining to village development projects.

However, the migrants modified the institution in several important ways. First, membership in the village association was extended to all villagers, regardless of wealth, land ownership, social status, or age³⁴. Migrants and locals were invited to participate in meetings and in decision-making, and the association set its meeting schedule around migrants' yearly return so that their participation would be more than symbolic. As M/D's description of village associations in an internal evaluation of its rural electrification projects—Imgoun and the several dozens that followed—reveals, toppling locally entrenched socio-economic hierarchies was how integral a part of the association's role in community development:

Associations allow for the management of collectively-owned equipment and for the envisioning of future projects while, at the same time, balancing the power between the young and old. In the traditional system [the *jema'a*], village elders, strong because of their experience, had the power to decide what should be done in the village, and the younger villagers had to obey those decisions even if they did not seem adapted to reality or to current needs....[T]he association enables everyone to get involved in the development of the village, and reduces the hierarchical inequalities between rich and poor, between young and old. (1993)

The interpretive conversations that had always taken place in the traditional councils were opened to include a more diverse set of voices and wider range of perspective. They were broadened to include the fertile ambiguity and generative conflict that Piore and Lester argue is so crucial for the articulation of innovative ideas.

³⁴ Although women were always formally welcomed to participate in the village association, patriarchal social pressures and gender norms in the village made difficult for women to attend meetings. This has recently started to change in several village associations.

Second, the migrants formalized the association, registering it as a legal entity. In 1989, Imgoun incorporated its village association under the Dahir number 159 of 1957. In doing so, migrants and local villagers made their association both visible and legible to the government. That is to say, they made the state formally aware of the activities in which they were engaged, officially notifying it of the social mobilization upon which their electricity network was built. They also translated their activities into a concept that the state could understand – into an institutional design that the state had, in fact, codified with the passage of the 1957 Dahir.

But 1957 seemed very distant in 1989, when the country was groaning under the weight of Hassan II's repressive dictatorship. After the political unrest of the mid-1970s and of the early 1980s that threatened to unseat the King from his throne, the central government eviscerated opposition parties and press, and tightened the vice around the non-government organizations that managed to survive during "*les années de plomb*" – literally, the leaden years – of absolute monarchy. For Imgoun, and for the villages that followed, to register their village association with the state at that historical moment was nothing short of a bold affront to the authority of state.

Their audacity was met with determined state resistance, but it was not met with outright refusal or even targeted repression. This was because the villagers had clear legal ground for their action. "It filed all its paperwork, did things by the book" remembers a French electricity engineer involved with M/D. "For that reason, it encountered a lot of political opposition from the local government at first." Municipal authorities attempted, in the case of Imgoun and in the case of several villages that followed, to intimidate the villagers instead into dissolving their association. The villagers' response was they were not responsible for the association – that it was a migrant initiative. "We told them, 'the migrants set it up. They're in France now. You'll have to go talk with them.'" Their strategy drew on the profound ways that emigration, encouraged by the state through its direct and indirect policies, had altered village life as a source of resistance to state control: while the association was registered in Morocco, the villagers placed it symbolically in a geographical space and jurisdiction that was outside the government reach.

Harassing migrants was not outside the repertoire of state strategies to maintain control. By all accounts, the Moroccan government had an elaborate surveillance network in receiving countries, especially France and Belgium. Through the infamous Friendship Societies that it sponsored, the Moroccan state attempted to intimidate emigrants who tried to organize around labor or human rights issues, either in Morocco or in France (see chapter 3). The Moroccan government resorted to myriad tactics of intimidation, including, but not limited to, the confiscation of passports when migrants returned for their yearly vacation (which made it impossible for migrants to return to their jobs in Europe legally), targeted auditing of migrants at customs and with respect to land ownership and tax issues, and on a few occasions, arrest and disappearance. (ATMF archives, Paris, Documents dated 1981-1985). However, persecuting migrants for organizing the provision of basic infrastructure that the state had so far been unable or unwilling to provide and for notifying the state formally, according to legal procedure the state established, of the association that they set up to manage the new service was too fragile a charge for the state to take direct action. It would have ultimately undermined the state's legitimacy in the valley, still frail after the riots of the early 1980s. As a result, the local government tolerated Imgoun's village association, although it maintained a watchful eye over its activities. (Interviews, Taroudant, December-January 2004).

“Tâche d’huile”: Spreading innovation

The technological model that the migration communities developed for energy provision, as well as the social model of the village association, quickly spread to the villages surrounding Imgoun. An elder from a village not far from Imgoun summed up the mechanisms by which this happened: “Imgoun is across the way, just there. We saw that they had electricity. At night, it was all lit up. We went to *Migrations et Développement* and told them come bring us electricity too” (Interview, December 2004). M/D members use an analogy to describe the spread of the technological and social models they elaborate: they say that it works like a drop of oil on a piece of paper that quickly widens far beyond its initial circumference.

The oil stain soon became an oil slick. By 1996, M/D had worked with over 70 villages to set up electricity networks, and had a waiting list double that number. While the organization worked with villages to tailor their network to their topographical and usage needs, M/D did impose a series of conditions for its participation. The most important of these was that villages had to create and legally register a village association. The association had to be inclusive and function according to a participatory decision-making process; it had to collect 40 percent of the cost of building the network from local residents and from migrants; it had to manage the logistics of the network in a manner that ensured that all households got access to electricity regardless of ability to pay; and it had to join the other village associations created as a result of M/D's intervention in a federation of village associations. By the mid-1990s, there were close to 200 federated village associations in the Souss valley, many of them self-taxing, and all of them carrying out development projects ranging from electric provision to the building of potable water networks to informal schooling. (M/D annual reports, 1994-1997; Interviews, M/D, 2004; M/D, email correspondence, 2004)

The oil stain not only spread throughout the valley, but also leaked into state's approach and method for rural electricity provision. During the early 1990s, the state in a discreet – even sometimes indirect -- exchange with migration communities in the Souss observed how the technological and social models those communities had developed functioned in practice. Very soon afterward, the state would appropriate many of the migration communities' innovations, re-inventing them all, much like the migration communities re-invented the *jema'a*, and would apply them to a massive national rural electrification program launched in 1996. The next section details the exchange that occurred between migration communities and the state in the interpretive space created by the shared practice of what is typically viewed as a state function.

2. Innovating the state

The interpretive space that allowed migration communities and the state to engage in a conversation about state practice unfurled across the political boundary that divided state and society at a moment in Morocco's history when the crown's policies made that boundary extremely charged. While the exchange between migration communities and

the state was very political, both in the content of what was communicated and in the participatory form that the conversations took, it was never overly confrontational. It never became a standoff between “society” and “the state.” Instead, the focus on practice diffused tensions, and allowed the conversation to hold enough ambiguity about what the problem and solutions were for creative ideas to emerge. The ambiguity also made the authorship of the ideas impossible to identify with certainty, and afforded the state enough political leeway to integrate those ideas into policy without appearing to capitulate to political pressure.

Conversations-in-practice

The conversations that would allow for the articulation and exchange of ideas and that changed state practice in electricity provision began indirectly. They occurred, at least initially, through intermediaries who were involved both with government schemes to provide rural electricity and with *Migrations et Développement*'s efforts to build a village electricity network. By and large, these conversational middlemen were French consultants deployed by the French government to provide Morocco with technical assistance in the design of rural energy solutions. Because of their agencies' ties to organized labor and in particular to the union that had supported migrants in labor disputes with Péchiney (see above), the consultants became aware of the migrants' experiment with rural electricity provision and several individuals soon began collaborating with them on a volunteer basis. Consultants from Agence Française pour la Maîtrise de l'Énergie, working with the Moroccan government since the early 1980s to study its rural electricity needs, were the first to serve as a conversational bridge between M/D and the state. Approached by M/D for help, they became involved with the electricity project in Imgoun when it was still in the planning stages, and through their consulting work, filtered back to the state the insights that emerged from their conversations with the migrants, the local villagers, and EDF. As a consultant who worked both with the Moroccan Ministry of the Interior and with M/D recalls, the exchange of ideas “was informal, indirect. It's difficult to establish a formal link. The information passed through people rather than through institutions” (Butin, Interview,

August 2004). (De Grommard, email correspondence 2004; Boyer, Interviews, January-March 2004)

Over time, the conversation with between the migration communities affiliated with M/D and the state evolved in two seemingly contradictory but ultimately complementary ways. First, they became more direct: representatives of migration communities were invited to participate in government meetings on how to reform rural electricity provision, and second, the indirect interpretative space that the consultants had helped open was formalized. Both of these two trends happened in the context of a government scheme designed to explore innovative electricity solutions for isolated rural areas.

The scheme – Programme Pilote pour la Pre-électrification Rurale (PPER) – grew out of the failure of the Moroccan government’s first targeted initiative to provide electricity to rural households since independence. The National Program for Rural Electricity (PNER), launched in 1982, was by all accounts a disappointing attempt: over four years, the government hooked up only 287 villages, the overwhelming majority of which were in areas that were close to urban centers where the national network was already well established (ONE 1999; ECIL 2000). Even this relatively un-ambitious effort proved too expensive for the government to envision on a grand scale, especially if it were to include villages that were at some distance from the existing electricity networks (World Bank 1988). Faced with the PNER’s disappointing performance, the Moroccan government commissioned the AFME and the Direction of Technical and Scientific Cooperation and Development, an another agency housed in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1987 to create what would become the PPER: a pilot program to experiment with rural energy strategies that did not require villages to be linked to the state network.

The French consultants involved with the project had worked with M/D and brought the migrant activists into the design process for the PPER. This was an exceptional move: M/D activists were the only actors involved in the elaboration of the program that would not participate directly in its implementation, and were also the only Moroccans present who were not affiliated with the government in any way. Nevertheless, the planning documents for the PPER suggest that M/D’s experiment in

Imgoun, still underway at the time, influenced the strategic priorities of the pilot program. For example, the program design report stresses the importance of conducting a careful micro-study of household electricity consumption and of constructing a network using technology that reflects the village's particular energy needs – a conclusion that if not drawn straight from Imgoun's experience could not have but been informed by it given the extensive discussions on which the program design was based (Royaume du Maroc/AFME 1988; Butin, Interviews, 2004; De Gromard, email correspondence, 2004).

Although the exchange through direct conversation between the state and the migrant activists of M/D ended with the design phase of the PPER, conversation through practice continued for almost a decade. The institutional design of the PPER drew the state into the innovative practices that migration communities in the Souss were developing for electricity provision. In what would grow to over 200 PPER pilot sites, all of them in villages outside the Souss, the Ministry of the Interior, in partnership with French consultants on-loan to the Moroccan government, tried out many of the same strategies – the same practices -- that migration communities in the Souss had developed for their energy projects, often with the help of the very same consultants who worked with the government. They conducted household surveys, used non-standard technological solutions, and relied on community management of electricity networks, amongst other strategies. In the process of using those practices, however, they also transformed and elaborated on them.

The modified practices for electricity provision and management were then reintroduced into the Soussi migration communities through the French consultants who worked with the government. As volunteers with M/D, the French consultants tried out technological solutions that were still novel in the Moroccan rural context in villages where M/D had erected an electricity network, often before they introduced the technologies into PPER pilot sites. According to the consultants, the M/D villages were useful sites to test the social reaction and use of different technologies because the villages had independent, functioning electricity networks that for rural Morocco were already quite mature. A 1993 initiative to replace incandescent with fluorescent lighting in the homes and streets of Imgoun is one example of such an initiative (M/D 1993a). The technological practices, once tested and transformed in M/D villages, were then

applied in PPER pilot sites. Through these exchanges in practice, the PPER provided an institutional structure for the conversations between the state and migration communities to continue. The PPER opened and supported an interpretative space that spanned the state-society boundary.

Ministry of the Interior retained three main lessons from these conversations-in-practice. First, the state recognized that it could use technology that was more adapted to the topography of rural Morocco and less expensive without compromising service or safety. This lesson was just pertinent for rural electricity provision in the mountainous regions of Central High-Atlas as it was for the vast expanses of desert in the Moroccan deep south. Second, because communities already spend a significant portion of their income on energy, buying everything from candles to wood, they were able and willing to contribute funds for the construction of electricity networks. Furthermore, the contribution communities could make was calculated as high enough to make rural electricity provision a profitable activity for the government if the market were big enough to create economies of scale (Butin, Interview, August 2004). However, the state recognized that households' ability to share in the costs of electricity provision was limited by the non-negotiable threshold of their income. (Moroccan Ministry of the Interior 2003; Mossadeq 1996)

Third, the state acknowledged that supporting electricity networks with some sort of social organization was key for those networks to function properly and cost-effectively, especially over the long-term. In fact, the directors of the PPER did not just appropriate the idea that local associations were indispensable for the management of electricity networks, but they went so far as to promote it within the Ministry of the Interior, which was their institutional base, as well as in other Ministries and levels of government. Furthermore, through the PPER, the Ministry of Interior recognized that local associations established to support electricity networks also served as catalysts for local economic development more generally. At a meeting of several Ministries in 1994, the directors of the PPER spoke of the relationship between local social organizations set up for electricity provision and development:

The provision of rural electricity should be seen as a stage in a broader strategy of rural development.[B]ecause it depends on local autonomous organization for its use, management,

and for its funding, decentralized electricity builds an institutional motor to drive other developmental actions (Berdai et al. 1993).

They went even further to identify local village associations as the most appropriate institutional form for this local social organization, precisely because they could acquire a formal legal status that would afford them a certain degree of autonomy from local state control. (Berdai et al. 1993)

For a division of the Ministry of the Interior -- the ministry that had enforced Hassan II's autocratic reign over the Kingdom for close to two decades -- to advance a perspective that favored independent social mobilization represented a significant break with the prevailing political culture in the ministry. It also represented an implicit acknowledgement that rural communities were vital settings where economic growth and development could occur; it suggested that a redrawing of Morocco's political cartography and redefining of the "Maroc Utile" -- the useful Morocco--was called for. The conversations-in-practice between migration communities and the state had shaken entrenched government views on rural communities, on local activism, and on development.

Institutionalizing practice

In mid-1990s, the Moroccan energy sector entered a crisis so severe it led to a fundamental reorganization of power production and distribution in the Kingdom. As Schon would have predicted, it drove the state to incorporate the lessons it gleaned from the PPER and the conversations that it embodied. However, unlike in Schon's model, those lessons existed not on the margins of society, outside the state, but rather were already a part of state practice in rural electricity provision, and the state codified those practices in policy.

Since the mid-1970s, energy production and distribution was state-owned and state-provided. The ONE managed power production, and distribution and the construction of electricity networks was handled either by the ONE or by the *regie*, an administrative unit larger than a municipality, but smaller than a province. Years of underinvestment in the energy sector, both on capital and on maintenance, led to its progressive breakdown in the 1990s. The drought that Morocco suffered throughout the

1980s and into the 1990s compounded this situation by undercutting production at Morocco's hydraulic power plants, which represented about 30% of the ONE production capacity. A lack of logistical and financial coordination between the ONE and the regimes involved in electricity distribution, most explicitly manifested in the huge debts many regimes had accumulated to the ONE, undermined the financial solvency of the state power producer. With the economy growing at a clip, urban, and particularly, industrial demand was rising and the ONE simply could not deliver the electricity required. After trying and failing to manage the energy shortage with scheduled black outs and brown outs³⁵, after its a campaign to get public and private firms to ration their energy usage met with unexpectedly fierce opposition, and after the ONE began to default of its petroleum bills, the state was forced to privatize energy production. It also privatized a significant portion of urban electricity distribution. (World Bank 1998; l'Economiste, various articles, 1994-1996).

With the privatization³⁶, the National Office of Electricity (ONE), that had produced and distributed the Kingdom's electricity, lost its reason for being. With several thousand employees, dismantling the public sector utility was not a political option, however. Even downsizing the ONE was delicate: the ONE could not lay off its workers without breaking its contractual agreement with the public sector employees. In order to find a new rationale for its existence, ONE had to develop new markets for its services – which after production was privatized were limited to electricity distribution. To stay afloat, the ONE adopted rural electricity as its new mission. Rural electricity distribution had always been part of its charge, but instead of its “hesitant commitment” to the task, as the World Bank characterized it, it now turned to it wholeheartedly. (World Bank 1998; Butin, Interview, August 2004; Bentaleb 2002).

³⁵ The ONE combined reduced tariffs at off-peak hours for industry with a public relations campaign. The ONE also engaged in heated negotiations with industrialists from 1992 through 1995 to schedule power outages. The ONE set up what it called “vigilance committees” to enforce the electricity usage schedule it had established in Morocco's industrial centers, especially in the Casablanca-Rabat-Kenitra corridor (e.g. Ain Sebaa and Mohamedia). Larger producers complained that the government policies were forcing them to cut production by 30 percent at a time when they were trying to penetrate foreign market. In a trend that worried the ONE, an important proportion of companies in Morocco's major industrial centers (i.e. Ain Sebaa) built independent generators.

³⁶ Privatization resulted in rise of production capacity from 2,400 in 1993 to 3,400 megawatts in 1996 (Belyazid).

In 1996, the ONE launched a massive rural electricity program, with the goal of linking 90 percent of rural households to the national electricity network by 2010. To meet its ambitious target, the ONE dedicated significant financial and institutional resources to the program – called *Programme d' Electrification Rurale Globale* (PERG). It restructured its bureaucracy, creating a dedicated division for rural electricity provision and centralizing a number of distribution functions (especially procurement of equipment) previously contracted out to local township in order to achieve economies of scale. It also levied a tax on urban consumers for the program, which it leveraged to secure additional loans from international donors to invest in the initiative. (ONE 1999; www.one.org.ma; Interviews, ONE, Rural Electricity Division, 2004).

In its design, PERG differed significantly from the lackluster rural electricity programs that the ONE had implemented in the past (the PNER I from 1982 to 1986 and the PNER 2 from 1991 to 1996). It adopted several of the strategies that the government had come to recognize as valuable through the PPER, but it modified them to fit the political and institutional concerns of the ONE, and the Moroccan state more generally. Three of the most important lessons from the PPER – about technology, cost-sharing, and social organization -- defined the broad lines of the program structure. First, the ONE deployed a series of “low-tech” technologies to connect villages to the national grid. It revised its standards for equipment, used materials that were less expensive and more readily available in the local market, and reviewed its administrative and training procedures in view of the more accessible technologies that it began using. As an ONE description of the program explains, “Before the PERG, the installations and equipment for rural electricity provision were too luxurious, even compared to rich countries like Canada.... As a result, the ONE has adopted a cost-reduction strategy for rural electricity provision based on the realistic concept of “electricity provision for a poor country” and translated into a search for economies at every level” including “standards,” “technology,” and “investment in human capital and materials” (ONE 1999: 9). Driss Benhima, director of the ONE at the time, clarified what some of those amendments to the ONE’s technological practices might entail, and alluded to the fact that the technological solutions adopted could be tailored to specific village requests: “If we worry less about esthetics, we can quarter the costs. If people want poles that are 9

meters tall, instead of 10.5 meters high, we can satisfy them, we can even go down to 6 meters” (Daoud 1997: 36)

Second, the program drew on the insight that rural household were willing and able to contribute financially to the construction of an electricity network. In the PERG, the ONE covered the expense of linking villages to the national grid through a cost-sharing scheme that required individual households to contribute a portion of the necessary funds. The ONE contributed 55% of the cost of hooking up each village, the local township added an additional 20%, and the consumer bore the remaining 25%, with the specification that for 70% of the villages concerned, that amount should not exceed a threshold of 14000 Moroccan Dirhams (approximately 2002 USD 1,400) to be paid over seven years.

Third, the program reflected an acknowledgment, although very limited, that community management of local electricity networks was important to keeping them functional and cost-effective over the long term. The program mandated some degree of community management, mostly in the form of fee collection from households, which would then be remitted to the ONE. In cases where the village in question was too isolated to be efficiently connected to the national network and where the ONE provided access to autonomous electricity sources (like hydro-electric or solar power) the PERG envisioned a much larger role for local social organizations. In fact, the program design document calls for a partnership with local groups, among them “associations or federations of associations that have as their goal the support of rural household, the most of active of which is *Migrations et Développement*” (ONE 1999: 16).

While the ONE and other segments of the governments, the Ministry of Interior amongst them, admitted the valuable role that village associations could play electricity management, and by extension, in development, it was an observation that nevertheless did not sit comfortably with the regime. Furthermore, the movement of organized, federated, and in many cases, self-taxing, Soussi village associations that began to gain momentum in the early nineties continued to grow throughout the decade: by 2000, not only had close to 300 associations joined the M/D federation, but new (sometimes-overlapping) federations were also emerging in the Souss valley. To control this trend, the Moroccan state, in partnership with the World Bank, created the Agence de

Développement Sociale (ADS). The ADS was set up in 1999 as a semi-autonomous government agency to funnel grants from foreign donors – mostly the EU and the World Bank -- to local non-governmental organizations, including associations. Essentially, through the new agency, the state was able to control the type and amount of funding to which associations, and federations of associations, had access (World Bank 2002). Furthermore, the ADS conducted, and continues to conduct, outreach in local communities encouraging them to form associations and apply for funds, thus bringing new associations directly under the state's tutelage. To carry out this initiative, the government brought in a former director of a local branch of M/D as executive director of the new agency. (Interviews, ADS, 2001)

3. Coda

The process of interpretive exchange between migration communities and the state that produced such dramatic effects in rural electricity provision were repeated over and over again in a number of policy areas. Like variations on a melodic theme, the exchanges all supported a vital process of policy innovation, but in each case, in a slightly different manner. The interpretive conversations sparked changes in state practices and in the structure of state institutions relating to fields from education to technical support for agricultural production. However, their effects were most significant in the areas of water and road construction. The conversations led to considerable amendments as to where and how major state agencies carried out their functions.

Water: Resuscitating villages

When I visited the village of Ifri in the Soussi heartland of Morocco in the winter of 2004, I was stunned by its beauty. Ifri sat at the base of spectacular cliff, into which the village's ancestors carved an *agadir*, a fortified communal granary with storerooms for each family's grain dug into the rockface. In the shadow of the *agadir*, with its lattice-like network of nooks and small wooden doors with intricate ancient locks, the village spread out in a patchwork of lush olive and almond orchards, blanketed in delicate white blossoms in January, and stone houses atop parcels of packed earth, knitted together by irrigation canals that directed water to the fields and the community cistern at

which young women did their families' washing. New cement buildings crowned with large satellite dishes protruded out of the village fabric, their boxy modern-looking structures advertising the financial success of emigrants from the community. A modest hostel for European ecotourists was under construction, and had already received several dozen visitors even though its toilet facilities were still not finished.

In 1995, Ifri's situation had been radically different. The nearby spring that was the village's only source of water had been completely exhausted, and Ifri had no access to water. The parched village was dying, as its residents were unable to withstand yet another drought that were visited upon the southern province of Taroudant with increasing frequency. Residents fled from the drought and soon there were only eight families in a village that had once been several hundred strong. Ifri was not unique in its predicament. The foothills surrounding Ifri were dotted with villages that had been abandoned to droughts, their adobe structures beginning to crumble and their orchards dried into eerie rows of black stumps. In fact, according to Moroccan state estimates in 1995, only 13 percent of rural residents in the Kingdom had reliable access to water, both for irrigation and household consumption, compared to 82 percent in urban areas. Additionally, the state estimated, with a range so broad that in and of itself it reflected the level of state neglect, that there was one water pump available for every 250 to 1,000 rural residents. It was a situation that was likely to get much worse, with underground water tables falling approximately 1.5 to 2 meters per year. (National Office of Potable Water, cited in Daoud 2005).

The remaining villagers of Ifri approached the state for help. Villager elders remembered a spring that used to gurgle up water when the river, once seasonally and now permanently, was dry, and they asked the state to dig a well there. State technicians ignored the villagers' local knowledge and picked a spot 35 meters away, which predictably, yielded only stone. The desperate and frustrated villagers contacted Migrations et Développement (M/D), with whom they had already collaborated to set up an independent electricity network to supply the hamlet with power. Working through the village association M/D had set up a few years prior, the village organized to dig a well where the elders had indicated and found water. In much the same improvised fashion that they erect electricity networks, M/D and the village association drew on the

hydraulic expertise of a French consultant (and former labor organizer), combined it with traditional water preservation techniques, and began constructing concrete walls around the well to protect the new water source and to direct overflow into their fields. Just as it had done in the case of electricity distribution, the village association set up a system of tariffs that enabled everyone in the village to access the water, regardless of income, but that also levied a small tax that would provide resources for further projects: a new irrigation network, a saffron cooperative, a cistern, and finally, a hostel. Residents quickly began returning and the village eventually grew larger than it had ever been. (Daoud 2005; Interviews, Taroudant, January 2004).

As other villages took note of Ifri's renaissance, and of that waters that collected in puddles in its orchards, they approach M/D for help with their own water shortages. In each of those villages, the emigrants of M/D set up a village association if one did not already exist, and brought in expert consultants. Interpretive conversations, promoted by emigrants and hosted by the associations throughout the process of construction, generated innovative hydraulic solutions that combined local knowledge with the latest technologies to produce a bricolage that none of the participants could imagine on their own. In Imgoun, when the underground water tables seemed to drop in a free fall, the villagers worked with M/D to build retaining walls into the surrounding foothills to hold back rainwater, allowing it to sink into the earth and feed the underground lakes that had dried up. During construction, village elders offered their suggestions for how the walls should be placed. They based their comments on intuition and weren't able to explain why they felt that the builders should proceed in a certain way, but their guidance was nevertheless included in the on-going conversations that accompanied construction. As the retaining walls were built, using the elders' advice as well as the consultants' sophisticated knowledge of the necessary structural elements that had to be incorporated into their design to prevent soil erosion, the villagers uncovered similar walls, ancient and made out of stone, that even the elders had forgotten, remembering them only as images they no longer believed in. In Anighd, villagers worked with M/D to build an artificial lake using a network of mini-dams that directed rainwater to a tub they surrounded with concrete walls. They insisted on setting the lake on the exact spot where the state had, in 1957, agreed to build a dam for the village, but never fulfilled the contract it had signed

with the village to much fanfare. The consultants advised against it, but the villagers, unable to give solid reasons to defend their position, nevertheless insisted, and the artificial lake was built on that site. During the next wet season, rain, directed by the mini-dams, flowed easily into the mould that quickly grew into an emerald lake; the place indicated by villagers was a natural basin for rainwater, but before the dams were built, it had been absorbed by the parched ground on its path down the mountain. In the village of Tinfat, with M/D's help, Anighd's artificial lake was reinvented as a series of *tanoutfis*, traditional rain reservoirs that were built with cement instead of the traditional stone, and that were flanked with the customary wall of porous rock, reinforced with this time with rust-resistant metal netting, to filter the water before use.

By year's end, the nearby villages of Tilfou, Timsarit, Tidnas and many others approached M/D for help in building hydraulic interventions that met their local needs and matched their village's specific topography. The collaborations generated new solutions for each case. However, M/D's resources were quickly stretched to their limit, and the emigrant organization appealed to the Moroccan government for assistance. It asked the Taroudant province Regional Agricultural Development Office (Offices régionaux de mise en valeur agricole – ORMVA) to contribute some of the building materials, and to verify the constructions to ensure that they complied with state norms. The partnership was a tense one, with the state attempting to standardize the projects, and to use inappropriate and expensive equipment. (Daoud 2005)

In 1998, the Moroccan state shifted from a reluctant collaboration on M/D hydraulic projects to a careful examination of the solutions those initiatives represented. That year, the Moroccan government, pressured by foreign donors who were alarmed at the ravages of droughts in the countryside, signed into law a mandate for a rural water program. The Program for the Collective Provision of Water in Rural Areas (Programme d'approvisionnement groupé en eau rurale – PAGER), along with a sub-program for drought prevention (PNLCES), underwritten by the World Bank, the EU, the UNDP and others, aimed to increase water coverage from rural Morocco from 13 to 80 percent. The PAGER directors drew on emigrant-fostered hydraulic solutions, and the social organization on which they rested, in designing the program. The PAGER director for research and water management wrote the EU office in Rabat that, "the hydraulic projects

of M/D should rank as priorities of the government,” adding that “[village] associations are better performers, more dynamic” in their elaboration of hydraulic interventions (qtd. in Daoud 2005: 89). The state organized the PAGER around a partnership between local village associations, requiring them to contribute 10 percent of project costs and to participate in their design and upkeep. As corroborated by the World Bank, “villagers determined the facilities they needed, participated in project construction, and received training in water-system management” (World Bank 2003). Using this methodology, the PAGER, in collaboration with village associations and M/D, had provided water to 140,000 residents by 2005, extending basic coverage to almost 50% of rural villages in Taroudant. (Daoud 2005)

As the World Bank’s evaluation of the PAGER notes, the rural water provision program had effects that went far beyond simply making water available for agricultural and household use. The government’s partnership with village associations, inspired by the M/D projects on which the state collaborated, increased the villages’ political ability to define priorities for their own economic development. “Each association’s decision-making capacity enhanced rural political voice,” concluded the World Bank summary of the program. It also quotes the institution’s Moroccan evaluator, who observed that, “it is a social revolution and an extraordinary change PAGER has introduced into Morocco’s countryside. Thanks to these associations, a new vision is growing for local development and democracy” (World Bank 2003).

Roads: Paving the way out of isolation

The Moroccan state’s record on road provision until the mid-1990s was abysmal. In 1994, according to the World Bank, less than 40 percent of the rural population had access to roads, paved or unpaved, on a consistent basis, and in some of the more isolated regions of the country, that percentage dipped to under 20 percent (Levy 2004). Despite this sparse coverage, the Moroccan government focused its resources on the construction and upgrade of highways between cities. It added only an estimated 280 kilometers to its national network per year between 1988 and 1994, with most construction occurring in urban areas (World Bank 2005). In Taroudant province, less than 500 kilometers of roads had been built, less than a third of the kilometers required for minimal basic

coverage (Daoud 2005). At least two thousand villages were completely cut off from reliable road service, with many villages having access to roads only seasonally (Daoud 2005). This isolation made it impossible for children to attend schools, for residents, especially women, to seek health care, and for farmers to transport their goods to markets outside their village, confining them to subsistence agriculture (Levy 2004).

As early as 1985, villagers and their emigrants began to take matters into their own hands. Largely with remittances, they funded the construction and pavement of roads, prioritizing many paths that were viewed as essential to transport provision to otherwise completely isolated village, accessible only by donkey or by foot. Over the next ten years, they would pave or upgrade almost 80 kilometers of road -- a heroic achievement for the rural farmers and emigrant laborers who bankrolled the public works with their own savings, but far from enough to pierce through the geographic and social isolation that was exacerbating already severe rural poverty. (Daoud 2005).

In 1995, the Moroccan government, pressed and funded by the World Bank, launched its first National Rural Roads Program (Programme Nationale de Construction de Routes Rurales --PNCRR). The program was designed to upgrade a select group of already existing roads to all-weather conditions, and aimed to improve 11,000 kilometers -- or 20 percent of the national network -- by 2005. To implement the program, the Moroccan government revised its laws, allowing the central Ministry of Infrastructure to extend loans to local government -- the provincial government and the local collectivities that represent groups of villages -- for road construction. (World Bank 2005).

During the elections that accompanied the political reforms --*l'alternance* -- of 1997, Mohammed Sajid was elected parliamentary deputy for Taroudant. A Casablanca native but the son of a wealthy industrialist from the province, Sajid set foot in Taroudant for the first time during his campaign. Fortuitously, however, he held a series of town meetings during his initial visit to the area and learned of the village associations created by M/D, as well as by other emigrants who had followed M/D's lead. Intrigued, he later met with M/D staff in the province and asked in particular about how their system for electricity provision was adapted by the state, focusing especially on community contribution to the construction of electricity networks linking villages to the national grid. The interest of a government official with easy access to the Ministry of

Infrastructure sparked a intensive deliberation between M/D, village associations in Taroudant, and emigrant associations in France about how to get the state to devote more of its resources to rural road construction in the province under the auspices of the PNCRR. (Daoud 2005; Interviews, Taroudant, January 2005)

Recognizing that road construction was too costly and too large a project for a village association to undertake on its own, they decided to create a federation of associations that would allow them to pool their resources to finance the roads. The federation elected Sajid as its president, who presented the following proposal to the Ministry of Infrastructure on its behalf. In collaboration with the local collectivities, who under PNCRR were some receiving funds for road construction, the federation would contribute 30 percent of the cost of building or paving new roads, with emigrants covering about 10 percent of the expenses. In exchange, the federation wanted to select the location of the roads, direct the project studies for the routes, and supervise their construction. The Ministry was generally agreeable to the proposal, largely, according to Sajid, because of federation's financial contribution, but insisted on final review of the plans for road construction. If there was a difference of opinion about the location or design of the road, they would return the plans to the federation for them to devise an alternate solution that addressed the Ministry's concerns. The central government signed a convention with the federation in 1998, pledging to construct 600 kilometers of roads over the next seven years. (Daoud 2005; ECIL 2002; Interviews, Taroudant, January 2005)

Within a short time, as the first roads were constructed under the agreement, it became clear that the community involvement, through the federation, in the planning and supervision of the roads was decisive. Roads chosen and managed by the federation cost significantly less to construct, sometimes fifty percent less than state estimates. Furthermore, the federation's roads tended to have greater social and economic impacts for the villages that they linked to the province's existing network of roads. In particular, they resulted in a noticeably higher impact on school enrollment, especially for girls, and in the increased use of butane instead wood for cooking, which in turn protected the soil from erosion caused by overharvesting of firewood. (Daoud 2005; Interviews, Taroudant, January 2005)

Significantly, the Ministry of Infrastructure's participation in this federation's matching funds scheme contributed to its revision the criteria that it used to select roads and to evaluate their impact. The Ministry revised its targets from a physical number of kilometers constructed to the number of people that will benefit from improve access to roads. Additionally, an amended version of the roads program strengthened the involvement of local collectivities, and village association through them, in the selection, planning, and maintenance of roads. (Word Bank 2005)

Conclusion

A group of migrant workers, laid-off from their manual production line jobs in France, built a rudimentary electricity network in an isolated hamlet tucked away in the folds of Atlas Mountains and changed the way a nation provided electricity to ten of thousands of its citizens. Then, through the same small-scale innovation-in-practice, and through the same tactic of drawing the government into their interpretive conversations, they went on to change the way the state supplied water to villages through rural Morocco, and the way it planned road networks and rolled out pavement to link isolated areas to urban centers. By the late 1990s, migrants had, in fact, contributed to the conceptual understandings and had amended the practices of three major state initiatives launched at the behest of donor institutions to alleviate rural poverty: the national program to provide rural electricity (PERG), the national program to provide water to rural areas (PAGER), and the national program to build rural roads (PNCRR) (van de Walle 2004). They had engaged the state in process interpretation that caused the re-invention of three programs that, combined, had yearly operating budgets that totaled several hundred million dollars (World Bank 2001).

By involving the state in the interpretive conversations around how to provide infrastructure for rural villages, migrants and their communities of origin changed state practices and state institutions in fundamental and unprecedented ways. However, they also challenged the premise that there were some areas of Morocco that were not inherently resistant to development, and brought the state in as a participant in a movement that belied the politically motivation division of Morocco into "useful" and "useless" areas. They redrew the political map of Morocco. In their version, rural areas

of Morocco not only part of “le Maroc utile,” they were also some of its most dynamic locations.

In the process, they resisted the state’s definition of the role they were to play in the Moroccan economy. They asserted situated identities as both emigrants and villagers, and neither exclusively, and in so doing, broke with the homogenized national templates as migrant workers that the state applied to them in order to reinforce the economic function they were assigned. Moreover, they discovered themselves as actors who could participate, with their communities, in the elaboration of development approaches that were situated, that grew out of the very local realities of their villages but that also drew on the emigration that had stretch families and tribes across space, across borders, and across economic and social contexts.

Migration communities – migrants and the villagers who never left – engaged with those resources actively and intensively, and in the process, determined what those resources were and what they would become in their village, and beyond. In constituting migration remittances, they cast themselves as protagonists of their own history, and of their own local processes of development, in ways that were far more profound than simply migrants bankrolling community projects or villagers spending the money that migrants sent home. As the director of *Migrations et Développement* explained in a moving reflection on the meaning of participating in development, migrants reclaimed a sense of themselves as members of their communities and recognized the agency that they could exercise to envision and create their futures:

The act of doing local development work, that’s something very important. Important not only for the village, in what they do and what come into being in the village, but also for their concept of themselves, their personality. Because these emigrants, they are uneasy in France, they feel they have a debt, they feel they are responsible, even guilty of something. When they are over there, they feel like returning, and when they are here, they feel like going back there. They are always in that tension and always between two places. Doing development work, it’s revealed to them that they are, that they can be actors. This is over and above the money that they bring, over and above when they can do, the skills that they have and that they can bring back. (Lahoussain Jamal, Rapport ECIL 2002)

Through the interpretive practices that they authored and engaged in, they could share in the transformation of the communities, they could catalyze the reform of state bureaucracies that affected their fate and the lot of their villages, and they could redefine

prevailing definitions of national development, bring down, above all, the level of situated practice.

Chapter 5

Process as Resource:

Mohammed VI, Emigrants, and the Politics of Rural Development

Introduction

The crowds had been gathering for hours in the hot sun, pressing against police lines and metal barriers for one last glimpse of Hassan II. After the crown prince announced on national television that the King's heart had stopped, ten of thousands of Moroccans left their homes for Rabat, many of them on foot, and two days later, on July 25, 1999, over a million people lined the capital's broad tree-lined avenues waiting for the royal funeral procession. As the gun carriage that bore the King's coffin turned the corner, the crowd erupted into wails of grief and deafening chants of "There is only one God, and Mohammed is his prophet." Many waved the Moroccan flag, and shook photos and newspaper pictures of the man who cautioned the Moroccan people, and their parliament, more than once that he was the shadow of God on earth. Others flung themselves against the barricades with cries of "he is our father. Our father is dead!" Volunteer teams scrambled to collect the mourners who had fainted from the emotional exertion and the heat. The young new King, Mohammed VI, dressed in the traditional flowing white robes and red fez, walked imperturbably behind in his father's body, with dozens of world leaders, including U.S. President Clinton, French President Chirac, and Israeli Prime Minister Barak, following several steps behind him on the two-mile funerary route to the royal mausoleum. There, as foreign dignitaries stood at the gates, Hassan II's remains were buried near those of his father in a private ceremony. After 38 years, the rule of the Arab world's longest reigning monarch was finally over. (Rosenblum 1999; Broder et al. 1999; Macpherson 1999; Buncombe 1999).

Mohammed VI, still several weeks shy of his thirty-sixth birthday when he ascended to the throne, was hailed as a modernizer. With Hassan II dead and buried, Moroccans tentatively began to whisper that it had been "time for some new blood" (qtd. in Jehl 1999), and that they had hopes that the new monarch would bring the change to a country weighed down under an authoritarian bureaucracy and struggling with an

unemployment rate at over 30 percent. Part of the so-called “internet generation” of new monarchs in the Arab world, which included King Abdullah of Jordan and Sheikh Hamad bin Issa of Bahrain among others, Mohammed VI pledged to implement democratic reforms and to jump start the Kingdom’s flagging economy. In particular, he advanced a plan for economic development that was regional in focus, and that placed special emphasis on Morocco’s long neglected rural areas. In doing so, the self-styled “King of the Poor” broke with the political cartography which had legitimated the exclusion of large portions of the country from Morocco’s succession of national plans for economic development, and made the alleviation of the staggering poverty and isolation of rural villages a national priority.

In its revised economic development strategy, the crown saw a role for Moroccan emigrants in the Moroccan national economy that differed markedly from the one they were assigned under Hassan II. The government under the previous monarch had viewed emigrants primarily as purveyors of remittances, and the state had engaged with emigrants to devise institutions – mostly the Banque Centrale Populaire – to channel the monies to national development priorities – priorities that in a painful irony largely bypassed migrants’ communities of origin. To ensure that emigrants continued to fulfill this function, the Moroccan state also engaged with them politically to smother emigrant labor mobilization in European centers because it viewed these emigrant activities as jeopardizing an important source of national income. For a brief period in the early 1990s, Hassan II’s government broke with this established pattern. Moroccan state repression had begun to undermine the government’s engagement with migrants over their financial transfers, and remittances began to dip. In response, the state merged its engagement with migrants over economic issues with its engagement around their political demands as workers and as citizens of Morocco and, increasingly, of Europe. The experiment was short-lived: the conversations generated a series of political challenges to the regime about how it managed the national economy. The Moroccan state quickly reverted back to its decades-old strategy of engaging with emigrants in order to direct remittances through the state banking system, while at the same time ignoring or repressing emigrant demands for greater political rights.

Under the new King, the Moroccan state began to see emigrants as the authors of interpretive processes that generated innovative solutions for infrastructure and social service provision in rural areas. Emigrant associations working with their villages of origin to remedy the lack of basic services had begun to transform state bureaucracies from within. They had drawn government agencies into their interpretive conversations about how to supply rural villages with electricity and water, about how to build roads to connect them to urban centers, and about how to provide them with functioning health and educational services. In the process, they had become important catalysts for institutional change. They had exposed state officials to new technological and social models for the provision of services, inspired in many cases by traditional local practices, and they collaborated with the state in its amendment of those solutions so that they could be widely applied in a variety of areas with different topographical and social configurations. In so doing, they caused the state to reconsider the technological and political paradigms that underlay its provision of basic services in rural Morocco—or lack thereof—and spurred the modification of the institutional processes and structures devoted to that task. As the Moroccan crown turned its attention to areas it had historically – and deliberately -- neglected, accessing interpretive processes that could complement the state’s meager experience in rural service provision became a state goal. The Moroccan government began to see the interpretive conversations that migrants fostered as a resource that was as important to the Kingdom’s economic development as the remittances that kept the nation’s economy afloat.

Under Mohammed VI, the Moroccan government added efforts to capture those interpretive processes to its efforts to capture remittances. To that end, it created a Ministry for Moroccans Living Abroad. The new sub-ministry was charged, in the main, with supporting emigrant organizations, especially those involved in local development in the Kingdom. In essence, the Moroccan state created an institutional structure to engage with emigrants to collect the resources it perceived in the social processes emigrants initiated, just as it had once tasked the BCP to engage with migrants to ensure that emigrant monies “did not escape [government] control.” However, because the interpretive conversations on which the state sought to capitalize grew out of emigrants’

grassroots mobilization of their communities, in Morocco as well as in Europe, and because the generative capacity of those conversations depended on their political ability to challenge entrenched interests that defended old ways of providing – or not providing – services to rural areas (see chapter 4), the office embodied the blending, for the second time, of two streams of conversations – political and economic – that the government had tended to keep separate in its dealings with Moroccan emigrants. Just as it had first time, the government had blended the two types of engagement and had created a ministry to support the new, inclusive conversations; their admixture produced a series of political critiques. Emigrant organization began to contest the elitist character of development planning in Morocco. Emigrants’ activism in rural communities yanked the boundaries of the *Maroc utile* -- the useful Morocco – outward to include them. In much the same way, their engagement with a government office that recognized their role as agents of local development explicitly provided them with a basis to call on the government to widen the circle of those who define what development means for their villages, as well as for Morocco as a whole.

Democratizing innovation, democratizing development

The Moroccan government’s efforts to capitalize on emigrant innovations for community development suggest the need to broaden emerging ideas about innovations generated by the people or firms who use them. A growing chorus of voices in the management literature on product development has noted that “innovation is rapidly becoming democratized” (Von Hippel 2005). They have shown that, thanks to advances in computer and communications technologies, the process of innovation is occurring outside the firms that manufacture products in an ever-larger number of cases, and that product users are increasingly innovating for themselves (Von Hippel 2005; Lakhani 2005; Shah 2000). Furthermore, these analyses have evaluated how manufacturing firms have been able to identify and capture the innovations elaborated by product users in order to build on them. Von Hippel (2005), in particular, has observed that firms that forge relationships with product users that have already innovated are able to commercialize those new ideas more rapidly. They are able to engage in an iterative exchange in which a product user comes up with a new idea that the manufacturer

develops into a prototype, which the user in turn evaluates and changes before the item is mass produced.

Moroccan government attempts to integrate emigrant innovations for rural development – especially infrastructure provision – suggest that this model, while sound in its fundamentals, may need to be elaborated further. It poses two challenges to this framework. First, theories of user-driven innovation focus on how firms are able to snare new insights and product models once they have already been formulated. In Morocco, however, the state was interested in capturing the process of innovation, and not just the ideas that it produced. Second, while theories of user-driven innovation point out the utility of a relationship between user-innovator and manufacturing firms, they pay less attention to the quality of that relationship as a determinant of how ideas move and develop. The relationship that the Moroccan government established with Moroccan emigrants in an effort to connect with the interpretive conversations about local development that they fostered suggests that the quality of that engagement matters a great deal. Perhaps because *processes of innovation*, emergent and fluid, are more sensitive than already-formulated ideas or products, power dynamics between the Moroccan regime and Moroccan emigrants affected the fidelity with which the processes of innovation were able to travel across institutions, and across spaces.

In this chapter, I show how the Moroccan government-- and the crown in particular-- came to view the interpretive conversations that emigrants initiated around question of local development as a resource that it wanted to capture. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section begins with conversations that Hassan II had newly split into two once again after a brief period during which they had been brought together. It also explains how that split in the state's engagement with emigrants kept their emerging role as actors in local development and administrative change in Morocco invisible. The second section depicts how the change in national development strategy after Mohammed VI ascended to the throne from one that was centralized to one that emphasized regional growth brought emigrant-initiated interpretive conversations in rural Morocco and their effects into relief. It portrays government efforts to draw on those conversations, and at times to co-opt them, hemming them in when they challenged the regime. It also shows the beginnings of emigrants' resistance to state management of

interpretive processes and an emergent demand for greater participation in development planning processes.

1. Divided conversations and political exclusion

In an interview with the conservative French newspaper, *Le Figaro*, in April 1996, Hassan II was asked about Moroccan emigration. He answered unequivocally, “I am against it.... Moroccans are not emigrants” (qtd. in Ministry of Communication, Kingdom of Morocco 1997: 63). At a time when close to ten percent of the Moroccan population was living and working abroad, the King’s comments signaled a return to a view of emigrants that had shaped government policy toward them during the 1970s and 1980s. After a brief interlude in the early 1990s during which the Moroccan state explored the relationship between the economic participation of emigrants in the Moroccan economy and their political rights to make demands of their government, the regime re-imposed a divide between their economic and political engagement with migrants. It downgraded and then dismantled the Ministry for Moroccans Living Abroad set in up in 1990 to “deal with [the] affairs [of Moroccan emigrants] outside the realm of the employment” (Hassan II, 1990, qtd. in Ministry of Communication, Kingdom of Morocco, 1991). It allowed the mammoth Banque Centrale Populaire (BCP), the state financial institution that monopolized the emigrant remittance market for decades, to hobble Bank Al-Amal. This bank was originally set up to encourage emigrants to invest in Morocco, as “a means for [Moroccan] citizens to act, even those that have settled as far away as Australia or other far off regions” (Hassan II, 1990, qtd. in Ministry of Communication, Kingdom of Morocco, 1991); it was built on the understanding that emigrants could have a transformative effect on the places where they acted. By 1996, when the King spoke to *Le Figaro*, only two institutions out the constellation of agencies set up to engage with emigrants were left standing: the BCP, which addressed emigrants’ financial needs, and the Hassan II Foundation, tasked with maintaining emigrants’ cultural ties to their country of origin. Moroccan emigrants were once again reclaimed as an arm of the national economy, an integral part of a national system that generated resources that the Moroccan state could redirect toward national development priorities. They were, in that sense, not emigrants. They were extensions of the Moroccan economy

in Europe, and the government reinforced their cultural identity as Moroccan nationals to ensure that they remained connected to that economy.

The BCP: Reclaiming interpretive territory

Just as before, the conversations about emigrants' economic participation in Morocco were very open-ended and offered ample room for interpretive engagement. The BCP reclaimed its position as the main tool through which the state worked to draw emigrants – and emigrant money – back into the Moroccan economy. The bank extended its tried and true quasi-social service “strategy of accompaniment” into new emigrant markets in Spain and Italy. Just as it had when it began its operations in France and Belgium in the early 1970s, the bank sent staff equipped “with a bank” – and now a laptop – “in their briefcases” to emigrant gathering spaces and their places of employment. In teahouses and basement mosques, out of trunks of cars parked in the fields of Andalusia, in the street markets of Sicily and Rome, BCP staff socialized with emigrants, and assisted them with non-financial needs, like accessing health care or enrolling their children in school, even while they opened bank accounts for them at the state institutions. The conversations that bank staff had with the new emigrants produced adaptations of established BCP practices; they were refashioned to reflect the new communication technologies on which migrants increasingly relied to keep in touch with their families. Chief among these was the cell phone: indeed, according to researchers at the INSEA, emigrant communities consistently ranked connection to a GSM cell phone network as one of their most important – and often the most important – infrastructure needs (Interviews, INSEA, Rabat, March 2004). The bank began to send SMS messages to emigrants confirming their transfers instead of old-fashioned paper receipts, but maintained the practice of sending one receipt, even if electronic, per transaction, to build a sense among new bancarized migrants that they could trust the BCP with their money. Additionally, the BCP began setting up dozens of new ATM stations every year, opening them through the country, in rural centers as well as popular neighborhoods of Kingdom's growing cities. Their choice of location was deliberate and reflected their familiarity with the changing profile of Morocco's new emigrants, who were increasingly likely to be of urban origin. The bank's outreach strategy toward new emigrants, based as

it was on interpretive engagement, was as effective in the mid-1990s as it had been two decades previously: although the BCP does not make public data about the country in which their emigrant clients were residing when they opened their accounts, BCP directors repeated emphasized that Spain and Italy represented significant growth markets for them and that their performance in those markets was meeting or exceeding expectations. By 2000, their outreach to new emigrants showed clear results: for the first time since the mid-1980s, the number of bank accounts opened by Moroccan emigrants jumped significantly, by 15 percent over the previous year. (BCP Annual Reports, 1990-2003; Interviews, BCP, Casablanca, Paris, January-March 2004).

In addition to drawing in clients who were new emigrants to Europe, the BCP also strove to re-invent itself as “a bank of the second and third generation,” providing a quality of service high enough and a gamut of products innovative enough to appeal to Europeans of Moroccan ancestry (BCP 2003)³⁷. “The new generations of Moroccans living abroad (MRE) are less and less attached to their country of origin,” summarized the BCP’s director for investment services. “What counts now is to meet their expectations, which are more and more demanding. These young people have gotten used to the speed of European [banking] services. We have to make a significant effort to rise to the standards of international banking services” (Sebti qtd. in Abadou 2002). To increase the efficiency of its service, the bank overhauled its information systems, already the most technologically and systemically advanced in Morocco, to meet “international standards,” and reduced the fees it levied on a variety of financial services it provided, including premiums on insurance for travel in the case of family emergency and on real estate in Morocco.

Concerned, as the director of investment services put it, that the “emotional aspect does not weigh as heavily” (Sebti qtd in Abadou 2002) in the banking decisions of second or third generation Moroccan emigrants, the BCP also began to market itself as a

³⁷ Moreover, the BCP was not unaware that a number of private banks --which had entered the emigrant market in earnest after Morocco reformed its financial sector in 1993-- were capturing a greater share of the market, and that the BCP would have to excel in emigrant service provision to maintain its lead. In 2004, the BCP market share had shrunk to about 60 percent of the emigrant market, with the BCME and Wafabank representing approximately 15 and 20 percent of the market respectively. The BCME and Wafabank merged in 2004 and began to mount an offensive to capture a greater portion of the emigrant market. (Interviews, BCP, Casablanca, March 2004; Interviews, BCME(Wafabank), Casablanca, March 2004 (during merger).)

vehicle through which Europeans of Moroccan descent could maintain their Moroccan identity. For example, the bank issued “vacation passports” to young second and third generation Moroccans, designed to “show our young ‘beurs’ that their country, Morocco, is culturally rich and that there is so much to see, ... so many places where all, young and old, can gather and enjoy each other” (BCP 2003). In an exchange similar to the one experienced by their parents, many young Moroccan “beurs” appropriated this outreach as a way to assert an oppositional Moroccan-ness, through which they maintained their difference in countries that stressed the importance of their integration into national cultures. The comments of Samir, a young Moroccan comedian raised in France captures this use of the BCP, and its branch in Paris, La Banque Chaabi. When asked in an interview about the connection he maintains to Morocco, the entertainer responded, “My only relationship with my country is with la Banque Chaabi and the Moroccan consulate where I get my national identity card and my passport...I’m 50,000 Euros in debt now because I just bought the Banque Chaabi’s white horse [the BCP’s trademark] so help me out and come see my show” (Yabiladi.com, 2003).

As part of its effort to recreate itself as a bank that could respond to the varied and changing needs of the Moroccan community abroad, the BCP also sought to position itself as an institution that managed the transfers of resources other than money, including what the bank called “immaterial resources [like] brain power, expertise in a variety of domains” (Belqiz, Director of BCP Delegations Abroad, qtd. in Foulani 1999). The Moroccan state complemented the BCP new initiatives with yearly gatherings in Europe – Salons des Marocains Residents à l’Etranger (1997-2000) – that were roughly equivalent to trade fairs in which the government (Ministry of Development, Employment, and Training) presented investment opportunities in Morocco. The fairs were expressly designed to host interpretive conversations with Moroccan emigrants about economic opportunities in Morocco in the hopes of generating new emigrant investment plans: the organizer of the fairs identified one the main goals of the events as “stimulating the desire to invest through *a direct and constructive dialogue* between Moroccans living abroad and the economic operators of Morocco today” (qtd. in Dades 1998; emphasis mine).

The Hassan II Foundation: Controlling through culture

In its political engagement with migrants, the Moroccan government curtailed the interpretive engagement it had explored in the early 1990s, and fell back on the more restrictive patterns of the 1970s and 1980s. However, the context for Moroccan government involvement had changed. In the 1990s, the decline that emigrant labor organizing suffered in the late 1980s became permanent as layoffs in heavy industry continued and emigrants either moved to the service sector or retired. Moroccan labor organizations redirected their energies toward promoting cultural activities and extending support toward emigrants' children and grandchildren, many of them young adults by that time. As a result, the Moroccan government shifted its focus from engaging with workers' organizations in order to control their activities to engaging with Moroccan families in order to define their cultural relationship to Morocco. The government's aim changed from defending the image of Moroccan emigrants as docile, hardworking laborers that were an asset to European employers, an increasingly difficult stance to maintain as the numbers of emigrants crossing the Gibraltar Straits illegally continued its rise, to tethering migrants, new and old, to the Moroccan economy through the cultivation of a specific national identity. And the Hassan II Foundation was charged with promoting it.

It was an identity that in several important respects represented a significant departure from the Moroccan state's established rhetoric. Contrary to what it had been asserting for years, the government suggested that cultural belonging to the Kingdom did not depend on return to the Kingdom, either actual or planned, nor did it require exclusive allegiance to the Moroccan state. Indeed, the King, and the government following his lead, began to stress that Moroccan nationality was irrevocable: that a Moroccan could never shed it, and neither could his children, even if they adopted another nationality, even if they chose to abandon it (Interviews, Fondation Hassan II, Rabat, July 2002, September 2003, January-March 2004). Moreover, in an abrupt about-face from the King's condemnation of emigrants' political participation and naturalization in receiving countries, a position he maintained vociferously for decades, the Director of the Foundation, Omar Azziman, made clear that the Moroccan regime was no longer against Moroccan emigrant integration into their host countries:

On the contrary, we know that their integration in the receiving country is a precondition for their development...It is in this way that our community abroad can become a source of riches that can contribute to the development of the modernization of Morocco...At the Foundation, we are not seeking to influence people's personal decisions or to discourage naturalization because we know that these choices make their lives easier and do not affect either their nationality of origin, of the force, the intensity of their sentimental and affective ties [to Morocco] (1998 qtd. in Chattou et al. 2002: 128)

What the Foundation's director inferred, the King made explicit. While national belonging no longer required emigrants to remain exclusively Moroccan and eschew political participation in foreign countries, it did depend on their adhesion to a Moroccan national identity, one that the state, through the Hassan II Foundation, would clearly define. In a 1996 interview broadcast on European television, Hassan II made this point emphatically: "This is the message that I send them [Moroccan emigrants]. If you want to become part of Moroccan national life, preserve your identity [as Moroccan]" (qtd. in Ministry of Information, Kingdom of Morocco, 1996: 203).

One of the key elements of that identity was that it was to rest on a kinder, gentler version of the *Beia*, the allegiance to the crown required of Moroccans, one that was defined in terms of friendly kinship as much as the requisite obedience to the monarch. After emigrants lobbied for a battery of political challenges to the authoritarian character of the regime in the early 1990s, the crown approached them with a more welcoming gloss on loyalty to the King to neutralize their protests: obedience to the regime was no more onerous than respect for a father. In a reflection of this shift, the King addressed an audience of Moroccan emigrants during his 1995 trip to New York as "my dear sons" instead of the customarily regal opening of "Our loyal subjects." Hassan II went on to explain this startling departure from the traditional designation:

You are indeed my sons. Why? Because the *Beia* [act of allegiance to the Sultan] that binds every Moroccan citizen to the King of Morocco signifies, above all, that a strong familial and religious bond unites every Moroccan to his Sovereign (Ministry of Communication, Kingdom of Morocco, 1996).

He marshaled this new filial interpretation of the *Beia* to bolster the stature of the Hassan II Foundation, and through his approbation, strengthened it in the Moroccan political context. In 1996, at a gathering of Moroccan emigrants in France, he announced that the

royal foundation would henceforth be a symbol of a relationship between Moroccans and their King that was familial above all:

To show you, you my children residing in France, how much Our solicitude and care for you is large and Our ties close, We have decided to entrust, as soon as We return, by the grace of God, the presidency of the Hassan II Foundation for Moroccans Living Abroad to Our devoted daughter, Lalla (Princess) Meryem.

Thus, our ties will not be solely those of allegiance, but ties of kinship, since you will be as my sons and my daughters....

In closing, let me offer the prayers that parents address to their children: “May God surround you with his blessings.” (Ministry of Communication, Kingdom of Morocco, 1997: 117)

Despite the purportedly informal nature of the new familial interpretation of the *Beia* that the Hassan II Foundation was charged with promoting, the government institution was domineering in its relationship with emigrants and defined the terms of the Moroccan identity that emigrants were to embrace. The Foundation ramped up its linguistic, religious, and cultural programs for emigrants and their family. In particular, it upped the proportion of its approximately \$10 million annual budget allocated to Arabic language instruction for the children of Moroccan emigrants to over seventy percent – Arabic being the language designated as the official idiom of Morocco by a regime that tried to suppress Berber or Amazight identities. Arabic is not, however, the primary language of many Moroccan emigrants, who heralded from Amazight or Berber villages. The Foundation dictated the content of those programs, and did not involve emigrants in their design in any meaningful way. Even when faced with complaints from Moroccan parents, for example, that the curriculum served up by the 430 instructors the Foundation sent to Europe was didactic and disconnected from the realities that their children faced, with some parents even suggesting that it smacked of royalist propaganda in its rosy portrayal of life in Morocco, the Foundation did not modify its pedagogical strategy, aside from a few slight modifications at the margins (Interviews, Paris, February 2004; Interviews, Brussels, February 2004; Interviews, Hassan II Foundation, Rabat, March 2004). The foundation truncated its communication with emigrant groups, canceling the publication of its monthly newsletter (*Lettre d’information*) and its glossy magazine for Moroccans in Europe, *Rivages*. It also curtailed many of the open-ended forums and other outreach to Moroccan emigrants, with the directors traveling only rarely to Europe

and engaging only with select groups of emigrants. As one ATMF activist commented about this shift, “The Foundation positioned itself as the mediator between the Moroccan government and Moroccans living abroad...but when we would write them, they would never write back” (Interview, ATMF, Paris, 2004). Furthermore, in a manner reminiscent of the strategy Moroccan consulates had used to maintain their influence over Friendship societies, the Foundation set up a registry of Moroccan associations abroad, and attempted to tether them to the state institutions by doling out small grants for approved cultural and social activities. (Belgendouz 1999; Brand 2002).

Operation Transit: *Marhaba fi biladkom* – Welcome to your country

The Foundation Hassan II completed the programs it sponsored in Europe with massive logistical support for emigrants who returned to Morocco during the summer months. Every year, over half of Morocco’s emigrant population -- by that time 2 million strong -- passed through the Kingdom’s two main ports in the space of the few days of July and August that framed their month-long vacations. The port of Tangier in particular was swamped, with lines of cars miles long with passengers waiting literally days to board the ferry that would take them across the Gilbratar straits to the equally overwhelmed Spanish port of Algeiras. The Hassan II Foundation, in cooperation with the Royal Armed Forces and the Spanish, orchestrated a yearly “Operation Transit,” in which it tried to speed its nationals through the bottlenecks of customs checks and ferries straining at capacity.

Operation Transit was initiated in 1988 as a trial cooperation with the Spanish government, which complained of highways chocked with returning Moroccans, gridlocking roadways from the Pyrenees to its southern coast during the first week of July and the last week of August. In the mid-1990s, the Moroccan government ratcheted up the program to a logistic operation that was almost military in scale. The Foundation set up welcome centers, complete with information booths, health services, rest centers, and customs offices, among other amenities, at both Moroccan and Spanish ports, and along the Moroccan and European highways that Moroccans took to reach their communities of origin. Additionally, it tasked a small legion of outreach officers with personally welcoming returning emigrants back to their country. The customs administration was

also ordered to improve its treatment of Moroccan returnees. The BCP joined the effort, underwriting the operation, plastering the ports and welcome centers with marketing materials, and flooding them with BCP staff, who approached emigrants in the idling cars and on picnic benches to explain how to open an account at the state bank and describing the new financial services the BCP launched every year during Operation Transit. (Brand 2002; Fondation Hassan II, internal documents on Operation Transit, 1996-2000; BCP, Operation Transit, 1996-2003; Interviews, Fondation Hassan II, August 2003, December 2003, Site visits, Welcome Center in Tangiers and Algesiras, August 2002, 2003).

Through Operation Transit, the Foundation made it easier to return to Morocco, its huge campaign reinforcing the sense that Moroccan emigrants were Moroccans that were welcome home, and should return as often as possible. “Make sure to return to your country...to reconnect with your family....That is where the future resides, for you and for the Kingdom,” exhorted the King (Ministry of Communication, Kingdom of Morocco, 1996). From the perspective of the Moroccan state, their yearly pilgrimage back to Kingdom reinforced their affective, cultural ties to their homeland, but it also reinforced their belonging to the Moroccan economy. The praise that the president of the National Commission of Agriculture and Economic Affairs showered on the Foundation underscored the relationship the state perceived between the reception extended through Operation Transit and emigrants’ participation in the national economy; after the majority of emigrants passed through Moroccan ports in 1998, he underscored “the extremely positive role” of the commission, headed by the Hassan II Foundation, that orchestrated the transit operation, adding, “we can only rejoice at the work accomplished by the Hassan II Foundation” (qtd. in Al Bayane, 1998). The enthusiastic state-sponsored reception of emigrants stood in sharp contrast to their exclusion from the political fabric of the country. This contrast would become all the more glaring as Morocco underwent a small but unprecedented movement toward democratic aperture.

L’Alternance: Transition and political exclusion

In response to international pressure and a growing internal political malaise that threatened to explode into a widespread uprising (strikes punctuated the spring of 1996 and Tangier rose up in riot), the ailing Hassan II held a referendum to push through a

series of constitutional reforms in 1996 (Layachi 1998: 97-101). The reforms ushered in a government headed by Adberrahmane Youssefi, the leader of the opposition USFP party who returned from exile to help midwife the political change (Layachi 1998: 97-101). The new transitional government – *gouvernement d'alternance* – reviewed dozens of ministry portfolios and prepared strategic plans for key policy areas. The issues of Moroccan communities abroad, however, were given short shrift (Belgendouz 1999). In fact, they were reduced to a mere sentence in the document that outlined the responsibilities of the new department for human rights: “the government will pay particular attention to respecting the rights of our compatriots abroad” (qtd. in Belgendouz 1999: 69).

Moroccan emigrants expressed their discontent at this political erasure (“*oubli*”) in forceful terms. In a manifesto issued by the Forum for Immigrants in the European Union, Moroccan nationals called on the Youssefi government “to repair this neglect by beginning a process of consultation with representatives of Moroccans living abroad in order to elaborate a global vision ... to give the Moroccan diaspora its rightful place and role in Morocco” (1998, qtd. in Chattou et al. 2002). They wanted the new government to engage with them as the short-lived Ministry for Moroccans Living Abroad had in the early 1990s (Chattou et al. 2002). Despite their protests, however, emigrants continued to be dismissed as political actors in Morocco and their complaints were blatantly ignored. (Belgendouz 1999: 68-77). Through the activities of the Foundation Hassan II, and the royal pronouncement that determined their direction, emigrants had been reduced to members of the Moroccan national family, provided, of course, that they adhered to the culture the patriarch of that family prescribed. They were heralded as providers, who sent money home – through the state channels of the BCP—and thus supported Morocco -- their extended family -- in its economic development. However, they were not considered citizens who could participate in the Moroccan political arena at a historic moment of political transition. Their right to affect political change in Morocco was dismissed.

Even as Moroccan emigrants were being edged out of Morocco’s processes of political transition, they were transforming the way major state bureaucracies did business. In concert with their communities of origin, Moroccan emigrants were

developing new technological and social models for the provision of basic infrastructure and services. They involved state bureaucracies charged with providing those services in the interpretive conversations through which they innovated, and in the process, changed how those government agencies conceived of infrastructure provision and rural development. They changed the state's technological approaches, but even more significantly, they changed state priorities about who in Morocco should receive state services. They challenged decades of state neglect of Morocco's rural areas. They demonstrated that rural communities, when connected to basic infrastructure grids, could become vital nexuses of economic development where traditional forms of knowledge could fuse with advanced technologies to generate unanticipated inventions, and where local communities and producers could forge relationships with international organizations and international markets. In doing so, they refuted by example the premise of state neglect – that rural areas were “useless” to Morocco's economic advancement – and drew the state into the regions that it had purposefully forgotten for so long.

Despite the fact that emigrants were transforming major government bureaucracies through their activities in rural communities in the Moroccan Souss, they remained invisible as local actors to the Moroccan state. Emigrants changed the way that the state conceptualized and implemented basic infrastructure provision; they caused the state to revise its dismissive view of local communities and include them as partner in public works projects; and they challenged the state to consider whether the chronic poverty in rural Morocco was a natural feature of the Kingdom or one that the state had created. And yet, neither the King nor the institutions he charged with reaching out to emigrants ever mentioned their role in local community development or how their efforts had informed the activities of the state in rural Morocco. As the King made clear, emigrants were as his “sons and daughters” and their tie to him through the indelible *Beia* – the act of allegiance to the Sultan – superceded any other ties to communities, be they in Morocco or in Europe. When belonging to those communities, and when embracing the signifiers of that belonging, like the Amazight language or other regional identities, conflicted with that tie to the King and differed from the Moroccan national identity the monarch favored, then the *Beia* necessarily overrode them. Once Hassan II died and

Mohammed VI ascended to the throne, however, the state's approach to Moroccan emigrants would change radically. Not only would emigrants' impact on government bureaucracies become visible, but they would also be wooed as important actors in regional development.

2. Mohammed VI: Capturing emigrant processes of innovation

In October 1999, within no more than a couple of months of his ascension to the throne, Mohammed VI took a trip that encapsulated the sea change that his reign would represent from his father's (Pelham 1999). The new King visited the northern Rif mountains of Morocco, an area to which Hassan II refused to return after, as crown prince, he put down a rebellion in the region in 1958. After he subdued the area, he reportedly loaded the leaders of the uprising into his helicopter and had them pushed out over the Atlantic on his journey back to the capitol. His rising chopper left behind thousands dead in the wake of his repression. Throughout Hassan II's reign, the Rif mountains rose up periodically against the regime, and each time their revolt was mercilessly crushed. In retaliation, Hassan II not only swore never to visit the region, but he also imposed an unwritten state investment embargo, to great effect. Thirty miles from Europe, this northern region of Morocco had not seen a road built since its independence from Spain in 1956. It displayed human development indicators that ranked among Africa's worst, including a 90 percent illiteracy rate among women (Pelham 1999). Hassan II also sent European labor recruiters to the region starting in the mid-1960s, in a ploy to export dissidents, and the Rif mountains, as late as 1999, still displayed the highest relative rate of emigration of any region in the nation, followed only by the Souss (INSEA 2000). When Mohammed VI's plane landed, he became the first monarch to visit the area in over forty years. Hundreds of thousands of people lined the mountain passes to greet him as he drove through the region, and to welcome the desire his trip seemed to herald of healing the bruises left by his father's iron fist (Pelham 1999).

In addition to formally recognizing that the Rif mountains were an integral and deserving part of the Kingdom, Mohammed VI's visit presaged the shift in an economic and political strategy that he would author. He moved from a centralized approach to

economic planning, which engineered the development of the Moroccan national economy as if it were a single whole, to a strategy that favored regional development – of all of Morocco’s regions, including the Rif – and delegated important economic planning functions to the provinces. He also transferred legal authority and resources to provincial governors. Governors were nominated by the King under Moroccan law, and Mohammed VI chose them on the basis of their commitment to his decentralized vision for the nation’s development. He also broke with the notion of a single Moroccan national identity, Arab and royalist, which dominated under his father’s reign, and began to promote the expression of regional identities and of non-Arab, especially of Amazight, cultures and languages that were prevalent in the more marginalized areas of the country. Before long, he established a Royal Institute of Amazight Culture to “protect... and consolidate the status of [Amazight cultures and languages] in cultural, media and educational domains” (Mohammed VI, 2002).

Through his strategy for economic and social development, the young monarch, his hold on the throne still tenuous, followed the pattern that successive sultans and French colonists had used to secure the Kingdom: he vested local rulers, devoted to his person as monarch, with the power to govern local regions and keep them loyal to the King. However, rather than lash through regions to the Sultan through control and submission, this time around Mohammed VI sought to link them to Rabat through their economic growth and prosperity. Emigrants, and more specifically, the interpretive processes that they initiated in their communities of origin, would emerge as key resources in Mohammed VI’s new vision for his Kingdom.

Regional development: “A strategic choice” (Mohammed VI, 2001)

Only weeks after he ascended to the throne, Mohammed VI laid out his plans for the new priorities Morocco’s economic development was to achieve. In his second public speech after his father’s death, he promised a strategy of development that would leave no one out, especially the most needy, toward whom he felt “a special solicitude and care” (Mohammed VI, Speech at 46th Anniversary of the Revolution of the King and the People, August 20, 1999). Moreover, he placed special emphasis on the needs of the rural poor, who represented over 75 percent of the Kingdom’s poor (Levy 2004). He

argued that Morocco could not develop as a nation unless it tended to the poverty that had settled like a permanent scourge on the Kingdom:

How shall we as a nation achieve national development if our rural area struggle with problems that force its inhabitants to abandon their lands... because of a lack of strategy of integrated development, based on the organization of agricultural activities and others [in rural areas], because of a lack of interest that should have been devoted to their living conditions and education, to the provision of basic infrastructure, to stemming the exodus [from rural areas] by putting into effect a plan that promotes the participation of local communities, that creates new centers of development... and that manages the occasional disasters like drought and others? (Mohammed VI, Speech at 46th Anniversary of the Revolution of the King and the People, August 20, 1999).

With these words, so unlike those of his father in tone and in content, Mohammed VI communicated an unequivocal rejection of the categorization of some regions—rural regions—of Morocco as being resistant to development, and as places where state investment was a futile exercise. The new King signaled to his nation that no area of Morocco was henceforth to be considered useless; the political cartography that carved out a *Maroc Utile* – a useful Morocco – from the rest of the Kingdom was no longer to be used in development planning.

Shortly thereafter, the King sent a letter to the Prime Minister, El Youssefi, which outlined the elements he wanted included in the forthcoming Five Year National Development Plan. He directed the Youssefi government to draft a plan that would “spread the benefits of prosperity to all of Our subjects,” and made clear that his first priority in meeting this goal was rural development: at the top of the King’s list, literally, was:

The promotion of neglected regions and their integration into the dynamic of economic development, notably by recovering the delay that rural areas suffer in the matter of basic infrastructure and social service provision, and by finding solutions to the drop in income, illiteracy, and the insufficiency of state support. (Mohammed VI, December 1999)

Moreover, Mohammed VI specified that he viewed local communities as an important source of the “solutions” he demanded: “economic and social development is the fruit of the collective effort of the community,” he stressed. As such, noted the King, it required the collaboration of “all socio-economic partners, especially the state, local collectivities,

public establishments, the private sector and social organizations.” Of these partners, local collectivities as the government bodies “closest to the ground” and community associations were to be viewed as privileged actors, and as such, their role should be written into the National Development Plan. Later, in a comment that suggested his awareness of the political nature of reversing entrenched patterns of state neglect in rural, and overwhelming Amizight, areas, the young King would add, “We are convinced in the benefits of local democracy... local collectivities are powerful levers for social and economic development” in regions whose “cultural diversity constitutes a source of enrichment for the Moroccan nation” (Mohammed VI, 2001).

Infrastructure and rural development

To comply with the turn toward rural development mandated by the King, the government initially relied on the infrastructure provision programs it had launched in the last years of Hassan II’s rule. Prompted by the World Bank and other donor agencies, including the EU and UNDP, the Moroccan government had, in the late 1990s, instituted several programs to remedy the egregious lack of basic services in the Kingdom’s rural areas. Three programs stood out because of their size and their reach: the PERG, a national program to provide rural electricity to rural areas; the PAGER, designed to supply water to rural areas; and the PNCRR, elaborated to construct roads in rural areas and correct the geographic and social isolation of hundreds of rural villages. The World Bank alone had provided Morocco with approximately 200 million dollars in loans between 1997 and 2000 for rural infrastructure development under these three programs (World Bank 2001). However, during the first few years of the programs’ existence, still under Hassan II, the government authorities tasked with their implementation were less than ambitious in their execution. The World Bank’s evaluation judged only 50% of non-adjustment loans, a hefty share of which went to the three main rural infrastructure programs, to have been satisfactory in their results over the 1997-2000 period (World Bank 2001). Two trends seem to have produced these mixed results: the government agencies responsible conducted elaborate surveys and squabbled over program design rather than acting; when they did act, they tended to favor the non-poor and tended to

focus their resources on easily accessible semi-rural areas located near urban centers. (van der Walle 2004; Levy 2004).

Once Mohammed VI identified rural development as a national priority, these three main infrastructure programs for the provision of electricity, water, and roads – the PERG, the PAGER, and the PNCRR – would become the institutional pillars for a new, more assertive approach to rural poverty. The programs represented, in effect, the only institutional structures in place at the time to address the needs of Morocco’s rural population. After the shift in development planning articulated by the new monarch, the programs were quickly ramped up, if not immediately in budget then in projects executed (Levy 2004; van der Walle 2004). The number of villages linked to electricity under the PERG, for example, nearly doubled between 2000 and 2003, shooting up from 1,700 to 3,200; moreover, the National Office of Electricity deviated significantly from its conservative practice of serving villages closest to rural centers, a trend best illustrated by the jump in the number of village it equipped with solar electricity panels-- a technological solution reserved for the most isolated of villages-- from 80 in 2000 to 580 in 2003 (www.one.org.ma).

As the implementing agencies for the PERG, the PAGER, and PNCRR expanded their program operations, they spread the techno-social models they used throughout Morocco. In all three programs, these techno-social approaches had been developed through interpretive engagement with emigrants and their rural communities of origin (see Chapter 4). Through interpretive conversations-in-practice with emigrant development groups, working primarily in the Souss region of the Kingdom, the relevant government agencies modified their methods for infrastructure provision. They amended their conceptual approach from one that demanded adherence to a set of standardized norms to one that favored locally generated solutions that were adapted to the specific topographic and social conditions in situated villages. Most importantly, based on lessons learned through engagement with migrants who stressed that situated interpretive conversations were the basis of development –“ they are our treasure” (Interview, January 2004, Taroudant) stated one long-time emigrant activist– the programs were revised to build community participation into project design and management. All three programs incorporated an understanding that community involvement was the factor that

transformed infrastructure from static facts on the ground to catalysts for an on-going process of development. As such, the programs came to embody a take on development that was radically different than the top-down view of economic growth through state management that had prevailed under Hassan II. As this approach to rural development was extended throughout the Kingdom once implementation of the PERG, the PAGER, and the PNCRR was accelerated, the process that led to this new conceptualization of development, and in particular the participation of emigrants in that process, became visible to state authorities. Emigrants began to be recognized officially as important actors in rural development, with Mohammed VI himself acknowledging their transformative role in their communities of origin as well as in government administrations.

Mohammed VI: Emigrants are actors in local development

To promote regional development, and rural development in particular, Mohammed VI targeted emigrants as a resource from the very beginning. In his first missive to the Prime Minister on the question of national economic development, the Mohammed VI pointed to emigrants as “dynamic agents” of economic development, and ordered the Prime Minister to factor their role into the National Development plan he was drafting. As he underscored in his letter, striking the only complimentary note in the whole epistle:

We would like to praise the laudable efforts of Our loyal subjects living outside the national territory in the matter of investment, and We would like to encourage them to continue in this vein given the numerous and great benefits that they generated for themselves and for Morocco. (Mohammed VI, December 1999)

However, in this first statement of his development strategy, Mohammed VI’s understanding of precisely how emigrants act as catalysts for economic and social change is still vague.

As government agencies charged with providing basic infrastructure – water, electricity, and roads in particular – ramped up their existing programs for rural areas to meet the new goals set by the King and his government, the role that emigrants had played in shaping how those services were conceived and delivered began to surface. During a visit to France, he addressed his audience as citizens who “adhere to the French

state and the values of its society, without denying your own values and origins,” and added that this dual perspective gave them the skills and the understanding to foster “cooperation in cultural and economic domains,” an attribute that was increasingly becoming manifest in the rural areas of Morocco:

The way that you follow the events in your country as well as your determination to contribute to the process of progress and modernization, as is demonstrated by the always increasing number of non-governmental organizations that you have set up for that purpose, and through which you have contributed to the consideration of urgent questions that demand our concerted attention, like the reduction of the vast poverty and the improvement of basic provision in the rural areas, bring us great satisfaction.

We would like to express, in relation to this, our sincere thanks and our admiration of the community projects that emigrant associations and individuals have undertaken to benefit the poorest of our country. (Mohammed VI, 2000)

The new King’s focus on regional rural development, and his growing acknowledgement of the role that emigrants had played in both in fostering local economic growth and shaping state approaches to service delivery provided tacit support for an “action-study” for local development launched in 2000 by the emigrant association M/D in the province of Taroudant. The study, designed to identify “ways to capitalize on local initiatives to put in place new forms of partnership with public authorities and programmes” (M/D, ECIL, 2002: 15), had the “unconditional support of the Wali [regional governor] of the Souss-Massa-Draa region,...as well as the support of the Governor of the Province of Taroudant, who both enthusiastically mobilized their services for the collaborative completion of this action-study” (M/D, ECIL, 2002: 15). The action-study was based on numerous overlapping rounds of interpretive conversations which included local residents, emigrants, M/D, other non-government organizations, and local, provincial and national state authorities. Their discussions addressed development activities in the region, which ranged from electricity provision to the creation of schools for adult women, to the growth of the ecotourism, to programs to revitalize Amazight traditions and language. More significantly, their conversations addressed head-on the ways that initiatives could be expanded or modified to foster greater state participation, as well as a more meaningful exchange of ideas and practices between government and local village associations. So unprecedented were these types of exchanges in the Moroccan context that M/D, in collaboration with the European

Union, published not only the findings of its study, but also the transcripts of many of the conversations that had produced them. (ECIL 2002; Interviews, M/D, Taroudant, December 2003-January 2004).

The “action-study,” the initiatives that it covered, and the avid collaboration of the Wali and the Governor, both royal nominees who reported to the King, in an effort that seemed to carry forward the King’s regional vision for economic development, piqued the interest of the new monarch. In 2001, Mohammed VI personally visited M/D’s headquarters in Taroudant, toured a number of the projects the association had initiated, and spoke at length with the emigrant organizers who had founded the organization and had established through it over 250 village associations, all self-taxing and part of an M/D federated network. During the annual “Pronouncement from the Throne” that followed his visit, Mohammed VI praised emigrant contributions to development, stating, “We want to assure them of Our esteem for the efficient contribution that they bring to economic developments efforts... in Morocco” (Mohammed VI 2002). The King returned to visit M/D only two years later in 2003, to inaugurate a road that had been built with the help of the Federation of Village and Emigrant Association from Taroudant through the national rural roads program. In the Moroccan political context at the time, such consistent attentiveness from the monarch for what were essentially the activities of an NGO was more than remarkable, and bespoke a significant level of royal interest. (Interviews, Taroudant, December 2003-January 2004; Daoud 2005)

“Democracy is not an end in itself”: Ignoring emigrant demands for direct political participation

Even as the King displayed a growing interest in the activities of emigrant development associations, and M/D in particular, Mohammed VI turned a deaf ear to emigrants’ demands that they be allowed to participate in the political transformation and the democratic aperture that his ascendance to the throne seemed to herald. Mohammed VI had not been King for even a month before criticism and political claims rose up from across the Mediterranean. Many emigrants were not placated by the new King’s assurances that he would “ponder earnestly on [emigrant] problems and consolidate their ties with their homeland” (qtd. in Al-Aly 1999). They demanded that their political rights

in Morocco be recognized, and that they be given representation in the new administration that the King was putting together. “We no longer want to be considered a mere source of hard currency. We want to be full fledged citizens and actively contribute to the socio-economic development of Morocco,” said Ahmed M’ dini, a Moroccan living in Germany, in a comment that typified the growing frustration of emigrant groups at their political exclusion at a time of change in Morocco (qtd. in Al-Aly 1999). Moreover, emigrants complained bitterly about the paucity of consular services and the lack of protection from – or official condemnation of – the racist attacks that Moroccans were experiencing throughout Europe, but especially in Spain. Indeed, in speaking with the Moroccan community in Spain, Mohammed VI referred to the attacks in El Ejido and other areas only obliquely, calling them “regrettable events, limited to certain regions” (Mohammed VI, September 18, 2000). Emigrants countered that protection was a “fundamental right that the authorities should guarantee to a community that has so far been like the chicken that hatches golden eggs” (qtd. in al Al-Aly 1999).

The new regime’s lack of response to emigrant political demands was consistent with its interpretation of the political rights of Moroccan in general, and of democracy in particular. The parliamentary elections of 2002 were the second ones held since Hassan II reauthorized them in 1997, after they had been banned for two decades. After the elections the King addressed the new parliament in a speech broadcast nationally. He told the new representatives that “democracy was not an end in itself” (qtd. in BBC 2002). As he told the nation, democracy was only useful insofar as it acted as a tool for economic development, and its exercise could only be contingent on whether it served the interests of the nation, a question for which he was – as sovereign – the final arbitrator. He condemned what he characterized as the legislators’ opportunistic use of the electoral campaign to make “puerile overstatements and sterile arguments” (qtd. BBC 2002). Additionally, he cautioned them to refrain from “turning every issue into a priority. There are four priorities...on which we should focus our efforts,” continued the King in authoritarian fashion, that the parliament should address with constructive “dialogue and unanimity” (qtd. BBC 2002)

Apart from the crown’s interest in emigrants’ roles in rural development, the Moroccan government maintained its practice of dealing with emigrants’ economic

participation in the national economy separately from their cultural and political involvement in the country. However, despite the Moroccan state's divided engagement with emigrants, it was not able to keep emigrants from making connections between the two – economic and political -- spheres. Emigrants, who, thanks to the government's transit operations, traveled with greater ease between Europe and Morocco, grew increasingly integrated into their community of origin, and began issuing critiques that were increasingly vocal and bold. Their challenges to the government were grounded in the relationship between the economic participation in Morocco and their political rights in the Kingdom articulated through those previous conversations. Emigrant investors, for example, began to voice their critiques in the Moroccan press of the cronyism in the financial sector and of a “perpetual harassment for bribes” that were undermining their investment initiatives (L'Economiste, August, 12, 2003). “The problem ... is that [a bank] can reverse its decision [to provide a loan] after a single phone call because you had a disagreement or misunderstanding with your ‘connection’ (*pistonneur*). ‘Moroccan emigrants need to be respected in administrative transactions as well as in consulates abroad’,” summarized a major glossy in Morocco (Fathallah 2002). Emigrants, dejected by the poverty in their communities of origin, began to complain vociferously about “the [state's] complete abandon – *la démission totale de l'état*” with respect to rural Morocco and its role in perpetuating egregious income inequalities in the Kingdom (Interviews, Paris, Brussels, 2004; Daoud 2004a; Daoud 2005.) Moroccan emigrants began to view themselves as important contributors to the Moroccan economy and began to demand political institutions that would enable them to shape the nation's political trajectory in a commensurate manner. “Moroccans living abroad want the political compensation for their economic contribution,” observed one editorial in a commentary on the increasingly outspoken emigrant challenges to the Moroccan political system, “not just a warm reception and welcoming billboards on the sides of highways. They want real participation in the management of the country; if not ... they will shut off the [remittance] faucets” (Economie & Entreprise, Hors série MRE, 2003).

“Keeping the faucets running”: Capitalizing on interpretation

Faced with snowballing political demands from emigrants, and in a bid to “keep the faucets running,” Mohammed VI ordered the restructuring of the Kingdom’s policies and institutions for emigrants. He dictated four major changes: the improvement of consular support for Moroccan communities abroad; the redefinition of the Hassan II Foundation as a strictly cultural agency; the transfer of Operation Transit to the Mohammed V Foundation, the royal foundation that he himself established; and most importantly, the creation of a new set of institutions that would facilitate Moroccan emigrants’ transformative participation in local areas, through investment and community organizing. In essence, he decreed the melioration of services for emigrants on the one hand, and the development of policy tools to foster and capture the process of innovation they had sparked in the country, processes he had followed with interest, on the other. (Mohammed VI, July 11, 2002). “It is Our firm desire that [emigrants] play an active and effective role in all of the domains of national life,” concluded the King. (Mohammed VI, July 30, 2002).

Under this rubric, the Moroccan government, tasked by the King, established two new institutions that directly or indirectly capitalize emigrant transformation of local institutions. The first are regional investment centers (*centres regional d’investissement*) designed to facilitate entrepreneurship in general, and emigrant entrepreneurship in particular. The first opened in 2003 and as of 2005, sixteen centers were open for business. The centers functioned as “one-stop-shops” where investors could set up firms as legal entities within a matter of hours, instead of the days and months it had taken investors before. They handled investors’ administrative transaction with levels of transparency that were verifiable and auditable, addressing emigrant complaints of the usury and corruption they faced. More importantly, however, the centers served as mediators between investor and local government, resolving disputes but also facilitating conversations that have led investors to amend their projects and local government to rethink their economic development strategies, their urban planning goals, and their infrastructure provision. In sum, the centers have provided emigrants with an institutional vehicle to affect the context of their investment, enabling them to act as political as well as economic agents (Interviews, CRI, Casablanca, March 2004;

Interviews, Office of the Mayor, Casablanca, January-March 2004; CRI 2004; Lamlili 2005; Jafry 2005).

The second institution created was the Ministry for Moroccans Living Abroad. Like its predecessor of the early 1990s, the Ministry was a sub-Ministry housed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its portfolio was broad, addressing economic, political and legal issues as they pertained to Moroccan communities abroad. Moreover, like the institution it resurrected, the Ministry brought together the economic and political conversations that the Moroccan government had, for a time, succeeding in making separate once again. (Interviews, Ministry for Moroccans Living Abroad, Rabat, September 2003 – March 2004; www.marocainsdumonde.gov.ma).

However, the rationale that inspired the creation of a Ministry in 2003 was different from the logic that gave rise to its previous incarnation. Instead of an institution design to placate emigrants' political objections in order to keep remittances flowing into the country, the new Ministry was set up to encourage and direct the interpretive processes that emigrants authored in Morocco – to act in essence as a system of canals and locks channeling processes of innovation to areas the state felt would benefit. The Ministry strategy documents list as one of the primary reasons for its creation, “the initiative of the Moroccan community abroad to become involved as a fundamental *human resource in the process of development*; the political dynamic in Morocco that has acknowledge the principles of equality and the citizenship rights of *all its residents*; and the mobilization of the civil society and the private sector *to assist the government in a variety of domains*” (Ministry-Delegate for the Moroccan Community Abroad, Kingdom of Morocco, 2003). In one of her first speeches, the Minister for the Moroccan Community Abroad, Nouzha Chekrouni, made this objective even more explicit:

We are witnessing a very active and creative dynamic of local and regional associations, most of them founded and organized by ambitious and entrepreneurial emigrants, that have engaged with determination and success in far-reaching partnership actions,... all of them insisting throughout on the endogenous capacities of the associations in Morocco, fostering innovation, and strengthening the actions that support the Moroccan community abroad. These praiseworthy initiatives...are what we insist on supporting and saluting. (2004, www.marocainsdumonde.gov.ma)

Spreading interpretation

With the creation (and resurrection) of new institutions, the Moroccan government shifted the ways that all of its institutions – old and new – that implement its policies toward emigrants operated. The state placed a renewed emphasis on creating and maintaining interpretive engagement with Moroccans living abroad around various aspects of their relationship with Morocco. In fact, the interpretive conversations, and the desire to capture them, that sparked a renewed wave of policy-making in this area became the heart of the policies themselves. Before defining an agenda for its work, the new Ministry for Moroccans Living Abroad began by contacting hundreds of Moroccan associations abroad, asking them to recommend ways the ministry should meet their needs, and following up with meetings and outreach to continue the conversation it began. The Ministry also began hosting annual weeklong Morocco fairs in cities with large Moroccan populations, like Paris and Brussels. The fairs were not only occasions to celebrate Moroccan culture and to interact with Moroccan communities abroad: the Ministry also used them to bring emigrants together with government and private real estate developers, the BCP, regional investment centers and representatives. The fairs – or salons – allowed Moroccans to purchase real estate or to begin their investment planning while in Europe, but they also permitted the Moroccan institutions invited and emigrants to engage in conversations about their needs and financial aspirations. (Interviews, Ministry for Moroccans Living Abroad, Rabat, September 2003 – March 2004; Correspondence; Ministry for Moroccans Living Abroad; January 2003-May 2004; Interviews, Migrant development associations, Taroudant, Paris, Brussels, Rabat, January-April 2004; *Le Matin* 2004).

In 2002, the Hassan II Foundation for Moroccans Living Abroad began hosting huge annual fairs for Moroccans emigrants over the summer. The week-long fairs were expressly designed to create interpretive conversations: the Foundation sponsored forums through the day on topics of concern to emigrants and their families, covering everything from investing in a summer home in Morocco to negotiating with European school systems; it also laid out dedicated but open physical spaces such that emigrants could wander through to meet with financial institutions, with traditional artisans, with publishing houses etc; and it organized cultural events, like musical performances and

caftan fashion shows, that served as festive events where emigrants, their non-emigrant friends and relatives, and government officials interact informally (On-site visits and Interviews, July 2002, August 2003, Casablanca). Even the Reception Centers along the route to Morocco (now under the management of the Mohammed V Foundation) were transformed into interpretive spaces, as staff from local consulates, from the Ministry, from state health services and from the Hassan II Foundation engaged informally with Moroccan migrants who have stopped there (On-site visits and Interviews, Algeiras, Tangiers, July 2002, August 2003.)

Co-opting interpretation

In April 2004, the Ministry for Moroccan Living Abroad, the regional investment center for Taroudant, and M/D signed a partnership accord to promote local development in the Souss region. That agreement was one of many that M/D and other emigrant organizations finalized with the Ministry, with Mohammed V Foundation, or with other government entities. Almost of these conventions specified a financial contribution from the state for development projects at least nominally carried out in partnership. Due to a shift in policy of the European Union and the World Bank, and a change in Moroccan law, the bulk of foreign aid had to be disbursed through Moroccan government institutions, most of it through the semi-autonomous Moroccan Agency for Social Development (see Chapter 4). However, Moroccan emigrants soon discovered that, in the majority of cases, the Moroccan government involvement was undermining their efforts. Rather than promoting the interpretive processes emigrants had authored and rather than facilitating the revision of state practice as those conversations had in the past, the Moroccan state seemed to be sabotaging emigrant initiatives.

Emigrant activists observed that this happened in one of two ways. First, government agencies often tried to supplant emigrant organizations. State agencies either took credit for the actions of emigrant organizations, or they tried to take over their activities. The ATMF (see Chapter 3) and Immigration, Développement et Démocratie (IDD), a Paris-based organization of former labor organizers turned advocates for community development in Morocco, both complained of this in the aftermath of the 2004 earthquake in Al Hoceima. Both organizations orchestrated a massive drive in the

Paris area to collect resources for the earthquake victims. many of them in villages where the organizations doing the grassroots mobilizing to prepare for development projects, and transported them down to Morocco in a caravan of trucks. They were blocked at the border, and the Moroccan customs authorities refused to let them pass until they turned over the resources to the Mohammed V Foundation; the Foundation later distributed the goods as gifts of the government in widely publicized events, focusing on urban centers rather than on the villages the emigrant organizations wanted to help (Email correspondence, 2004; Telquel 2004). Other emigrant NGOs have found that the state has attempted to co-opt the process of community organizing on which they based their development work. As one veteran M/D emigrant activist observed, “the state is happy to use [village] associations, but not to work with them; in fact, it doesn’t know quite what to do because it’s not ready to cede some of its power, it can’t engage and imagine solutions with the people. The state tends to kill the initiatives. The populations are treated like solicitors or implementers, and sometimes that’s what they become” (qtd. in Daoud 2005: 193).

The second way that the state compromised emigrant development work was by withholding funds for the organizing activity on which the development projects rested. State agencies, and the Mohammed V Foundation in particular, flatly refused to pay administrative costs and overhead. More significantly, though, they declined to support financial the mobilization of communities into village associations, which, according to emigrants, was the heart of their development work. “We often spend more time setting up a village organization, building a consensus amongst the old, the young, the local elites, the emigrants, than actually doing the project. But isn’t that organizing work what generates development?” (Daoud 2005). State agencies typically only funded activities for which emigrant organization could provide receipts of purchase, something that was impossible to do for community organizing work. Emigrants and the communities they worked with found themselves increasingly compelled paying a larger share of projects than they ever had before, contributing the agreed-upon percentage of implementation costs as well as the outlays involved in organizing, even as government regulations made those projects more expensive. In a bitter irony that was far from lost on emigrant activists, government attempts to capitalize on the interpretive conversations that

emigrants had set in motion and that the state had recognized as invaluable to local development were killing those very processes of innovation.

Organizing to protect interpretation

In an effort to safeguard community processes of interpretation and innovation from the hazards of state partnerships, emigrant organizations have begun to form alliances. As the time of this writing, Moroccan emigrant development groups had already held several conferences and strategy meetings in cities throughout Europe. In part, their goal was to share knowledge about development projects, and specifically the techno-social innovations they had generated in concert with local villagers in rural Morocco. However, their aim was also to share information about procedures in various Moroccan state agencies and to create a network of Moroccan emigrant development groups. In mid-2005, this networking drive was still nascent, but already emigrant activist spoke of the need to make the *collective impact* of emigrant development initiative clear as a means to develop a source of political power for negotiations with the state.

In reflecting on their accomplishments in local development, several M/D activists noted that they helped change local communities' relationship to the state. "Before, people didn't even know how to have a conversation [about development issues]. Now, they understand the need to organize, they know how to talk to the state. Now that is progress" (qtd. Daoud 2005: 197), commented an emigrant who worked with M/D since the start. "I don't believe work done by a single administration or organization, because it can only be the reflection of a society, it can't on its own get things moving. The idea is to communicate, to think together" (qtd. in Daoud 2005: 198) concluded another activist. As emigrant development began to organize to challenge the state and to defend the interpretive spaces that they open up and that they viewed as foundational to economic and social development in rural Morocco, they were embodying the same practices that they set in motion in their communities of origin. Through their conference and meetings, they were "communicating and thinking together" to generate new approaches for "talking to the state." (Interviews, Marrakesh, February 2005; email correspondence; www.coordinationsud.org; www.migdev.org).

Mexico
Structuring Interpretation

Chapter 6
The Reluctant Conversationalist:
The Mexican Government's Discontinuous Engagement with Mexican-Americans,
1968-2000

Introduction

With the end of the bracero program – a large scale labor export agreement convened with the United States (see Chapter 2) – in 1964, the Mexican government was finally relieved of the task of managing the emigration of its workers to U.S. agriculture and industry. The termination of the labor export protocols and the formal closure of the U.S. to all but a trickle of Mexican labor had little effect on the actual number of Mexican workers that crossed the border in search the low wage jobs that were available to them. Emigration not only continued apace, but actually accelerated dramatically over the next several decades as both migration networks and the structural dependence of U.S. economic production on cheap labor became more entrenched (Piore 1979). However, instead of the flows of workers documented with the allocation of bracero contracts, Mexican labor emigration slipped under the radar, as Mexican workers began to cross into the United States illegally or under arrangements that were only marginally legal. The Mexican authorities, exhausted after two decades of dealing with the strong arm negotiation tactics the United States had used to secure a ready supply of cheap labor, was only too happy to avert its gaze from labor emigration. Mexican labor emigration became the proverbial elephant in the living room of bilateral relations between Mexico and the United States, a phenomenon that progressively and irrevocably enmeshing both economies, yet which both governments, with a wink and a nod, pretended did not exist, at least for a time. The Mexican government in particular did its best to keep Mexican emigration invisible as long as possible. In service of that goal, the Mexican government consistently minimized Mexican emigration, producing a series of studies which argued that the numbers of workers emigrating was trivial. More importantly for the elaboration of policies that link migration to development, the

Mexican government stubbornly refused to engage with Mexican migrants, contending that there was no significant constituency of migrants with whom to engage.

While Mexican and U.S. government policy made Mexican migrants invisible, Mexican-Americans were bursting onto the public stage through their social mobilization. Inspired by the gains that African Americans wrested through the civil rights movement, incipient but increasingly networked Mexican-American political activity of the 1950s and early 1960s grew into a full-blown movement. The wave of activism became identified as the “Chicano movement.” Chicano was an in-group term, short for Mexicano, used by Mexican-Americans to refer to one another since the turn of the 20th century. However, in the 1960s, *Chicano* and *Chicanismo* came to signify the “radically political and ethnic populism” (Gómez-Quíñonez 1990: 103) that characterized the Mexican-American movement; Chicano activists began to examine how racism and class exploitation reinforced each other to shape Mexican-American experiences in the United States, and began to eschew the assimilationist tendencies of established Mexican-American advocacy organizations for increasingly separatist and identity-based stances. The Chicano movement was a river fed by many streams: it encompassed organizations with agendas as different as the United Farm Workers Union, which focused on the working conditions of agricultural laborers, to the more militant Crusade for Justice and la Raza Unida, which targeted the racist treatment with which working-class Mexican-Americans were confronted; it included student groups, ranging from radical to liberal, intellectuals, and separatists that called for creation of an independent homeland for Mexican-Americans, a re-invention of the mythical Aztlan; and it comprised church groups and Marxist cells. However, they were all part of the same political current insofar as they couched their revindication of political, economic and cultural rights for Mexican-Americans in a distinct ethnic and historical identity. In sum, the Chicano movement made Mexican-Americans visible as a group, and demonstrated their growing political power. (Gómez-Quíñonez 1990)

If the Mexican government acted as if Mexican migrants did not exist, it had a more difficult time ignoring Mexican-Americans and their increasingly influential Chicano movement. When Chicano activists approached the Mexican government in the late 1960s, at a moment when it was in throes of a political crisis, Mexican authorities

entered into a dialogue with them in the hopes that an association with the left-leaning grassroots movement would help restore the PRI's tattered revolutionary credentials and secure the party's hold on power once again. Soon after it began its engagement with Mexican-Americans, however, the Mexican government abruptly discontinued their conversation. It found that Chicano leaders, rather than being docile partners in an engagement the Mexican government controlled, did not refrain from directing bold critiques at the PRI and at its system of governance. Furthermore, the Mexican government quickly discovered that it could not engage with Mexican-Americans without addressing the issue of Mexican labor emigration; Chicanos called the Mexican government to task over its lackadaisical approach to Mexican migration, arguing that the immigrants undermined Chicanos' already precarious position in U.S. labor markets.

It was a pattern that would be repeated over and over again during the next thirty years. Every time the Mexican government was confronted with a political crisis its statesmen believed they could resolve by drawing on Mexican-American political power, it re-initiated their engagement with Chicanos. Invariably, their conversations would raise difficult questions about Mexican migration, PRI hegemony, and later, the quality of economic and political ties between Mexico and the United States; and invariably, at that moment, the Mexican government would brusquely curtail its interaction with Mexican-American groups. However, those repeated but discontinuous cycles of engagement would lay the institutional groundwork for an interpretive conversation that, some thirty years later, would address head-on the same issues that consistently short-circuited the Mexican government's interaction with Chicanos.

Each round of interpretive conversation between Mexican-Americans and the Mexican government produced new insights about the possibilities that a relationship held for both parties, and each successive batch of insights built on those produced through previous generations of interpretive conversation. Eventually, the insights gave rise to institutions, as both Mexican-Americans and the Mexican government created formal structures to instantiate and support the new conceptual understandings. However, the insights in and of themselves, and the institutions they inspired, were never sufficient to bridge the chasms that the Mexican government so determinedly enforced: most centrally, they could never close the discursive divide maintained by the Mexican

government between Mexican-Americans and Mexican migrants, and between interpretive engagement and the development of new sources of counter-hegemonic political power. Instead, both the insights and institutions played the role of mnemonic devices: they became akin to artifacts that held the memory about how to engage interpretively --about the practices that make up interpretive conversation.

Insights as mnemonic devices

In this sense, the insights and the institutions that they inspired had the same qualities Orlikowski describes technology as having in organizations. Drawing on structuration theory, she explains that technology embodies a seemingly contradictory duality: technology is the product of situated human actions and social processes, “socially constructed by actors through the meanings they attach to it and the various features they emphasize and use” (1992: 406). However, technology is also artifacts and institutions that become reified, and that lose their connection to the social processes that produced them and imbued them with meaning. Similarly, the insights and institutions that came out of the interpretive conversations between the Mexican government and Mexican-Americans were generated by historically and politically situated social processes. However, once the insights were articulated and the institutions erected, they acquired the character of self-standing artifacts that did not disappear when the conversation ended. As this chapter will show, the understandings and the conceptual relationships that were formulated and verbalized through them could not be “unsaid,” even when the Mexican government pulled out the engagement, even when it tore down the organizational structures it set up to support and implement those new understandings.

Orlikowski goes on to observe that duality of technology – that it is at once the social processes that produced it as well as an artifact or structure – opens it to the “potential for users to change it (physically and socially) throughout their interaction with it” (1992: 408). Technology users are able to “interpret, appropriate, and manipulate” the technological artifact, modifying it throughout its existence, and in so doing, becoming an extension of the social processes that constructed the technology artifact in the first place. Social interaction with technology, argues Orlikowski, makes the iterative

processes of *design* and *use* “tightly coupled.” Similarly, the insights produced through interpretive conversations between Mexican-Americans and the Mexican government were “interpret[ed], appropriate[d] and manipulate[d]” as both Mexican-Americans and the Mexican government used them to define their relationship. The insights were reinvented in the process, and became distinct in important ways from their previous iterations.

However, the interpretive processes between Mexican-Americans and the Mexican government were not ongoing and seamless like those Orlikowski describes in the construction of technology. Instead, they were abruptly suspended over and over again, with a barren stretch opening between the conversations’ end and the political crisis that impelled the Mexican government to re-start its engagement with Mexican-Americans. As a result, the coupling of *design* and *use*, and of *artifact* and *social process* was mediated by memory. Jane Jacobs, in her most recent work, not only joins many scholars of knowledge production and knowing in her assertion that knowledge is only fully held in practice of doing things and being in relationship – in the “countless nuances that are assimilated only through experience” (2004: 5)-- she also explores what happens when the practice that holds knowledge is discontinued and recedes into memory. She cautions that the knowledge can only be reconstructed, using artifacts, symbols, writings, but it can never be revived. Furthermore, its reconstruction is situated, and is determined by the political, historical, cultural, and even intellectual context in which the remaining fragments are painstakingly put together. Present practices fill in the gaps left by those abandoned and preserved only in memory. (2004)

Similarly, the insights produced by successive but discontinuous engagement between Mexican-American and the Mexican government became depictions of the social processes that sparked them rather than an immediate embodiment of them. Although conceptual breakthroughs in their own right, the insights became representations of the interpretive practices that produced them. Each time the Mexican government re-established its interpretive engagement with Mexican Americans, both parties revisited those insights and re-interpreted them based on their current political and economic situation, but also based on their recollection what those insights had meant at the moment they were articulated. It was as if the insight were like old photographs that

both the Mexican government and the Mexican American were contemplating. The insight as photograph was not just a record – a snapshot -- of what had transpired at a particular moment in time; it also became repository for the meanings that they attached to the past events and the ramifications that their interpretation of their past interaction would have for their future engagement. In this sense, the Mexican government's interpretive engagement with Mexican-Americans was built on the practice of rescuing abandoned insights, and re-interpreting them in new political and economic contexts (Jacobs 2004). It is this capacity to resuscitate insights and institutions, and to re-invent them to meet new constraints and opportunities, that would provide the necessary conditions for a radically different type of interpretive conversation to emerge after 2000: a conversation that explicitly and forthrightly addressed relationship between Mexican-Americans and Mexican migrants, and between interpretive engagement and the development of new sources of political power beyond the control of the PRI.

In this chapter, I trace the repeated cycles of interpretive conversation between the Mexican government and Mexican-Americans over roughly thirty years, from 1968 to 2000, and I contrast this engagement with the objectifying analytic approach the Mexican government directed toward Mexican migrants. The chapter is divided into two sections, with the first half depicting the Mexican government's reticence in dealing with Chicanos, a trait it displayed through the end of the de la Madrid administration (1988), and the second half portraying the instrumental enthusiasm with which the Salinas and Zedillo administration approached Mexican-Americans. I focus on the activities of the federal government, which, as will be illustrated in the following chapters, differed from those at the state level, but I do show how the Mexican federal government tried to use state governments to reinforce its general approach to Mexican migrants, which, predictably, was to make them invisible.

1. Reluctant engagement

The end of a revolution and the beginning of a conversation

The origins of Mexico's current set of policies toward Mexican emigrants can be traced back to October 2, 1968. On that evening, only ten days before Mexico was to

host the Olympics, government forces opened fire on student protestors holding a rally in the Tlatelolco neighborhood of Mexico City. In what has come to be known as the Tlatelolco massacres, soldiers and plainclothes policemen shot dead at least fifty students, injured over five hundred, and took almost two thousand into custody, as residents and bureaucrats from the Ministry of Foreign relations watched from their balconies (Braun 1997: 532-533; Turner 1979)³⁸.

Despite government efforts to suppress information about the Tlatelolco massacres, the shots fired at Plaza of the Three Cultures reverberated across the border. Chicano students immediately organized protests at the Mexican consulate in Los Angeles. Participants in the emerging Chicano student movement had been meeting informally and corresponding for months with students organizers in Mexico City. While their engagement was not structured by and had not yet produced a definitive agenda, Mexican and Chicano students felt an intuitive affinity for one another, with Mexican students looking to their Chicano counterparts as natural allies in their drive for the democratization of Mexico and with Chicano students turning to the Mexican student movement as a source of cultural identification (Santamaria Gomez 1994: 30-32). Information and disturbing images from the Tlatelolco massacre unavailable in the sanitized accounts in both the English and Spanish language press flowed freely through the social networks that the students had forged through their informal encounters³⁹; they heard jarring accounts of students like themselves, with whom they had political and social relationships, shot dead in the square or rounded up summarily for questioning and

³⁸ Diplomat Jorge Casteñada is one of the government officials who watched the massacres from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building facing the plaza where most of the students had gathered. He issued one of the first public accounts of the event, in a letter sent to the New York Times on October 11 and published ten days later. In his description of the incident, most of the students had already cleared the square by the time the soldiers appeared, an account that contradicts the version offered by several other eyewitnesses who remember the crowd of unarmed students caught helplessly between two lines of advancing soldiers, some of whom shot at each other in the chaos. Not only were the actual events of the Tlatelolco massacre highly disputed. The actual number of dead and injured has been the subject of considerable controversy. The count of those shot dead on October 2nd has been estimated at as high as 800. The debate over the death tolls was produced in part by government efforts to censor information about the massacres immediately after they occurred (Braun 1997: 532-533, notes 89 -91).

³⁹ See Poniatowska, E. (1971). *La Noche de Tlatelolco*. Mexico: Biblioteca Era, and Ramirez, R. (1969) *El Movimiento Estudiantil de México*. Mexico: Ediciones Era for information not published in contemporary press accounts of the events.

indefinite detention (Santamaria Gomez 1994: 34-35)⁴⁰. When Echeverría Alvarez, then internal security minister (Secretario de Gobernación), traveled to Los Angeles in 1969, only months after the events, Chicano students demanded an interview in which they held him to account for the actions of government security forces (Santamaria Gomez 1994: 38). During this period, the Los Angeles Mexican consular offices also endured a number of bombing attempts, attributed at the time to supporters of the Mexican student movement. (Santamaria Gomez 1994:30- 35).

The Tlatelolco massacres acted as a catalyst that strengthened the political relationship between the Chicano and Mexican student movements. In 1969, a newly formed MECHA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán) sent its first delegation to Mexico City to meet with Mexican student activists (Orozco, G. et al 2000: 47; Gómez-Quíñones 1990: 119; Santamaria Gómez 1994: 36-37). The students held meetings and conferences on the UNAM campus, but the Chicano students also visited factories, poor urban neighborhoods and rural areas. This visit was followed by several others in quick succession, and were, as one Chicano activist recalled, a source for “important political learning” (qtd. in Santamaria Gomez 1994: 39).

The repeated exchanges and discussions between the student movements and activists enabled them to articulate a basis for their alliance and political collaboration. The activists’ reasoning was expressed in many iterations, in many different forums, and by a variety of Chicano and Mexican leftist activist organizations. However, the most striking formulation of the rationale for their allegiance was perhaps the “Letter from Lecumberri,” a missive from Mexican student activists held in the Lecumberri prison outside Mexico City, published in the *La Raza* magazine, a broadsheet produced by La Raza Unida Party out of San Antonio, Texas, on the 25th of June, 1972. According to the letter, the Chicano and Mexican student movements shared a common history and a common struggle against capitalist imperialism in the United States as well as in Mexico. Moreover, Chicanos were part of larger Mexico, lost to United States aggression in 1848:

The Rio Grande is just a wound in the heart of our peoples and never a barrier that divides us in our common historical inheritance....Chicano is a word that has come to

⁴⁰ An illustration of how powerful a symbol the Tlatelolco massacre became in the Chicano movement is the fact that Corky Gonzalez, leader of the Crusade for Justice, christened the first Chicano school opened in Denver in 1970 the Tlatelolco school (Santamaria Gomez 1994: 36).

mean the struggle for auto-determination. It's time that the Chicanos not have to rely solely on their own strength. And the same is true for us. The next revolution will need conscious individuals that understand the need to transform Mexican society....

Chicanos, as the part of the Mexican Nation that lives in the belly of the beast, will be one of the most important allies in the march toward victory (qtd. in Santamaria Gomez 1994: 41-42).

The logic that the student movements articulated provided Chicano activists with a platform from which they could challenge Echeverría as he campaigned for president and once he assumed the presidency. During a visit to Mexico city in 1970, Chicano students, viewing the struggle of their Mexican counterparts as related to their own, confronted Echeverría, then the PRI candidate for president, about the Mexican government's treatment of the student movement. Those in attendance recall that the secretary of Gobernacion evaded their questions with flat diplomatic platitudes and did not address their concerns (Santamaria Gomez 1994: 39-40). Two years later, when Echeverría traveled to San Antonio, Texas, as president of Mexico, a group of Chicano activists organized a protest to condemn the arrest of political activists in Mexico and the murder of eleven students and the injury of dozens more by paramilitary thugs during a student demonstration on July 10, 1971. The following day, the president met with the protestors and agreed to allow a delegation of Chicanos to enter and monitor conditions in the Lecumberri prison. When the president continued on to Los Angeles, he was again met with crowds of Chicano protestors (Santamaria Gomez 1994: 48).

However, the rationale the students articulated for their collaboration also provided Echeverría and his administration with a discursive bridge that enabled him to engage with and co-opt elements of the Chicano movement as part of a larger strategy to distance himself from the "stigma of Tlatelolco" (Shapira 1977). Echeverria won the election by an alarmingly low margin: with 34 percent of the eligible votes abstaining, 25 percent of the ballots cast annulled, and another 20 percent going to opposition parties, the PRI candidate had won by only 21 percent of the popular vote, arguably the lowest proportion since the PRI had institutionalized the Mexican revolution (Shapira 1977: 566). As soon as Echeverría took office, he launched a number of initiatives, some substantive but most rhetorical, to neutralize the memory of the bloody events of 1968 and to quell the popular unrest that had continued in the wake of the massacre, especially

the rise of new urban guerilla movements which threatened to be particularly destabilizing. The new president declared that his *sexenio* would witness a period of *Apertura Democratica* (Democratic Opening), a phrase that quickly became the slogan of his presidency. As part of this Democratic Opening, Echeverría took pains to meet with students, absorbing many key figures into the state bureaucracy⁴¹, and he designated new, more progressive, leadership for the UNAM, the national public university that had been the nucleus of student organizing, while at the same time weakening the institution's resource base (Shapira 1977; Turner 1979: 252; Braun 1997: note 131; Zermeño 1993). Echeverría's administration supported this message with a marked increase in public spending on infrastructure and social services, designed to defuse rebel activity (Lustig 1998: 18). The Echeverría administration complemented its domestic policies with an activist foreign policy stance, largely, as Shapira (1978) argues, as a substitute for fundamental redistributive and democratizing reforms within Mexico. The backbone of Echeverría's foreign policy was a Third Worldist – *Tercermundista* – stance, which called for the defense of nations against colonial political and economic exploitation, and in the context of which Mexico called for the reform of the United Nations and forged stronger ties with leftist governments in Latin America as well as with developing countries beyond the western hemisphere that adhered to the Non-Aligned movement (Shapira 1978). As an extension of his Tercermundista politicking, Echeverría began to extend an open reception to Chicano activists, embracing their representation of themselves as part of Mexico – and the Third World-- within the United States (Corwin 1978: 197-205; Gutierrez, J. 1986; Gutierrez, A. 1986: 49; de la Garza 1986).

Echeverría's engagement with Chicano leaders was primarily interpretive in its quality, as both the Mexican administration and the Chicano groups sought to cultivate a better sense of each other and to develop conceptual bases that would support their continued involvement⁴² (Gutierrez, J. 1986: 33). The rationale that the Mexican

⁴¹ Political analyst Enrique Kraus issued a warning in the early 1980s, that too many of the Generation of 1968 had been swallowed up by the Mexican bureaucracy, abandoning their role as necessary social critics. (Braun 1997: note 131).

⁴² Ironically, thanks to its interpretive style of engagement, the ties that the Echeverría administration would establish with certain Chicano organizations and leaders would prove more enduring than the collaboration between Chicano and Mexican student activists, whose relationship dissolved after MECHA veered toward a more moderate political stance (Gómez-Quiñones 1990: 119-120) and as many Mexican student leaders turned to concerns that were more narrowly domestic in character (Shapira 1977: 568-574).

government and Chicanos articulated for their relationship during this early stage of interaction would provide the logic around which the Mexican government would structure its engagement with Chicanos—but more important, with Mexican migrants—in the decades to come. It would also allow for the clear identification and statement of points of contention that would remain stubborn sources of conflict between the Mexican state, Mexican-Americans, and eventually Mexican migrants. The Mexican state's interpretive engagement with Chicanos would generate insights that would eventually prove pivotal in its interaction with Mexican emigrants. However, during the Echeverría administration, the government did not extend the same interpretive receptiveness to this latter group. Instead, it addressed the issue of emigration and emigrant needs with an arm's length analytical approach in which the state controlled the meanings attached to emigration in Mexican political discourse.

Beginning an Engagement: The Echeverría Administration (1971-1976)

The Echeverría administration's interpretive engagement with Chicano leaders began in 1971. Late that year, a conference on Chicanos was organized in Mexico, and in the context of that gathering, Echeverría met with a handful of high-profile Chicano leaders, including Reies Lopez Tijerina, who had spearheaded the land-grant struggle in New Mexico, Jose Angel Gutierrez, founder of the Raza Unida Party, and the renowned Chicano film director, Jesús Salvador Treviño (Gutierrez, A 1986: 50; Santamaría Gómez 1994: 54)⁴³. Out of that meeting emerged several tentative efforts at collaboration: the Mexican government pledged funding for the production of two films with a strong Chicano content that would target a Mexican audience and educate it about the conditions of Mexican-Americans in *México de afuera*; the Echeverría administration also promised to fund fifty scholarships for Chicano students to study medicine in the Mexico's public universities, training them to serve as doctors in Chicano communities; the Mexican government also committed funds for Chicano cultural events and conferences, and

⁴³ Cesar Chavez consistently declined invitations from Chicano leaders and the Mexican government to participate in discussions with the Echeverría administration. Instead, Chavez and the UFW forged a working relationship with CTM (Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos), a major Mexican union that was at loggerheads with Echeverría throughout his sexenio. The goal of the UFW was to try and organize Mexican workers in Meixo prior to the arrival to California. Eventually, Chavez did meet with Echeverría successor on a handful of occasions (Gutierrez, J. 1986: 30, 34)

donated Spanish-language books for student libraries in the American Southwest (Gutierrez, A 1986: 50; Santamaría Gómez 1994: 54; Orozco, G. 2001; Bustamante 1986: 16-17). The following year, Echeverría began to formalize the relationship between the Mexican government and Chicano groups by naming Jorge Bustamante, then a newly-minted PhD who had just completed a dissertation on Mexican migration to the United States, official liaison between his administration and Mexican-Americans (Bustamante 1986; Mindiola 1986; Gutierrez, A 1986). Over the next several years, Bustamante organized a series of meetings, in Mexico as well as in the United States, between Chicano leaders and intellectuals and Echeverría and his administration (Bustamante 1986; Gutierrez, A 1986). Echeverría also supported the founding of the Mexican Cultural Institute in San Antonio, and used it as a venue for cultural events, the distribution of educational materials, and as a space for meetings between Chicanos and the Mexican administration (Santamaría Gómez 1994: 54).

The engagement between Chicano groups and the Mexican government was often complicated and delicate, and the conversations it was based on fraught with misunderstanding, miscommunication, and confusion. Two main factors contributed to this taxing, but ultimately generative, ambiguity. The first was the social distance between the Mexican government and Chicanos which made their engagement, as Armando Gutierrez, a Chicano leader who participated in the exchanges put it, “terra incognita” (Gutierrez 1986: 50). The massive repatriations of Mexican workers from the United States during the Depression put an end to the consular activism that the revolutionary Mexican government had embraced. After several decades of advocating for the rights of Mexican workers, intervening in labor disputes, organizing Mexican and Mexican-American community groups, and sponsoring cultural events to promote a sense of *Mexicanidad*, Mexican national identity⁴⁴, “the role of the consulates in defending the interests of Mexican expatriates and in providing limited leadership in the Chicano community was scaled back and forgotten” in the 1930s, as the Mexican state embraced the principle of non-intervention and officially eschewed responsibility for working and living conditions beyond its borders (Zazuata 1983, qtd. in Sherman 1999: 843). By the

⁴⁴ Footnote about Mexican consular activity.

1970s, after forty years of disengagement, the Mexican government and Mexican-Americans had become strangers to one another (Gutierrez 1986).

Mexican bureaucrats displayed a chronic nescience of the conditions under which Mexican-Americans lived and worked, of their political aspirations, and of their social and cultural identities. Some of the misperceptions reflected the Mexican state's lack of involvement with Mexican-Americans in a straightforward way: Chicanos were viewed as primarily agricultural workers, for example, due in part to the publicity that Cesar Chavez and United Farm Workers movement had received, even though the vast majority of Mexican-Americans, an estimated 90 percent, lived and worked in urban settings (Bustamante 1986: 90). Other misconceptions were more pernicious: as numerous Chicano participants in the conversations with the Mexican state have attested, Mexican-Americans were disparaged lower-class *pachucos* or *ponchos*, who expressed a bastardized version of Mexican culture and who had little in common with the elites who staffed the Mexican bureaucracy (Bustamante 1986; de la Garza 1980: 575; Gutierrez 1986; Shain 1999). A former bureaucrat in under Echeverría colorfully summarized the perception of many bureaucrats as follows: “[people thought:] look at him, so Mexican – *con el nopal en la frente* – coming here speaking English in all his conceit” (Interview, Fundación Solidaridad Mexicano-Americano, Mexico City, July, 2003). Chicano leaders and activists also brought their own set of misapprehensions to their discussions with the Echeverría administration. Many arrived with only a rudimentary understanding of Mexican politics and of the inner workings of the Mexican bureaucracy, to say nothing of the tensions and power struggles within corporatist machine that was the PRI. Furthermore, the activists initially often only had a vague or emergent sense of where they and their petitions fit within the Mexican political landscape (Santamaría Gómez 1994: 30-60). Reflecting on the pilgrimages made by Chicano activists during the 1970s, Rodolfo O. de la Garza, an Chicano intellectual who participated in meetings with the Mexican government during that period, observed, “Chicanos often go to Mexico expecting to find themselves but come away instead understanding that being Chicano is not being Mexicano” (de la Garza 1980: 575). A former staffer in Echeverría's Office of the President who was charged with receiving Chicano leaders remembered how this

mutual misunderstanding infused the exchanges between the Mexican administration and Chicano groups with confusion and ambiguity, even suspicion.

In the 1970s, after forty years of neglect --*olvido*, the government began to receive Mexican-American activists, who, for the most part, came to Mexico without specific proposal or demands, looking instead for a kind of moral support for their struggle in the US for their human rights after the struggle initiated by the African-Americans. We forgot them for forty years. ... [During the bracero program] the Mexican government, at that time, took no actions to engage with the Mexican community --*acciones de acercamiento*, to try and understand what was happening in that community, what were its needs, what were its characteristics. In truth, there was nothing. Forty years of *olvido*, but they didn't come to seek us out either. It was the first time that they came to seek us out, the first time Mexican-Americans leaders came to Mexico. They came to seek out the government. They knocked on door at Los Pinos, at different offices of the government, and let me repeat, they didn't have a clear proposal. Since there hadn't been this relationship of "*acercamiento*," they came with this desire to connect with their roots, to find their homeland. In reality, sometimes all they asked for was a flag—that simple—just a flag. And the authorities at that time, which was when Echeverría was president, well, they viewed them with a lot of surprise and even suspicion, to say the least. "What do they want? How can we possibly help them? Be careful, they are a cell of activists, they could create problems for us with the gringos." And, as you can image, that relationship is one that we have to treat with a lot of care. So they approached them with their claws out, as we say here. And we didn't understand at all what was happening with [the Chicanos], what they were going through. (Interview, Fundación Solidaridad Mexicano-Americano, Mexico City, July, 2003).

The lengthy estrangement between the Mexican government and Mexican-American communities was not the only factor that fostered misunderstanding. The second cause of the indeterminacy of the engagement between the Mexican government and Chicanos was the multiplicity of political orientations amongst Chicano groups. In his dealings with the Chicano movement, the Mexican president showed a marked preference for Jose Angel Gutierrez and for Reies Lopez Tijerina (Bustamante 1986). Nevertheless, his government received Chicano leaders representing a wide spectrum of political strategies and beliefs, engaging with everyone from radical grassroots community organizers with ties to guerrilla movements in Mexico to staid political lobbyists with connections in Washington (Santamaría Gómez 1994: 30-66; Bustamante 1986). This cacophony of Chicano voices was matched by the differences of opinion in

the Mexican government about the value of extending a warm welcome to Chicano groups. Certainly, there was a quorum of advocates in the government for the continued engagement with Chicanos, with many of them concentrated in the Office of the President (Bustamante 1986; Interviews, Fundación Solidaridad Mexicano-Americano, Mexico City, July, 2003). However, in other instances of the administration, government officials expressed unequivocal reluctance at engaging with Chicanos (especially the Secretariat of Foreign Relations (SRE) (de la Garza 1980)). As one Mexican academic who had been involved in the implementation of initiatives for Chicanos under Echeverría reflected in 1978 that, “Mexican officials never thought Chicanos could be important and interesting to Mexico, and there are may be only five who think so today” (qtd. in de la Garza 1980: 572).

Emerging insights: Common cause and possibilities for political collaboration

The on-going engagement of the Echeverría administration with Chicano groups, through formal and informal meetings, conferences, and presidential tours in California and the Southwest, brought several insights to the surface of the variegated conversations between the Mexican government and Mexican-Americans. The discussions produced two realizations about areas of common cause between Chicanos and the Mexican government. The Echeverría administration and Chicanos articulated a mutual recognition of their political interrelatedness. Chicano activists view of themselves as a colonized part of the Third World within the United States, formulated in the late sixties by student activists, had not only been embraced by the Mexican government, but it had also been communicated back to Chicanos in repeated and explicit iterations. The alliance between the Chicano student movement and Mexican leftist activists that had Mexican state had actively repressed had evolved into clear political compact between Chicano groups and the Mexican government. *Caracol*, an influential Chicano publication out of San Antonio (Paloma Acosta 2005), summarized the emergence of this new relationship in its editorial pages:

We have also finally achieved, and this is probably the most important point (declared publicly by the President of Mexico), Mexico’s recognition that Chicanos are a colony within the United States and that they are part of the Third World. This has already been

published and Echeverría admitted that there is [a people] called Chicano and that we are oppressed (Caracol, November 1975, qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 60).

Out of this shared understanding, new perspectives for political collaboration between the Chicano movement and the Echeverría administration began to emerge. Chicano activists began to view their involvement with the Mexican government as a source of leverage in their negotiations and contests with the United States federal and state governments. Chicano leaders enjoyed unprecedented access to high-level government officials in Mexico, including Echeverría himself on numerous occasions, and benefited from ample coverage in the Mexican press of their visits to Mexico and of their political endeavors in the United States—access and visibility that they struggled, largely unsuccessfully at that time, to acquire in the United States. As Jose Angel Gutierrez, frequent participant in meeting with the Mexican government in the 1970s noted, “Chicanos appear more frequently in the corridors of power in Mexico than they do in the U.S.” (Gutierrez, J. 1986: 26). The facility with which Chicano groups were able to gain an audience with the Echeverría administration gave Chicano groups and their agendas a new level of visibility and legitimacy on both sides of the border, an advantage that they could use for community organizing as well as to press their demands with the U.S government (Gutierrez, J. 1986: 27; Shain 1999; de la Garza 1986). Gutierrez offered a succinct but powerful statement on the resource that access to the Mexican government represented for Chicanos in their civil rights struggles in the United States:

Los chicanos no deberían voltear hacia Wall Street o Washington para encontrar su destino. Nuestro destino es el sur con un pueblo como nosotros [...] Nosotros somos una familia sin fronteras, somos una familia sin huérfanos. I'll remind you in case you've forgotten que no somos hijos de la Inmaculada Concepción nor of the statue of Liberty. Somos hijos de mexicanos. (Caracol, November 1975, qtd in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 60)⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ I have provided the un-translated origin followed by a version in which I have translated the Spanish portion in an attempt to maintain the integrity of the message about linguistic identity embedded in the original statement. The mixed use of Spanish and English reflected an important statement about cultural *mestisaje* – mixture – that Chicano writers embraced as part of their vindication of their mixed-heritage identities. For more on this, please see Anzaldúa, Gloria (1999). *Borderlands = La Frontera*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Chicanos should not look to Wall Street or Washington to find their destiny. Our destiny is to the south with a people like us [...] We are a family without borders, we are a family without orphans. I'll remind you in case you've forgotten that we are not the sons of the Immaculate Conception or of the statue of Liberty. We are sons of Mexicans. (Caracol, November 1975, qtd in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 60).

A parallel insight began to emerge in the halls of the Mexican Office of the President. Members of the Echeverría administration began to identify Chicanos as a potential source of political influence that could be brought to bear on U.S. policies towards its southern neighbor. As one staffer in Echeverría's Office of the President recalls, her engagement with Chicano leaders enabled her to discern their strength as community leaders and the political opportunities that this could represent for the Mexican state: "I had the opportunity to meet with very important [Chicano] leaders... and I started to see the potential of collaborating with them" (Interview, Fundación Solidaridad Mexicano-Americano, Mexico City, July, 2003). The analogy that was raised was the case of Israel, which had succeeded in organizing a powerful lobby that exercised considerable sway on U.S. policies in the Middle East (Gutierrez, A. 1986; Shain 1999). Nevertheless, the commitment to Chicanos as a political arm of the Mexican state was still embryonic during Echeverría's *sexenio* and treated by most with a heavy dose of skepticism. The same staffer explained:

[Chicano leaders] represented a community that was beginning to stand out in the United States, with a unique proposal for their futures, looking for their own spaces, claiming their own territory politically, economically and socially. So I thought, well, this is fabulous. And the reference is always the obvious one: what Israel has accomplished, with all of the obvious and very marked differences, of course. Every one thought I was crazy, and now I am visionary. Going from crazy to visionary in one lifetime is a big accomplishment. (Interview, Fundación Solidaridad Mexicano-Americano, Mexico City, July, 2003).

Modest electoral gains by Mexican-Americans in the 1970s and the extension of the protection of the 1965 Voting Rights Act to Latino voters in 1975, slowly lent credence to the view that Chicanos, and the Chicano movement in particular, displayed the potential to develop into an forceful organized constituency that would be responsive to Mexican interests, and more importantly, that the U. S. government would no longer be able to ignore (Gutierrez, A 1986: 48-49). This nascent vision would not mature into an

officially and explicitly articulated policy, however, until some years later, as the sexenio of Lopez Portillo drew to a close. (Gutierrez. A 1986).

Difference and Discord: PRI political control and Mexican emigration

While the engagement between Chicano groups and the Mexican government mapped out areas of common ground between them, the discussion also brought their differences in perspective and their ambition into high relief. The first area of discord arose around the critical remarks that several Chicano leaders directed at the PRI. Several Chicano leaders denounced the PRI's authoritarian tactics of governance and Chicano intellectuals publicly questioned whether, by engaging with the Mexican state, Chicanos were not legitimizing the party's regressive policies in Mexico -- policies which, as they were careful to point out, led to the hemisphere's most unequal distribution of wealth (de la Garza 1986: 41). Others were more trenchant in their criticism of the interaction between Chicanos and the Mexican state. Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzalez, for example, excoriated co-founder of La Raza Unida Party, Jose Angel Gutierrez for developing a relationship with the Mexican government, lambasting such efforts as amounting to "support of a fascist Mexican government and a betrayal of the Mexican people" (Acuna 1981 qtd. in de la Garza 1986: 40). For its part, the Echeverría administration bristled at such blunt critiques, somewhat baffled at the Chicano groups' resistance to co-optation. In response, the Mexican authorities progressively began to exclude Chicanos identified as critical to the government from participation in dialogues between the Mexican state and Mexican-Americans (de la Garza 1986: 39).

The second area of contention was both more sensitive and more intrinsic to both Chicano and Mexican national interests. Discussions between the Echeverría administration and Chicano groups revealed that they were in fundamental disagreement about Mexican emigration policy. The Echeverría administration began its sexenio by exploring the possibility with the U.S. government of resuscitating the Bracero program that had vehicled Mexican emigration for three decades during and after WWII. The moment for such negotiations seemed propitious: due to the sheer number of Mexican immigrants crossing the border into the U.S. without legal work permits, the phenomenon was emerging as a public policy concern for the U.S. By 1972, the apprehension of

undocumented migrants by U.S. border patrol had shot up to 430,000 from only 55, 349 in 1965, and proposals to curtail illegal entry into the US and to apply sanctions on employers that hired immigrants who did not have legal work permits were being circulated in the US congress (Corwin 1978: 197). As nativist sentiment in the U.S. seemed to be on an upsurge, Echeverría publicly announced in 1973 that his administration would push hard for an agreement on Mexican labor emigration that would afford Mexican workers protection from zealous border enforcement and egregious labor exploitation (Cornelius 1983; Corwin 1978: 78). With Washington mired in the Watergate scandal, his proposals received scant attention (Corwin 1978: 78).

Chicano groups, however, did take note of Echeverría's efforts to negotiate a new migrant labor accord, and their opposition was vociferous and staunch. Unions involved in farm labor organizing drives, like the United Farm Workers Union, were joined by a host of Chicano groups in their registering their explicit disapproval of the proposals with both the Mexican and U.S. governments. The Raza Unida held a formal meeting with the Echeverría administration to reiterate its rejection of a new bracero program and to lay out the minimal conditions under which it would refrain from launching a massive protest against the initiative. According to the organization's summary of the meeting, they sought guarantees to protect working conditions for labor already across the border:

We had an interview with the Minister of Foreign Relations in Mexico and with Echeverría to voice our opposition to his policy with regard to the braceros. We are unconditionally opposed to a Bracero Program. We would only accept an agreement under the following conditions: 1) Mexican workers would have to have their own union or they would have to join our unions....2) Chicanos would have the right to veto such a program (Caracol, November 1975, qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 58, note 25).

Ultimately, the negotiations between the Mexican and United States government failed because the U.S. government, destabilized by the crisis that Nixon precipitated, was unable to withstand the pressure applied by organized labor. The quota of workers that the United States proposed was merely symbolic when compared to actual levels of undocumented Mexican immigration, offering a paltry 20,000 work contracts when the number of apprehensions of illegal border crossings by Mexican had, by 1974, topped 700,000 (Corwin 1978: 198-201). However, the rhetoric the Echeverría adopted in the wake of the negotiations' collapse reflected its engagement with Chicano groups. In his

state of the union address to the Mexican congress in 1974, following his meetings with the Ford administration, Echeverría expounded on the reasons Mexico did not sign a labor export agreement with the United States:

Concern for the dignity of man has impelled us to take a decided stand on the serious problem of migration Mexican workers without papers....Today, in the highest tribunal of Mexico, we protest strongly the flagrant violation of human rights and the attempts against the life and dignity of our compatriots, who deserve the respect accorded to human being by every civilized society, regardless of such formal considerations as those involved in their immigration status....

We reject the idea of a new migrant worker agreement, for such agreements have never succeeded in preventing undocumented immigration in the past. The history of such agreements since the time of the Second World War shows us that quotas, far from solving the problem, have aggravated it (1979: 125-126).

He went on to add that “the solution to the migrant farm worker program is dependent our own efforts... through the accelerated creation of jobs in agriculture and in industry” (1979: 125). During the remainder of his administration, Echeverría promulgated a series of measures designed to do precisely that, including an increase in spending on rural economic development and a population law devised to promote family planning (Corwin 1978: 189-199; Lustig 1998).

Throughout the negotiations with the United States government over a new bracero arrangement, the Echeverría administration consulted neither with groups representing Mexican migrants (as opposed to Chicanos) nor with local government representing migrants’ communities of origin. In contrast to its engagement and on-going discussions with Chicano groups, the Mexican state adopted a distinctly analytical approach to the phenomenon. In 1972, the Mexican government created an interagency commission, Comisión Intersecretarial para Estudio del Problema de la Emigración Subrepticia de Trabajadores Mexicanos en los Estados Unidos, charged with researching the causes and consequences of undocumented migration. The commission’s main findings, delivered in 1974, were two-fold: first, that emigration had a significant impact on rural communities in Central Western Mexico, which received the lion’s share of the estimated \$1 billion that migrants remitted annually in the early 1970s; and second, that most emigration was temporary, with migrants returning to Mexico after a period of time, and that thus, U.S. analysts had overestimated the dimensions of the phenomenon

(Corwin 1978: 198-199). In light of the commission's conclusions, and faced with political opposition from Chicano groups and their allies in Mexico, including the powerful Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos (CTM), bi-national consultations for a labor export agreement were shelved (Corwin 1978: 202; Shapira 1977).

Controlling the Conversation: Lopez Portillo (1976-1982)

Echeverría's successor, President Lopez Portillo, presided over a country that had been rescued from an economic free-fall by the location of vast oil reservoirs, confirmed publicly during the first year of the new leader's sexenio (Lustig 1998:20). The Echeverría administration's heavy public investment, combined with a resolute defense of the value of peso, in the context of the oil shocks of the mid-1970s and capital flight, produced a serious deficit in Mexico's balance of payments. By 1976, the Mexican government, having depleted its currency reserves, was forced to let the peso float. The currency quickly lost 40 percent of its value, and Mexico seemed destined for a grave recession (Lustig 1998; Santin Quiroz 2001). The discovery of oil meant that the Mexican government shifted from the management of economic crisis to the "management of abundance" (*administración de la abundancia*) as Lopez Portillo called it (Santin Quiroz 2001: 62), and ramped up its public expenditures dramatically (Lustig 1998; Santin Quiroz 2001). Managing Mexico's newfound abundance also involved managing its relationship with the main consumer of the oil and gas it produced: the United States (Meyer 1983). Throughout the Lopez Portillo sexenio, the relationship between the two neighbors was often delicate and strained. The sources of tension ranged from U.S. trade barriers to Mexico's foreign policy in Latin America, but central among them remained the question of undocumented Mexican migration to the US (Vásquez et al. 1983; Bustamante et al. 1983). The progressive worsening of relations between the United States and Mexico led the Mexican government to turn to its connections with Chicano groups as a source of political leverage in its dealing with the United States. The Lopez-Portillo administration flirted with the notion of Chicanos acting as a lobby for Mexican interests, and to that end, created an official body to institutionalize Chicano interactions with the Mexican state. However, the Mexican government attempts to

control the engagement by formalizing it ultimately suffocated it out of existence, and marked the end of a rich period of interpretive interaction with Mexican Americans.

Bilateral tensions and Chicano offers of help

In the summer of 1977, the U.S. government bypassed bi-lateral negotiations and took steps to deal with the flow of Mexican migration unilaterally. On August 4, President Carter sent a proposal to Congress, laying out plans for an amnesty program for migrants who had been in the United States since 1970, coupled with sanctions on employers who hired undocumented immigrants and an enhanced border patrol (Carter 1979). By August 7, 250,000 Mexicans from their nation's interior had massed at Tijuana, determined to cross over to the United States before the announced amnesty plan went into effect⁴⁶. Tijuana, a city of under a million inhabitants, was overwhelmed: “[migrants] beg on the streets...without lodging, food, or hope of public welfare [in this] congested, economically depressed city...[where] the unemployment rate exceeds forty percent,” reported a dispatch for the New York Times (Holles 1977). Heedful of its “special relationship” with the US, the Lopez Portillo government limited itself to expressing its “dismay” at the Carter proposals and at the fact that they had been publicly released without prior consultation with the Mexican administration⁴⁷ (Riding 1977). (One Mexican analyst was less cautious in his summation of the situation: “If we depend on American financing, if we depend on the United States buying our oil and our tomatoes, just how much choice do we have – just how much can we complain?” (qtd in Riding 1977)). In subsequent negotiations with the United States, the Lopez Portillo administration pointed out repeatedly that Mexico would remain dependent on the “escape valve” that emigration represented for the pressure of high levels of unemployment in Mexico, so long as the United States refused to dismantle protectionist

⁴⁶ Migrant smugglers were charging \$250 to help migrants cross into the United States, and offered to “obtain bogus, back-dated documents, such as rent receipts, utility bills, Social Security cards and American work permits” for an additional \$300-\$400. (Holles 1977).

⁴⁷ One Mexican government official admitted, “We have to be very careful what we say because we don’t want to affect the magnificent relations we’ve had with the United States since President López Portillo took office” (qtd. in Riding 1977).

barriers against Mexican agricultural and manufactured products and to insist on purchasing gas from Mexico at below-market rates⁴⁸ (Riding 1977a; Riding 1978).

In response to the Carter administration's proposal to curb illegal migration, a delegation of Chicano leaders traveled to Mexico City in early 1978 to offer their support to the Mexican government. The group, made up of familiar ambassadors of the Chicano movement like Jose Angel Gutierrez from La Raza Unida and Eduardo Morgia from LULAC as well as new representatives from organizations solidly established in Washington political circles like the National Council of La Raza, came to offer a united front against the Carter immigration control initiatives. "We are unanimously opposed to the Carter Plan," declared José Angel Gutiérrez (qtd. in *New York Times*, February 12, 1978). Edward Morgia clarified the purpose of their visit: they had come to proffer their support as an organized lobby for Mexico within the U.S. "We've never before told Mexico that we are all ready to help Mexico in the United States. We feel that in the future Mexico can use us as Israel uses American Jews, as Italy uses Italian-Americans, and so on... [With 16 million Mexican-Americans], we are just beginning to realize our potential strength" (qtd. in *New York Times*, February 12, 1978). Lopez Portillo responded to the offer of help with a general encouragement of their efforts, and extended a vague promise that should the U.S. and Mexican governments enter into formal deliberations over a labor export agreement, "Mexican-Americans would be represented on the Mexican negotiating team" (*New York Times*, February 12, 1978). The Mexican statesman, however, tagged a clear caveat onto his otherwise favorable comments; he emphasized that he had "no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of the United States" (*New York Times*, February 12, 1978). Lopez Portillo hedged his enthusiasm for the Chicano effort in part because the Mexican administration had contemplated using concessions over the U.S. control of its border and of immigration as a bargaining chip in its torturous negotiations with its northern neighbor over an oil agreement that was more favorable to Mexico (de la Garza 1980). As one Mexican analyst trenchantly observed in

⁴⁸ Mexico wanted to sell its natural gas to the U.S. at \$2.60 per thousand cubic feet—a price worked out by Mexico and six American companies. Washington, however, was determined to pay no more than \$2.16, the price it had negotiated with Canada. After Mexico suspended negotiations, the U.S. Secretary of Energy cavalierly commented that "sooner or later" Mexico would lower its price, to which the Mexican administration replied that "sooner or later" the United States would have to raise its offer (Riding 1978). In the end (1980), Mexico sold only a seventh of the gas initially negotiated to the U.S. The remainder was consumed internally or burnt off. (Meyer 1983: 186-188)

1978, “the Mexican government may accept conditions which Chicanos wouldn’t accept” (qtd. in de la Garza 1980: 573).

As deliberation over the sale of Mexican oil dragged on, Mexico’s relationship with the United States continued to sour: a frustrated Lopez Portillo declared that “Mexico is neither on the list of United States priorities nor on that of United States respect” (October 13, qtd. in Binder 1978). To affect Mexico’s degenerating relationship with the United States Lopez Portillo took the Chicano delegation up on its offer and drew on the connections that his predecessor had forged with Chicano leaders. However, in contrast to the engagement under the Echeverría administration, the Lopez Portillo government sought to exercise control over the conversations it had with Chicano groups. It strove to mold a pell-mell series of interactions with a wide spectrum of Chicano groups into a disciplined lobby that could, in fact, apply influence on the U.S. government, lobbying it effectively for Mexican interests (Gutierrez, A 1986: 33, note 26). As one official in the Lopez Portillo administration surmised, “President Lopez Portillo [did] not want to develop relations with [Chicanos] until it [was] clear how each [could] help the other” (qtd. in de la Garza 1980: 578). To create that clarity and build a cogent political lobby, the Lopez Portillo administration narrowed the thematic scope of its conversations with Chicanos and carefully vetted the participants. Jorge Bustamante, chief architect of Echeverría’s style of engagement with Chicanos, observed, “Lopez Portillo preferred a new type of Chicano leader, one better suited to the political process of training public officials or representatives of legitimate organizations supported by foundations of national importance” (Bustamante 1986: 16), and the president’s administration took pains to invite more moderate Chicano and Mexican-American organization to the table. (Bustamante 1986; Gutierrez, A. 1986).

Disciplining engagement: The creation of the Hispanic Commission

To systematize consultation between Chicanos and the Mexican state, the Lopez Portillo government institutionalized their interactions. The Lopez Portillo administration appropriated a request from Chicano groups for formal legation in Mexico City, and recast it as the Comisión Mixta de Enlace or the Hispanic Commission, as it was called in English in 1979 (the word Chicano was glaringly absent from the commission’s title), a

group that would represent Chicanos in their discussions with the Mexican state (Santamaña Gómez 1994: 69, 80; Gutierrez, A. 54; Orozco, G. 2001). Membership was confined to a permanent list of ten organizations, including nine Chicano organizations and one Puerto Rican group. Only two of the nine Chicano organizations had strong grass-roots traditions, with most of the remainder heavily dependent on foundation funding or on the catholic church. Chicano groups that had been very active in the relationship with the Mexican government under Echeverría, like La Raza Party, were excluded from the new body⁴⁹ (Gutierrez, J: 29-32; Gutierrez, A. 1986: 55). Moreover, the Commission was relegated to the portfolio of the Secretary of Labor, Pedro Ojeda Paulada, moving engagement with the Chicano community out of the Office of the President, perhaps reflecting the president's lingering ambivalence at active engagement with Chicanos. Furthermore, Lopez Portillo transferred responsibility for managing the relationship with Chicanos from Bustamante, a dynamic proponent of Mexican engagement with a spectrum of Chicano organizations and intellectuals, to Guido Belasso, a career bureaucrat with a much more conservative view of the possibilities a Chicano lobby represented for Mexico (Gutierrez, A 1986: 55). Chicano groups barred from the commission watched with dismay as Lopez Portillo and his administration publicly dismissed their petitions for support in U.S. civil rights struggles as out of hand⁵⁰ (de la Garza 1980: 577).

The relationship with Chicanos that the Commission was designed to embody was reinforced through the extension of diplomatic gestures to Mexican-Americans. Lopez Portillo continued and broadened his predecessor's scholarship program for Chicanos in Mexican universities, and maintained the distribution of educational materials for

⁴⁹ The ten members of the Hispanic Commission were: the Puerto Rican group ASPIRA, Project SER, LULAC, American G.I. Forum, MALDEF, National Association of Farmworker Organizations (NAFO), Mexican American Women National Association (MANA), IMAGE, National Hispanic Forum, and the National Council of La Raza. Chicano community groups have several complaints about the list of participants. Some of these concerns are the following: NAFO did not include the United Farmworkers of America (founded by Cesar Chavez); the National Hispanic Forum was composed of organizations based in Washington, D.C. and was heavily dependent on the support of the catholic church; National Council of La Raza had an agenda that was staff- rather than member-directed and relied on Ford Foundation funding; and the dual role of some of the organizations' leaders as representatives to the Commission and as members to the United States Department of State Hispanic Advisory Committee. (Gutierrez, A. 1986: 29-32).

⁵⁰ The Mexican Government's treatment of Chicano land grant petitions illustrates this shift in attitude well: the Lopez Portillo administration moved from a considered response to Chicano requests to deriding them. See de la Garza (1980) for more on this change in attitude.

American schools with large Mexican-American student populations. Additionally, the Secretary of Education designed a summer course to train North American teachers in bilingual education. (Orozco, G. 2001).

These symbolic programs were not enough to keep the relationship between Chicanos and the Mexican government from fraying⁵¹. Once the Lopez Portillo administration institutionalized the conversations between Chicanos and the Mexican government, the interactions lost the unscripted nature that made them so generative of insights about the affinity between Mexican-Americans and the Mexican State, and the about the types of collaboration it could support. By reigning in the content of the discussions and directing them to serve interests that were more narrowly those of the Mexican government -- as opposed to agendas that embodied the conceptual connections that emerged between the Chicano movement and the Mexican state through their ongoing interactions -- the Lopez Portillo administration sapped them of their indeterminacy, and thus, of the vitality that made them compelling to Chicano activists in the first place. Shortly after its creation, the Commission morphed into a largely ceremonial expression of what had, for a time, been a vibrant, if occasionally contentious, relationship (Gutierrez, A. 1986: 55). During the entirety of its brief existence, the Commission did not once meet with the Mexican president and was defunct by the end of Lopez Portillo's sexenio (Gutierrez, J. 1986: 32).

Ultimately, Lopez Portillo did not call on the Commission to act as a lobby for Mexican interests in the United States, and even less to influence North American policies toward Mexican emigrants. Instead, Mexican government largely evaded the issue by retreating behind its principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other nations (Corwin 1978; Santamaría Gómez 1994). As the Carter and then the Reagan administration floated a series on proposal to control Mexican immigration, all of which involved some combination of border militarization and the apportioning of a very limited number of work contracts, the Lopez Portillo administration refrained from

⁵¹ De la Garza recounts one particular low point of the relationship between Chicanos and the Mexican government. The Lopez Portillo administration adamantly objected to the appointment of Julian Nava, a Chicano lawyer, as U.S. ambassador to Mexico, feeling that it represented a diplomatic slight to Mexico. A senior member of the Secretariat of Foreign Relations charged with U.S. affairs is said to have remarked, "Just because he looks like us, they think he will more acceptable to us." De la Garza wryly adds, "As the official is of European rather than mestizo origin, his remarks are said to have elicited the following response, 'Isn't that why they appointed you to deal with U.S. affairs?'" (de la Garza 1986:42).

commenting publicly on the schemes (Riding 1977; Crewsdon 1978; Pear 1981a & 1981b). (The boldest – and only -- comment that Lopez Portillo ever made regarding U.S. migration proposals was that he was “very intrigued” by a Reagan plan to legalize circular migration from Mexico, enabling migrants to work in the U.S. seasonally (Pear 1981)). However, the Lopez Portillo administration also evoked judicial principle to refuse to continue transporting to the Mexican interior Mexican migrants whom the U.S. border patrol had caught trying to cross the into the United States illegally and had unceremoniously delivered back across the border, thereby withdrawing the Mexican government’s material and moral support for U.S. border control (Santamaría Gómez 1994: 92-93). Lopez Portillo declared that, “Mexico is not a prison for its population” (qtd. in Corwin 1978: 210), and Jorge Castañeda, named Secretary of Foreign Relations in 1979, asserted shortly after assuming his post that, “Mexico can neither constitutionally, nor politically, nor judicially, nor morally, control the movement of Mexicans within and beyond its borders” (qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 92).

In its reserved efforts to attend to the issue of Mexican migration, of which only a small fraction was legal, the Lopez Portillo government, just as the Echeverría administration before it, engaged neither with the migrants who left for work in the United States nor with the communities they supported with their remittances. Instead, the Mexican administration adopted, once again, an arm’s length analytical approach to the phenomenon. In 1977, the Mexican government commissioned a follow-up study on undocumented migration to the U.S. The latter study was much more extensive than the research ordered under Echeverría: approximately 150,000 surveys were conducted, at the border as well as in migrants’ communities of origin (Orozco, G. 2001; Riding 1980). However, the findings, released in 1980, were consistent with the previous investigation: the magnitude of undocumented migration had been significantly overblown, as had the quantity of the remittances sent back to Mexico⁵² (Riding 1980). The government’s study lent credence to its reticent posture on migration questions, and to its continued grave under-funding and under-staffing of its consular offices in the United States. In a

⁵² The study concluded that the number of undocumented migrants from Mexico was somewhere between 480,000 and 1.22 million depending on the season, far lower than U.S. administration estimate of anywhere between 3 to 6 million. Furthermore, the study placed the level of remittances at \$310 million, as opposed to the \$3 billion suggested by U.S. estimates. (Riding 1980)

further reflection of the state's reluctant attention to Mexican migrants, the detailed results of the study were never diffused, and when the direction of the office running the investigation – the National Commission on Population (CONAPO) – changed at the end of the Lopez Portillo sexenio, the documentation of the survey was lost (Interview, Fundación Solidaridad Mexicano-Americano, Mexico City, July, 2003).

Transnational labor organizing: Emergent conversations

The Lopez Portillo administration's impassive policy attitude toward Mexican emigration and more specifically, toward the working conditions to which undocumented migrants workers were often subjected opened a vacuum which labor organizations on both sides of the border moved to fill. Ironically, the Carter and Reagan immigration proposals, and Chicano mobilization against them, brought increased public – and press - - attention to the discrimination and exploitation endured by Mexican migrants workers and their families in the U.S. Organizations ranging from the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF) to the more radical (and now defunct) Centro de Acción Social Autónoma (CASA) mobilized against insults such as indiscriminate and overly zealous INS round-ups of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans suspected of being in the U.S. illegally and the lack of educational access for the children of immigrant workers, regardless of their parents' legal status (Santamaría Gómez 1994: 86-97; Gómez-Quiñonez 1990; Zazuata 1983). Chicano labor activists also began organizing undocumented Mexican workers in earnest; efforts by the UFW in this vein were joined by smaller drives by the International Ladies Garment Workers and the United Electrical Workers (Santamaría Gómez 1994: 86-97; Gómez-Quiñonez 1990: 166-167). In response, a number of Mexican labor unions, including the Sindicato de Telefonistas (STRM) and the Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos (CIOAC), issued formal statements in defense of the rights of their co-nationals living and working across the border. The STRM, for example, declared at its 1978 convention that “the human rights of migrants workers in the United States should stop being the object of discrimination” and called for national union drive in solidarity with migrant workers (qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 96). In 1980, ten U.S. and Mexican unions -- including the United Auto Workers, International Ladies Garment Workers Union from

the U.S., and the STRM and the CIOAC from Mexico -- congregated in a meeting space in Tlatelolco, Mexico City, for a bi-national labor convention on protecting the rights of Mexican migrant workers in the United States (Santamaría Gómez 1994; 97-98).

The unprecedented transnational mobilization launched by this event lost momentum fairly quickly, largely because of the decline of U.S. unions under Reagan, argues Santamaría Gómez (1994). However, the meeting laid down the leftist networks and set new conversations in motion that would come back to haunt the PRI in Mexican presidential elections less than a decade later, when the electoral dominance of the ruling party came under serious attack by a leftist coalition headed by PRI defector, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas.

The End of a Conversation: De la Madrid (1982-1988)

By the end of his sexenio, it had become clear that Lopez Portillo's gamble to stake the economic fortunes of Mexico on newly discovered oil reserves had been a tragic miscalculation. As the price for crude began to fall in 1981, Lopez Portillo's program of massive public spending⁵³, funded by windfall oil revenues and significant international borrowing, began to fall apart. By 1982, Mexico was facing its worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Inflation surpassed 100 percent and was still rising; economic activity ground to halt, with the economy registering a negative growth rate; unemployment doubled; the peso lost most of value in a matter of months; and the public deficit skyrocketed to almost twenty percent of GDP. The Lopez Portillo administration suspended payment on the principle of its \$80 billion foreign debt and nationalized the banking system. De la Madrid inherited an economy in shambles. (Chand 2001: 25-31; Lustig 1998; Migdail 1987: 116-118)

Immediately upon assuming office, the new president was compelled to embark on a course of radical economic restructuring, including with two brutal rounds of IMF-ordered structural adjustment programs. Under the mandate of fiscal austerity, public spending was slashed, with expenditures on health, education, and nutrition reduced by

⁵³ While much of literature on the 1982 economic crisis attributed Mexico's economic nosedive to the mismanagement of public funds and a foolhardy prognosis of oil prices continuing on their upward trend, Lustig (1998) rightly points out that both Mexico's public spending choices and view of the oil market was roughly in keeping with the directives of organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

over a third. Myriad government programs were discontinued or vigorously pruned (Lusting 1998; Santín Quiroz 2001; Migdail 1987: 116-118). The Mexican government's engagement with Chicanos was no exception. De la Madrid suspended the conversations with Mexicans-Americans, that had under his predecessor, grown stilted and rote, and he drastically reduced the Mexican state's cultural outreach to the Chicano community (Orozco, G. 2001; Santamaría Gómez 1994: 111-128). Furthermore, the government's treatment of Mexican migrants remained skeletal; despite heroic efforts by certain individual consuls (most notably the consul representing his government in Los Angeles), consular protection of exploited migrants was stripped down to the bare minimum. Additionally, under the regimen of belt-tightening, no new major studies of Mexican emigration were commissioned (Orozco, G. 2001; Santamaría Gómez 1994: 111-128).

However, despite the termination of Mexican government's engagement with the Chicano movement and the neglect of Mexican emigrants that characterized it, de la Madrid's sexenio marked a crucial turning point for Mexican state policy toward Mexican emigrants. There were three reasons for this. First, the Mexican state, through venues as formal as presidential speeches, explicitly recognized the potential of Mexican-Americans as a political lobby; under de la Madrid, the Mexican state embraced and appropriated the view extended by Chicano activists throughout the 1970s that they could serve as a political lever through which Mexico could influence political outcomes to its north (Gutierrez, A. 1986; Santamaría Gómez 1994). Mexico was never able to act on that insight, for reasons explained below, but the adoption of the idea that Mexico could shape policy in the United States through its descendants would transform Mexican state approaches to both Mexican-Americans and Mexican migrants. Second, during de la Madrid sexenio, the United States implemented a major amnesty program, known as the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). Within the span of a few short months, the act changed the status of literally millions of Mexican migrants, giving them the legal right to live and work in the United States. (Bean et al. 1998) The acquired legal standing allowed them to emerge out of clandestinity, to organize, and eventually to petition – forcefully -- both the United States government, and more significantly, the Mexican state for their political rights (Valdes 1995; Dresser 1993; Fitzgerald 2003). The Mexican government would have no choice but to take notice. The reasons has to do

with the third shift that de la Madrid presided over, no doubt unhappily, during his sexenio. The prolonged economic paroxysm that gripped Mexico for close to a decade also shook the PRI's monopoly hold on power. The crisis galvanized opposition against the ruling party and set in motion a wave of politicization that would have ramifications felt into the next millennium (Chand 2001; Shirk 2005).

Envisioning a Mexican lobby in the United States

When de la Madrid was nominated as the PRI's candidate for the presidency, he was virtually unknown in Chicano political circles. Apart from a couple of brief visits to San Antonio and Los Angeles as the official representative of the Lopez Portillo administration at the Mexican national holiday festivities, de la Madrid did not have much exposure to Mexican-American and Mexican migrants. However, the candidate did have the foresight to reach out to Bustamante, the erstwhile Mexican government liaison to Chicano group, and ask him to lay out a plan for campaign outreach to Mexican-Americans. Bustamante plotted three meetings for the politician, with the participation of Chicano organizations and Chicano intellectuals. In keeping with the preferences of the Mexican government, made clear under Lopez Portillo, no left-of-center groups were invited to attend. (Gutierrez, A. 1986: 56-58; Santamaría Gómez 1994: 111-114).

The first meeting was held in Mexico City on March 3rd, 1982, as the country was tumbling into economic crisis. The future president told "friends from the Mexican-American community and from Chicano organizations" that he would, in his administration, foster "[the] development [of a relationship with you] that is more systematic, closer, more profound than has emerged to date" (qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 111-112). Conceding that, "we Mexicans have perhaps not had the energy, nor perhaps the possibility, nor have we paid the attention required to establish the mechanisms for communication, for dialogue, and for engagement with you (qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 112), de la Madrid was emphatic in his insistence that "this meeting...should above all else be understood as a reaffirmation of the willingness of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional and its candidate to the Presidency of Mexico, to fortify, expand, and systematize these linkages, having as their base history and

sentiment, can evolve into forms of cooperation even more dynamic and positive” (qtd. in Gutierrez, A. 1986: 56), intimating that these forms of cooperation would be part of a policy toward the United States that would be less defensive and “more dynamic, more responsible, and more active” (qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 112). At de la Madrid’s following meeting with Chicano intellectuals and organizations in April in Ciudad Juarez, the statesman was more specific, noting that even cultural programs should be viewed as Mexico’s strategy to defend the rights of Mexican-Americans, because “to reaffirm their cultural identity and the solidarity produced within these communities ... gives both of us more leverage in the process of social and political negotiation in the United States” (qtd. in Gutierrez, A 1986: 57). With this statement, de la Madrid explicitly appropriated Chicano views of their organizations and communities as a potential lobby that could sway United States policy toward its southern neighbor.

However, despite the presidential candidate’s enthusiastic pronouncements about the promise of the relationship between Mexican-Americans and Mexico, the third meeting planned was never held. The final engagement was to be between de la Madrid and Chicano activists and journalists, scheduled to take place in October immediately following president-elect de la Madrid’s October audience with President Reagan. After the appointment between Reagan and de la Madrid, the slated meeting with Chicanos was scuttled. In its stead, a gathering between de la Madrid and a handful of Mexican-American scholars was hastily convened. The improvised session would be the last time de la Madrid would meeting with Mexican-Americans during his administration. (Gutierrez, A 1986: 56-58; Gutierrez, J. 1986: 34).

The formal explanation for the suspension of discussions with Chicanos was the resource constraints that the Mexican government confronted as the nation’s economic difficulties escalated into a historic crisis (Gutierrez, J. 1986: 34). Without a doubt, the government’s budgetary contraction made it financially difficult and politically untenable to dedicate funds to maintaining a dialogue with Chicanos, and to continue the cultural programs that supported it, while at the same time cutting vital social services domestically (Orozco, G. 2001).

However, Mexico’s economic crisis also generated political pressure from the United States government to snuff out Mexico’s re-emergent engagement with Mexican-

Americans (Santamaría Gómez 1994: 114; Castañeda in Santamaría Gomez 1994: 114 note 3). As early as 1978, ex-CIA director William Colby vocalized conservative opposition to the relationship when he warned that Mexican emigration was “a silent invasion” likely to represent a greater threat to the United States than the Soviet Union, because it could give rise to a separatist movement in the Southwest, similar to one Canada had witnessed in Quebec except that it would have dangerously strong ties to Mexico (Bustamante et al. 1983: 318; Santamaría Gómez 1994: 123). In the months before president-elect de la Madrid took office, 35 U.S. congressmen sent a letter to President Reagan communicating their alarm at the state of affairs in Mexico, and intimating the implications that such ties between the Mexican government and Mexican-Americans and Mexican immigrants would have for the United States:

The increasing instability in Mexico could potentially lead to a communist take-over unless the United States takes appropriate action to ensure that ...president elect Miguel de la Madrid does not continue the socialist program initiated by the two previous administrations (sent in September 1982, qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 129).

In response, the Reagan administration, and its newly appointed ambassador to Mexico, John Gavin, offered their friendly advice to the de la Madrid administration that the Mexican government should desist its political engagement with Chicano groups in the United States (Santamaría Gómez 1994: 114).

Changing migration patterns and the passage of IRCA

The economic vulnerability that made Mexico receptive to U.S. suggestions about the manner in which it handled its relationship to Mexican-Americans also had profound impacts on emigration flows from Mexico. During the de la Madrid sexenio, real wages fell by approximately half, while the cost of the basic food basket almost doubled (Lustig 1998: 61-96). The contraction of wages combined with a relative rise in prices had clear welfare effects, captured most poignantly in the indicators on child malnutrition: according to Mexican government (ISSSTE) data, the percentage of children suffering ailments linked to insufficient nutrition as a proportion of all sick children rose by almost 3 percentage points in the same number of years, from 8.5 percent in 1981 to 11.7 percent in 1984 (Lustig 1998: 87-88). An even starker indicator of the impact that Mexico’s economic turmoil had on family welfare was provided by a United Nations Children’s

Fund (UNICEF) study on world hunger, which reported that, “in 1986, more children died of hunger in Mexico than in the Sudan” (Migdail 1987: 118). However, as Lustig observes, the welfare consequences for the poor and middle class segments of Mexican society, as well as the resultant political protest, were less pronounced than the decline in real wages would imply (Lustig 1998: 61-96). Households adopted a number of non-wage strategies to supplement their income, and chief among them, particularly for rural residents, was emigration to the United States (Lustig 1998: 74, 91). As indicated by case-based and survey studies in rural Mexico (Grindle 1989; Gregory 1987), out-migration increased substantially during the economic crisis of the 1980s, more than doubling in some of the communities canvassed, leading to labor shortages in agriculture in Mexico’s center-west states. Furthermore, suggestive of the intensified economic pressure behind the migration flows was the fact that the geographic origin of the migrants became more diversified during the crisis, with Mexican labor emigration emanating from states to the south and east of Mexico’s traditional migrant sending states, and with migrants displaying a wider range of educational levels, with the migrants of the crisis displaying both lower and significantly higher levels of education, as measured in years of schooling, than had traditionally been the norm⁵⁴ (Bean et al. 1998; Massay et al. 1993?; Bustamante et al. 1998; Jones 1995). Moreover, remittances, previously spent on investments in land, housing, or education, were increasingly devoted to subsistence expenditures like food (Grindle 1989; Gregory 1987). Data from the INS on the apprehension of illegal Mexican immigrants during this period seems to confirm the intensification of emigration during the economic crisis: the average number of apprehensions averaged 1,260,855 a year for 1981-1986, peaking at 1,767,400 in 1986, a 50 percent increase from the average for 1971-1980 (Vernez et al. 1991)⁵⁵

⁵⁴ According to surveys conducted by the Mexican government, the average rate of schooling pre-1980 had been 4.9 years of schooling, whereas data from a 1993-95 survey show that average schooling levels had shot up to 6.2 years for men (Bustamante et al. 1998: 91-163; see article for detailed information on survey methodology).

⁵⁵ Data on apprehensions represent a very rough measure of migration flows. They are as reflective on border control practices as of actual migration movements. However, for the time periods covered by the data present here, there was no significant increase of border control activities, as evidenced by the level of federal funds allocated to them, roughly constant in real terms throughout the period considered here. With the passage of IRCA, the federal government did significantly increase border control activities. (Hayes 2001) For more on other methods to measure levels of undocumented migration, please see Bean et al. (1998) and Van Hook et al. (1998).

The increase in Mexican migration did not go unnoticed by restrictionist policy makers in United States. After a decade of haggling in the United States government over a possible immigration control legislative package, anti-immigrant pressure groups, ascendant in the Reagan government, used the deterioration of the Mexican economy and the record number of apprehensions of Mexican undocumented immigrants by the INS, to push hard for an immigration law. Liberal opponents of the bill, also cognizant of the economic strains Mexico was under and its implication for migration flows, ceded, fearing that even more draconian legislation would be proposed in the future. (Hayes 2001: 61; Alba 1998). Thus, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was passed in the 1986 legislative session. As part of the compromise that allowed for the act's passage, Congress also enacted the Special Agricultural Workers and the Replenishment Agricultural Workers programs to guarantee the agricultural lobby a steady supply of workers despite the new immigration controls stipulated in the act. (Hayes 2001: 47-73; Chiswick 1988).

IRCA, popularly called the Simpson-Rodino act, radically changed the character of Mexican migration to the United States. The act enabled more than 3 million undocumented Mexican migrants to change their legal status under its terms⁵⁶, allowing them to move out of residence and work arrangements that, if not always patently in violation of US laws, were not clearly legal either. Specifically, the act stipulated that migrants who had lived in the United States more or less continuously since 1982 were eligible for legal work and residence permits, and could, within six years, become naturalized citizens. Additionally, those migrants who had worked in agriculture for at least 90 days in 1986 could also qualify for legal status. Furthermore, once legalized, migrants were free to follow the established procedures to bring their family members to join them; and they did, in large numbers. In one fell legislative swoop, the undocumented Mexican immigrants who had been so invisible that their numbers in the United States had been the subject of wild controversy, with estimates ranging from 400,000 to 6 million, emerged into the statutory light. With the passage of IRCA, over 3 million undocumented immigrants suddenly became visible to the Mexican state, their

⁵⁶ An estimated 1.7 million under IRCA and 1.3 million under SAW (Binational Study 1998).

existence in the United States manifest and incontrovertible. (Chiswick 1988; Hayes 2001; Bean et al. 1998; Bustamante et al. 1998).

In addition to making a large segment of the Mexican undocumented immigrant population visible to both the Mexican and American states, IRCA transformed its profile in certain key ways that would, over time, have important political ramifications for Mexico. As Mexican undocumented immigrants acquired legal status, a large proportion of them settled indefinitely in the United States. Rather than migrating across the border for a delimited period of time, either seasonally or for a longer but finite stay that sometimes stretched over several years, many stayed in the United States permanently. However, newly shielded with legal status, “*rodinos*” were able to cross the border more frequently, traveling back and forth from the United States and their communities of origin as they pleased, or as their work schedules would allow (Cornelius 1989). Thus, they remained deeply rooted their communities of origin and socially – not to mention materially -- invested in their futures (cites – Kearney, Fitzgerald, Smith, M; Smith, R. etc). Yet, living and working in the United States, they came out from under the direct influence of the PRI, and the political hegemony enforced and cajoled through the party’s corporatist networks, particularly in the Mexican countryside. In sum, IRCA created a significant, conspicuous population of Mexican migrants able to express their political critique of the Mexican political system and to mobilize against its excesses in a non-Mexican political space, where the PRI had little control. The implications of the political latitude that Mexican immigrants acquired as a result of the amnesty program would slowly become visible– and unsettling – to the Mexican PRI government as it faced the mounting political challenge generated by a sexenio of searing economic hardship.

The gathering political crisis

The economic crisis that would come to define the de la Madrid presidency brought long simmering social tensions to a head. Mexico’s business interests and its middle class felt that the state, through its cavalier mismanagement of the economy, had squandered the wealth and social status that they had worked hard to achieve. The nationalization of the banking system and state control over their accounts, in particular,

was experienced as stark evidence of their vulnerability to capricious state policy. Mexico's poor, its urban workers and its rural campesinos, felt analogous alienation from a state and a party with which they had historically been identified. The precipitous fall of real wages, the successive dismantling of crucial nutritional and health subsidies, the utter abandonment of agriculture and the rise of rural misery that it left in its wake, left them lacerated and struggling with serious impoverishment. Moreover, the complete ineffectiveness of the Mexican Worker's Confederation (CTM) and the National Peasant Confederation (CNC), the country's major unions, in defending the interests of their members despite their close historic ties with the ruling party discredited them as established corporatist mechanisms that had previously guaranteed some measure of economic redistribution (Chand 2001; Shirk 2005).

The rise in social discontent, in different segment of Mexican society, gradually began to amend the significance of Mexico's electoral processes. Frustrated citizens began taking their grievances to the ballot box, progressively changing elections from a ritual of political pretend where the winners were invariably the PRI's nominees to moments of real political contests where politicians, and the party they represented, were called to account. This trend was particular pronounced in the north of Mexico, where the National Action Party (PAN), a right-of-center party representing business and middle class interests, was making sizable electoral gains. In the border state of Chihuahua, where the PAN achieved its most striking electoral advances, the opposition party, in 1983, won the mayoral races for all of the state's main cities, and carried a number of important seats in the state legislature. "In one stroke," notes political analyst Vikram Chand, "over 70 percent of Chihuahua's population had fallen under PAN jurisdiction" (2001: 33). In response to the PAN's electoral victories, the PRI fell back on tried and true strategies of election fraud. However, election irregularities became so widespread and blatant that, in the prevailing environment of political dissatisfaction and economic difficulty, they produced a backlash against PRI. Chihuahua, where the electoral manipulation had been most egregious and robbed the PAN gubernatorial candidate of a widely expected victory in 1986, became the focal point for protests against the PRI's electoral tactics, and more broadly, against the ruling party's obdurate hold on power, increasingly viewed as illegitimate. (Chand 2001; Shirk 2005)

The fact that Chihuahua emerged as the site of serious resistance movement against the PRI's electoral practices meant that the protests would spill across the border. Indeed, organizers of the protests capitalized on the state's contiguity with the U.S. to orchestrate events that would bring the electoral fraud Chihuahua endured to international -- and more pertinently, to the United States' -- attention. In July, the PAN organized a six-day blockade of an important bridge over the Rio Grande, linking the cities of Ciudad Juarez and El Paso (Chand 2001). The blockade of the largest port of entry on the US-Mexico border cost Mexico an estimated \$15 million in export fees, but likely cost American enterprises with maquila plants in Chihuahua and unable to transport their products across the border far more (New York Times, July 30, 1986). The protests, which lasted several months, raised concerns in Washington. By October, the CIA had issued a report warning that Mexico's political system " 'will rupture violently' unless Mexico's leaders make the country's 'rigid, authoritarian political structure' more democratic" (qtd. in Pear 1986), and, encouraged by PAN lobbyist, congressmen passed formal resolutions urging de la Madrid to "open up political channels for opposition parties" (Senator Dennis DeConcini, qtd. in Pear 1986; Santamaría Gomez 1994). The opposition in Chihuahua had successfully galvanized U.S. political pressure which it leveraged against the ruling PRI. In doing so, they expanded the political arena of Mexican electoral contest into the United States. And in that arena, Mexico electoral integrity became *the* central issue.

By the middle of 1987, the PRI was showing the strains of the growing political discontent in a Mexico still groaning under oppressive austerity conditions. Cuachtemoc Cardenas, governor of Michoacan and son of Lazaro Cardenas, one of founders of the PRI and one of the most revered populist politicians in Mexico's history, had split off a dissident faction of the ruling party, which was baptized the "Democratic Current." Cardenas called for labor, peasant, and students to demand electoral transparency, declaring that the Mexico's next president must emerge "not from the summit but from the grass roots" (qtd. in Rohter 1987). Within months, as the presidential elections of July 1988 approached, the charismatic politician had left the party and was running his own campaign for president under the banner of the National Democratic Front (FND), a hastily assembled coalitions of leftist organizations and parties. The 1988 presidential

elections, which pitted the PRI's nominee, technocrat Carlos Salinas, against the FND's Cardenas and the PAN's candidate Manuel Clouthier, promised to be the most contested election held since the ruling party came to power after the Mexican revolution in the 1929. In preparation for the electoral contest, both the PND and the PAN trained electoral monitors and schooled their supporters in the techniques of civil disobedience, which they planned to apply if the election were shown to be fraudulent. PAN-candidate Clouthier warned that the opposition would "paralyze all of Mexico" if fraud occurred (qtd. in Rohter 1988a).

The movement for electoral transparency quickly spread north of the border. The protests in Ciudad Juarez had not only demonstrated that the hegemony of the PRI was fragile, but that political mobilization in the United States could have significant impacts in Mexico. The movement re-energized the networks of Chicano and leftist organization that had been forged during the sexenios of Echeverría and Lopez Portillo, either through their engagement with the Mexican government or through their resistance to their exclusion from those conversations. Groups and political relationships that had been worn down and worn thin under the anti-leftist stance of the Reagan administration and de la Madrid's ostracism of them, such that only emaciated versions remained in many cases, were revitalized by what they perceived as an unprecedented opportunity to press for democratic aperture in Mexico (Martinez Saldaña et al. 2002: 223-224; Santamaría Gomez 1994: 153-165). Veteran organizers of the Chicano groups, like La Raza Unida Party, and of Mexican left, including many members of unions who had established alliances with Mexican labor organizers in the United States and who had been forced to migrate themselves due to the economic crisis of the 1980s were joined by scores of Mexican immigrants. Many of them were newly legalized under IRCA, and thus were more able take a public political stand without fear of deportation. Small but devoted groups of Mexican organizers were turning cities like Los Angeles, San Jose, San Antonio and Chicago into sites where Mexico's electoral contest was also being staged. (Calderón et al. 2002; Martinez Saldaña et al. 2002: 223-224; Santamaría Gómez 1994: 165-171; Dresser 1993: 98-99).

The Chicano groups and immigrants involved overwhelmingly rallied behind Cardenas, who they saw not just as the bearer of the populist legacy of the Mexican

revolution and as sympathetic to their concerns, but also as their best hope to challenge the entrenched system of PRI autocracy. Ben Garza, Chicano activist in the Los Angeles area and Cardenas supporter described the conflation in a reflection on the political mobilization of that period:

For 4 or 5 years, we had been trying to organize people around the issue of democracy in Mexico. The 1988 election simply brought more people together. Many people of course support Cardenas, but others joined of their desire to support democracy in Mexico. They were tired of the PRI and corruption. (qtd. in Dresser 1993: 99)

Thus, the Cardenas campaign became a vehicle through which Mexicans and Mexican-American pushed for Mexican electoral reform.

As part of that reform, Mexican immigrants articulated their claim to the right to vote in Mexican elections even while residing the United States, and explicitly linked that demand to the exercise of transparent elections. They made their appeal for the right to vote based on legal grounds, but also based on their familial, cultural, and economic commitment to their country of origin (Caldéron Chelius et al. 2002; Ross n.d.). In a formal letter sent to Miguel de la Madrid, a congress of 22 Mexican immigrant groups, Chicano organizations, and union locals, clarified that the fact that they or their ancestors had, as migrants, “left our homeland in search of a better life for our families does not imply that our interest that our country should be more prosperous and more just has diminished.” The missive to the Mexican president continued:

With the inalienable right with which our nationality endows us, our close family and cultural ties, our daily contribution to the wellbeing of our homeland, we demand that you guarantee effective suffrage and clear and impartial elections on the 6th of July. Furthermore, we will hold you responsible for the consequences that failure to comply may generate. (qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 158-159).

Cardenas, increasingly aware of the political lever that migrants could represent in Mexican elections, came out in support of voting rights for Mexicans living in the United States.

The end of an affair

In response to this grassroots mobilization and the bold claims it was provoking, the PRI speedily recovered its former interest in Mexican-Americans, and mounted a campaign to restore its connections with Mexican-American leaders. As part of an

initiative called “Impact 1988,” the Mexican government, in a familiar pattern, scheduled a series of meetings in early 1988 between Mexican-American organizations and intellectuals and the PRI leadership, including Salinas, to “explore in detail”, as the program documents specify, “the opportunities and the challenges...of developing a strategy, made up of concrete actions, to improve the relations between Mexico and the United States” (qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 139) and the notion of Mexican-Americans serving as an ethnic lobby for Mexico was once again invoked. (Santamaría Gómez 1994: 137-142). The PRI’s response to Mexican immigrants was just as familiar. In contrast to its approach to Mexican-Americans, the PRI did not reach out to communities of Mexican immigrants in the United States. (Santamaría Gómez 1994:137-142)

After a sexenio of distance, the renewed engagement between the PRI and Chicanos was strained, and perceived by many participants as instrumental (Santamaría Gómez 1994:137-142). Just as quickly as the Mexican government remembered to court Mexican-Americans, the engagement began to disintegrate into bitter recriminations. In June, 1988, a month before the Mexican elections, the California Democratic Party passed a resolution proposed by the Chicano caucus, “asking the US government to pressure Mexico to respect human rights and to give Mexican citizens who reside outside the country the right to vote” (Acuña 1996: 233). The resolution also requested ‘the North American government to intervene in the Mexican presidential elections of this year’ (qtd. in Acuña 1996: 233). Through Bustamante, the Mexican government issued a virulent attack on the resolution, published in several major Mexican newspapers. “Just because Chicanos have Spanish surnames, that does not give them the credentials to understand what is happening in Mexico,” railed Bustamante, adding that the resolution revealed that Chicanos “think like any other gringo.” He cautioned Chicanos that if they wanted to be in solidarity with their Mexican brethren, they should refrain from criticizing “Mexican affairs” (Acuña 1996: 233).

On the eve of an election for which independent polls indicated that Salinas might not win a clear majority (Rohter 1988), the PRI had alienated Mexican-Americans and had confirmed its disinterest in Mexican migrants. Salinas and his party would soon discover that this was a serious miscalculation.

2. Building a lobby

Contested results, computer malfunction and rebuilding PRI legitimacy

Carlos Salinas de Gortari, PRI candidate for president, declared victory shortly after midnight the night the polls closed on July 6, 1988. But as official election results failed to come in to confirm Salinas' claim – a delay blamed on alleged computer malfunction—accusations of vote fraud began to mount. Opposition candidates charged that the PRI had rigged the vote, stooping to tactics from ballot stuffing to the destruction of ballot boxes in pro-opposition municipalities to the resuscitation of hundreds of thousands of dead who had cast their votes according to election rolls in many areas (Rohter 1988). As official tallies continued to dribble in for days, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, the leftist opposition candidate, proclaimed that he had in fact won the election and that any PRI attempt to deny him the office of president would be “the technical equivalent of a coup” (qtd in Branigin 1988). Public outcry began to mount, with small scale protests flaring throughout the country. To draw international attention to the electoral crisis, opposition protestors in Chihuahua occupied the bridge linking Ciudad Juarez to El Paso, just as they had in 1986, bringing transnational commerce to a halt at one of the busiest land ports at the border and costing the Mexican government and U.S. businesses millions of dollars (Treaster 1988). When the Federal Electoral Commission finally announced, over a week after the election, that Salinas had indeed won the election, but only by just over 50 percent of the vote, a devastatingly—and suspiciously-- slim margin for a party that had never garnered less than 70 percent of the vote in presidential elections, Cardenas called for a protest rally in Mexico City. The demonstration drew over 200,000 people to the streets of the capitol, a city that the PRI had lost in the elections, and Cardenas supporters jeered effigies of Salinas and chanted “Salinas Lies, Cardenas is President!” (Rohter 1988). Shortly thereafter, Cardenas embarked on a six-week post-election campaign throughout Mexico, which he christened his “journey for democracy and respect for popular sovereignty,” and at rallies where he was introduced

as “the President-elect of the Mexican people,” called for protests and civil disobedience to challenge the election results (Rohter 1988).

The events in Mexico reverberated across the border. Coverage of controversial electoral results was featured on the front pages of major U.S newspapers, and analysts fretted over what the close electoral contest would mean for Mexico’s commitment to repaying its debt and sticking to its a grueling austerity program (Rohter 1988; Kissinger 1988). The embryonic network of Mexican and Mexican-American Cardenas supporters went into high gear and organized protests against the results in cities throughout California and the Southwest, with the most dramatic mobilizations occurring in Los Angeles in the form of mass demonstrations and daily picketing outside the Mexican consulate (Dressner 1993; Martinez Saldaña 2002). Cardenas took his post-election campaign to the United States, and in 1989 began a tour of American cities to advance his cause. The head of the newly formed Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD – Partido Revolucionario Democrático), a consolidated version of the PND, traveled to meet supporters in California and Southwest (Reinhold 1989). Through his barnstorming, Cardenas energized the Mexican and Mexican-American democracy movement that had rallied behind him, and helped transform the spontaneous political mobilization into the formal branch of PRD of the United States, with strong bases in California and Illinois (Dressner 1993; Martinez Saldaña 2002; Interviews, Chicago, August 2003). Cardenas appealed forcefully to Mexican workers, potential members of the PRD political machine in the U.S., decrying Mexican government neglect, and calling for a reform in Mexican electoral law that would allow migrants to cast absentee ballots. Large numbers of Mexican migrants responded to the reiteration of this proposal, which he had first made during his pre-election campaign, with enthusiastic support, while the PRI, from Mexico, derided the idea as a threat to national sovereignty, claiming that it would give the U.S. inappropriate and dangerous influence of Mexican political outcomes. (Santamaria Gomez 1994).

During his post-election campaign circuit in north of the border, Cardenas also met with Chicano community leaders and politicians, including Senator Joseph Montoya, and United States government representatives, including California state controller and future governor Gray Davis, former governor Jerry Brown, and Jesse Jackson

(Santamaria Gomez 1994: 182-202). The Mexican opposition leader also traveled to Washington for meetings with various think tanks and toured prominent universities like Harvard and MIT, where the politician was introduced as “the legitimate president of Mexico,” and gave speeches about the ramifications of the Mexican elections for the nation’s political future (Santamaria Gomez 1994: 182-202). Mexican political analyst Jorge Casteñeda concluded in 1989 that: “No other Mexican politician has moved masses in the United States like Cardenas” (*Proceso*, November 1989, qtd. in Santamaria Gomez 1994: 202).

The political in-roads that Cardenas was making in the U.S. jolted Salinas and the PRI machine into action. Despite the PRI’s dismissal of Cardenas supporters as “naïve” (Lopez Pescador, Consul of Los Angeles, November 1988, qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 183) and its accusations that Cardenas’ actions were “seditious⁵⁷” (*Uno mas uno*, December 88, qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 286), the mass anti-PRI rallies in cities throughout the U.S., coupled the warm reception that the opposition leader received at major American political and intellectual institutions, made unequivocally clear that the Cardenas campaign had transformed the United States into a staging area for Mexican politics (Dresser 1993; Martinez Saldaña 2002; Ramírez Paredes 1991). As Lopez Pescador, consul in Los Angeles at the height of the anti-PRI demonstrations, reflected, “[the protest activities] led to an awakening in Mexican political circles. The Mexican government realized that there [were] many anti-PRI Mexicans living in California who return[ed] periodically to their communities and [had] influence in Mexico” (qtd. in Dresser 1993: 94). Furthermore, the PRD was quickly gaining credence as an important political actor and ally for Mexican-American organizations: “we knew that the PRD, and PRD cells, had gained a lot of ground in the Mexican-American community,” notes one program officer under Salinas (Interview, Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, Mexico City, May 2005). Salinas, with his party behind him, was determined not cede the emerging political territory north of the border to his rival. Months before assuming the office of president, Salinas and his staff began a series of high-level meetings with

⁵⁷ In addition to calling him seditious, the PRI senators that levied this charge also accused the opposition leader of “a lack of professional and political ethics, and compared him to those who had gone to Maximilliam of Hamsburg [and asked him] to come and govern [Mexico]” (*Uno mas uno*, December 1988, qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 186)

Mexican-American leaders, which, in a break with Mexican state tradition, also included a handful of Mexican emigrants, most of them established entrepreneurs (Santamaría Gómez 1994: 182-202; Interview, Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, Mexico City, May 2005; Reinhold 1989).

Initially, the goal of the PRI's renewed engagement with Mexican-Americans, and of its nascent interaction with Mexican immigrants was to recoup spheres of political influence lost to the PRD. Salinas revived and broadened the Mexican government's historically on-again, off-again *acercamiento* with Mexican-American groups in order to reinforce the exceedingly fragile legitimacy of his electoral victory, both in the Mexico and in the United States, and to neutralize the opposition movement that seemed to be gathering ominous momentum north of the border. Very quickly, however, that engagement evolved into a set of policy principles and programs that the Salinas administration would apply in its interactions with Mexican and Mexican-American communities in the United States, and that the Zedillo administration after it would continue. The central tenet that emerged in this area was the distinction between Mexican-American and Mexican migrants. After a brief period of engaging with both groups and of conflating them often in gross oversimplifications, the Salinas administration began to see them as fundamentally different, with different political values for Mexico and for the PRI.

For the Mexican state, Mexican-Americans were, without a doubt, the political prize to be captured: they were a segment of the United States population with increasing political and economic clout, they were represented by several large and established organizations, and they could serve as an "ideal vehicle" – in the words of Salinas' Foreign Secretary Solana (qtd. in Reinhold 1989)– to press for Mexico's interests in the United States. Mexican emigrants, on the other hand, had only moderate political value to the Mexican government. Their grievances had to be addressed, if only to dampen the opposition's appeal and organizing drive amongst them. However, without voting rights in Mexico or in the United States, they were of consequence to the Mexican government primarily as a vehicle through which the Mexican state could access and strengthen its relationship with Mexican-Americans, both in the present and in the future. For the

Mexican government, Mexican emigrants, including the upwards of 3 million newly legalized *rodinos*, were essentially a means to an end.

In its policies, the Salinas administration developed a blatantly bifurcated approach, echoing past Mexican policy. With Mexican Americans, Salinas reopened the interpretive conversations that had sputtered along under his predecessors, and fortified them by carving out a dedicated department in the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs charged with maintaining and augmenting them. Through their interpretive engagement, Mexican-American groups and the Mexican state revived concepts articulated during their earlier interactions of the 1970s and early 1980s, reinterpreted them, and created institutions to support and implement them. The most central of these notions was the definition of Mexican-Americans as a lobby in United States that could push for Mexicans interests, especially, under Salinas, the passage of NAFTA. In their approach to Mexican migrants, by contrast, the Salinas and Zedillo administrations limited their engagement to the provision of services. Mexican migrants were reduced to mere recipients of state policy, and were rarely involved in the process of its development.

Reaching out: Program for Mexican Communities Abroad

Within less than a year of taking office, Salinas de Gortari announced the creation of the Program for Mexican Communities Abroad (Programa para Comunidades Mexicanas en el Extranjero –PCME) and apportioned a directorate in the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs to manage it. The PCME, a program umbrella that would become the federal government’s most important policy tool in its approach toward Mexican-Americans and Mexican migrants living in the state during both the Salinas and Zedillo administrations, grew out of the engagement that Salinas restarted with Mexican-Americans after his very controversial election. A year of dedicated attempts to woo Mexican-American leaders and organizations back into an engagement with the Mexican government after several years of neglect finally culminated in two major meetings in the fall of 1989, one in Tijuana and one in Washington, D.C. At both gatherings, attended by prominent Mexican-Americans as well as a few Mexican emigrants, the Mexican president emphasized the importance his administration attached to its relationship with Mexican-Americans, stressing the value of a rapprochement between the Mexican state

and Mexican origin communities for the construction of friendlier national ties between the United States and its southern neighbor. At the Tijuana meeting, Salinas underscored the significance that a revived acercamiento with Mexican-Americans could have for a redefinition of Mexico's relationship with the United States:

Without false antagonisms and for our mutual benefit, our two countries will find new areas of compromise and collaboration. [Our] rapprochement ... occurs at a juncture in the relationship between Mexico and the United States that is especially interesting.

(Tijuana, September 14, 1989, qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 209-210).

Mexican-American leaders responded to the government overtures with some reticence, expressing their concern that the Salinas administration, just like its predecessors, was reaching out to the Mexican-American community at a moment of political crisis and would callously sever the ties it had established the moment Mexican-Americans raised issues that the regime found threatening (Interviews, Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, Mexico City, May 2005; Reinhold 1989; Santamaría Gómez 1994: 210-211; DGMCE1990). They insisted that Salinas government institutionalize its engagement with the Mexican origin population in the United States, and create a formal program to host it: "one of the main conclusions [of these meetings]," reports Mexican government account, "was that the relationship should be made more systematic, permanent, that things should not remain as they were, vulnerable to changes in administration and dependent the goodwill of a few isolated groups in Mexico and the United States" (DGCME 1990). The PCME was the Mexican government's response.

Formally launched January 2, 1990, the PCME and the Dirección General para las Comunidades Mexicanas en El Extranjero (DGCME), the office that managed it, began with an extremely vague mandate. The Salinas administration did not have a clear idea of how to institutionalize its engagement with Mexican-Americans, and the staff tasked with carrying out the assignment had had no contact with Mexican origin communities abroad. As a former PCME staff member bluntly put it, "the people who were put in charge of the program had no exposure to the topic. They had never dealt with the issues. The reaction was 'how do I make heads or tails of this?' (*con qué se come esto?*) Who are these people? What do they want? What do they think?" (Interview, Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, Mexico City, May 2005). The official memo that created the PCME's reflects this confusion: it stated generally that the mission of the

program and of the DGCME was “to attend to Mexican communities abroad and to strengthen government links with them, given the singular resource they represent in this new stage of the bilateral relationship with the United States” (DGMCE 1990). The program goals were similarly amorphous, and referred broadly to “the promotion of social relationships, the promotion of economic relationships, and planning and evaluation” (DGMCE 1990: 14-17). Throughout, the blurred PCME blueprint reiterates the need to open venues for increased communication, as a means for program staff to familiarize themselves with Mexican origin communities and to bring the implications of their mandate into sharper focus: in short, to figure out what to do (DCMCE 1990).

The PCME program staff began scheduling a large number of meetings with Mexican-American and Mexican migrant groups in the U.S., at which the DGCME consulted with them about the direction the PCME should take (DGCME n.d.; Diaz de Colossio 1990). As a former program officer in the DGCME remembered:

The first thing that we did was to visit a large number of communities in the United States, *in situ*, and to ask, “if you were tasked with designing a program for Mexicans Abroad, what would you do? Because we don’t want to sit at a desk and try to decide what it is that you want or you need.” This was very healthy, because not only did it permit us to understand the needs with which we could begin to interact and address, and to look for mutual collaboration and benefits, but it also enabled a lot of people to learn about the program, and to get to know the director, and begin to trust him, as a person that came to them for the first time and asked, what shall we do and how shall we do it together. (Interview, Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, Mexico City, May 2005).

The interpretive conversations initiated in these meeting proved an invaluable foundation for the new program. They allowed DGCME staff to become acquainted with Mexican and Mexican-American communities in the United States, equipping them with a more grounded sense of the constituency their program was created to address, but also developing a rapport that would allow for the generation of new insights about the relationship between the Mexican government and Mexican origin communities in the United States. “The program wasn’t something perfectly designed, planned by a group of experts, that decided that they were going to do this or that,” explained a former PCME program officer:

No! It came out of the process, because the people involved were interested and open.... That was how it was. We didn't have a plan, we just took baby steps, and figured it out along the way. With obstacles along the way, of course, we stumbled a lot. But what I want to say is that the program was created because of the people involved and their commitment to the issue and to the journey, not because of an existing institutional framework. (Interview, Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, Mexico City, May 2005).

Articulating a taxonomy: Mexican-Americans and Mexican migrants

The cardinal insight that the DGCME gleaned from its tour of Mexican communities in the United States – a tour that the director called “ a voyage of wonder and discovery” (Diaz de Colossio, October 19, 1990) -- was that Mexican-Americans and Mexican migrants were two fundamentally dissimilar constituencies, with whom engagement had radically different ramifications for Mexico and for Mexico's relationship with the United States (Interviews, Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, Mexico City, May 2005). After conflating Mexican-Americans and Mexican migrants in the early stages of program development – early program documents evidence a persistent slippage between two populations, generally describing the profile of longstanding Mexican-American communities and tagging on Mexican migrants as an afterthought (see DGCME 1990; DGCME 1990a for examples) – program officers began to distinguish between the two groups (Interviews, Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, Mexico City, May 2003). The DGCME ultimately determined that, in Mexico's quest to develop its political and economic ties with the United States, migrants were essentially a liability whereas Mexican-American were an untapped resource. The needs that Mexican migrants enumerated in meetings with DGCME staff – assistance in regularizing their legal status, defense of their rights as workers and protection from excessive exploitation, access to basic health and education services – put the Mexican government in a quandary: migrant grievances could not be addressed fully without raising the delicate question of migration – especially undocumented migration -- and the treatment of migrant workers with United States authorities (Interview, Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, Mexico City, May 2005; Gonzalez Gutierrez 1993; Santamaría Gómez 1994: 182-214). Moreover, Mexican migrants could levy little

political influence in the United States: they could not vote, had little positive effect on public opinion, and their level of political mobilization was weak, especially once anti-PRI mobilization behind Cardenas had started to disintegrate after the electoral fervor died down (Martinez Saldaña 2002; Dressner 1993; Gonzalez Gutierrez 1993). (By 1990, reports Martinez Saldaña, the PRD network in California had lost much of its strength, and numerous meetings with Cardenas on subsequent visits to the US were cancelled because of low attendance (2002: 232-242).) Mexican migrants were, as the former administrator to the PCME bluntly assessed, “poor and disenfranchised” (Gonzalez Gutierrez 1993: 222).

Mexican-Americans, on the other hand, were, as the same PCME officer put it, “aware of their political and economic power...and willing to exercise it” (Gonzalez Gutierrez 1993: 222). Not only could Mexican-Americans vote, but they had organized accomplished civil rights organizations that had successfully pushed for legislation to fight systemic discrimination. Their growing political clout was increasingly being matched by their rising purchasing power and economic status (Gonzalez Gutierrez 1993: 222-223; DGCME 1991). Moreover, as detailed in several DGCME papers (1990-1992 mimeos), they were a population forecasted to grow in number and in influence. As a result, Mexican-Americans, with their connections to their ancestral homeland, were uniquely placed to rehabilitate Mexico’s image in the United States, badly battered by the accusations of wholesale electoral fraud⁵⁸ (DGCME 1990; Dresser 1993). Finally, Mexican-American intellectuals and community leaders had, in the late 1970s, presciently begun articulating proposals for a reforms in the rapport between the U.S. and Mexico that, in early 1990s, were poised to redefine the bilateral relationship radically and irrevocably (Zazueta 1983: 481, note 80). Most centrally, Chicano activists had raised the idea of a common market between the two countries, only to be brusquely rebuffed by the Lopez Portillo administration (Zazueta 1983: 481, note 80; Santamaría Gómez 1994). At a time when Mexico was negotiating the reduction of trade barriers with the United States and seriously contemplating the creation of North American free

⁵⁸ See Dresser (1993) for more detail on the lengths to which the Salinas administration went to rehabilitate its image and to establish the legitimacy of Salinas’s election. These included, for example, the dispatch of Mexican government officials to the headquarter of major U.S. media outlet to press for “more balanced” coverage of Mexican politics (1993: 92).

trade area, Mexican American conceptual development of the idea, and political support for it from some Mexican-American camps, became invaluable.

Serving Mexican emigrants

As the DGCME began to differentiate between Mexican migrants and Mexican-Americans, the PCME program activities began to branch off in two different directions, one which addressed the needs of Mexican migrants and the other which cultivated a substantive engagement with Mexican-Americans. In its approach to Mexican migrants, the DGCME focused on providing services, largely through local consulates, in areas that were politically innocuous, steering clear of migrants' working and living conditions in the United States and of the economic constraints in Mexico that compelled many migrants to cross the border the first place. The goal of these services was two-fold: first, to minimize the negative impacts of labor emigration on communities of origin in Mexico, and second, and more important, to preserve migrants' cultural and political ties to Mexico as a way of accessing the political and economic clout of their Mexican-Americans descendants (Interviews, SRE, Mexico City, May 2003; Interviews, Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, Mexico City, May 2003). As Gonzalez Gutierrez, program officer for the PCME in Los Angeles stated, the program was part of "a long term strategy to use the generation of Rodinos to build bridges to the Mexican diaspora's future generations"⁵⁹(1993: 233).

Concretely, the PCME extended support to Mexican migrants in three main realms: health, education, and the promotion of sports and cultural activities. In the area of health, the PCME focused primarily on the diffusion of public health information on communicable diseases like HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, and on monitoring their epidemiological advance in amongst migrants as well as in their communities of origin in

⁵⁹ The DGCME proposal for "Academic Interchange" refers to this function of *rodinos* more explicitly. The documents reads as follows: "Mexican-origin communities in the United States have acquired a great importance in the last few years. A few numbers suffice to illustrate this. 3.4 million Mexicans applied for amnesty under the Simpson-Rodino law; 1.6 million have applied under SAW...Since many of them are heads of households, and had already or have recently brought their families to join them in the United States, we can estimate conservatively that there are about 10 million Mexican living in the United States....What influence will they have on us in twenty years? If we count their descendants as well as new emigrants, they can grow to 30 or 40 million people" (DGCME, April 28, 1990). Observations such as these about Rodinos abound in early DGCME documents (1990-1992).

Mexico. Additionally, the PCME also lent some support to rural clinics that served migrant workers and their families. With regards to education, the PCME dedicated resources to promote bilingual education, targeting the children of Mexican migrants in particular, in an effort to preserve their linguistic affiliation with Mexico but also, building on research which suggested that proficiency in one language facilitated the acquisition of a second, to ensure that they performed well in English-language school systems so that they could climb the U.S. socio-economic ladder. The PCME organized a number of training sessions and exchanges for American teachers and distributed pedagogical material to schools and other educational centers in the United States. Finally, to preserve Mexican migrants cultural identification with their homeland, the PCME sponsored a series of cultural and sports events, including a bi-national soccer tournament in which Mexican teams on both side of the border competed for the gold cup, and supported the traditional nationalistic festivities organized by the consulate. (Gonzalez Gutierrez et al. 1998; DGCME 1990b, 1990c; *La Paloma*, Issues 7-22; January 1992-January 1995).

The process by which the DGCME designed these services was distinctly analytic. The PCME program staff evaluated Mexican migrant needs based on their relatively limited interactions with them, as well as on information they received from consular offices, and then elaborated a gamut of services to meet them. Mexican migrants were not involved in the process of program formulation in any meaningful way: a clear distinction was maintained between the PCME program staff that retained control over the design of the services, and migrants who were their beneficiaries. As a result of this divide, the programs reflected Mexican government *perceptions* of the migrant needs that were designed to address more closely than they responded to actual constraints that migrants experienced. In the realm of education, for example, migrants expressed more interest in receiving assistance in English proficiency than in developing their Spanish skills, both for themselves because of the edge it would give them in U.S. labor markets and for their children because of the boost it would give them as they tried to integrate themselves in U.S. schools. Nevertheless, the PCME focused almost exclusively on programs to promote Spanish competence (Interviews, SRE, Mexico City, May 2003; Interviews, Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, Mexico City, May

2003.) Another striking instance of this disconnect is the Programa Paisano, an intervention deployed by a related office in the Mexican government, the National Migration Institute, and drawn up in partnership with the DGCME, and based on the same information sources that the DGCME used as it was designing PCME services for migrants. The Paisano program was crafted as a preventive program against abuses by Mexican customs authorities against migrants, an intervention prompted in part because of Zacatecas Governor Borrego's lobbying of the Federal Government (Interview, Borrego, Mexico City, May 2003; Interviews, SRE, Mexico City, May 2003). However, in a blatant reflection of the government's patronizing definition of migrant needs, the program focused exclusively on returning migrants, and did nothing to address the extortion and mistreatment of migrants who were exiting Mexico, leaving them vulnerable to racketeering by customs officials in cahoots with migrant smugglers – known as coyotes. As Mexican government evaluation of human rights violations against Mexican migrants conceded, "it would seem that the problem lies basically in the fact that the design of the "Paisano" program involved the assumption... that the migrants that enter and leave are different individuals" (Mexican National Human Rights Commission 1992: 46-47).

The state appraisal of the Paisano program illustrates another feature of the analytic approach used by the Mexican federal government in designing programs for Mexican migrants. The PCME programs were subject to repeated evaluations. With each round of assessment, the programs were both narrowed and standardized. At the beginning of the PCME, consulates were afforded a fair amount of discretion in how they wanted to implement PCME services, adapting the educational or cultural programs to the specific characteristics of the community they were serving (well-established urban migrants communities in places like Los Angeles had very different needs than those based around food processing plants in the rural Midwest, for example) but by the final years of the Zedillo administration, the interventions had been made so uniform, with the room for local improvisation and adaptation edited out, that consular offices began discretely rebelling against them. Consular staff quietly abandoned or circumvented many PCME programs. (Interviews, Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, Mexico City, May 2003; Interview, SRE, Mexico City, May 2003).

Engaging with Mexican-Americans

In dramatic contrast to its approach with Mexican migrants, the DGCME took pains to maintain and cultivate its interpretive engagement with Mexican-Americans, initiating and re-initiating conversations with Mexican-American leaders and organizations. In the context of the PCME, the DGCME continued to meet intensively with Mexican-American organizations, calling for their reactions to DGCME proposals, soliciting their suggestions on how to enhance the relationship between the Mexican government and Mexican-Americans, and asking for their perspectives on the meaning that such a relationship could have for their communities as well as for Mexico as a nation. DGCME director Roger Diaz de Colossio's entreaty to the National Council of La Raza, at a Washington gathering, typified his overture to Mexican-American groups; "Our futures are inextricably linked," he asserted:

Without a doubt, it is to our mutual benefit to work closely together,
We still have many things to learn and relationships to develop. We need your guidance
and your suggestions on how to proceed. We have so many things to do and, to repair
years of neglect, we have to do them very fast. We will be listening to your ideas and
will be enriched by them. (Diaz de Colossio, July 16, 1990)

The Mexican government reinforced its outreach to Mexican-Americans with myriad goodwill gestures: it bestowed the Aztec Eagle medal of honor on several Mexican-American community leaders; it sponsored a number of conferences on Mexican-American issues, in the United States and in Mexico, including a Festival of La Raza in three border cities; it underwrote several gallery exhibits and musical performances; and began publishing *La Paloma*, a bilingual newsletter recapping exchanges between Mexican-Americans and the Mexican government (its circulation would grow to three-quarter of a million exemplars per issue) (*La Paloma*, No.1-3, September 1990 – February 1991). Beyond these symbolic activities, however, the PCME program for Mexican-Americans remained extremely nebulous, and would be defined only through the conversations that the Mexican state had with Mexican Americans. Their interpretive engagement would generate three successive waves of insights: first, their conversations produced precise understandings of the potential and dimensions of a possible Mexican origin lobby in the United States; second, they brought to the surface operational insights

about how to mobilize that lobby for specific political goals; and third, they demonstrated how the PRI's increasingly political vulnerability only reinforced the historical limits of the Mexican government's – and the PRI's – commitment to an engagement with Mexican American communities.

Mapping Mejjamérica

While the notion of Mexican-Americans acting as a lobby for Mexico had circulated since the late 1970s under Lopez Portillo, the Mexican government had always been a recalcitrant participant in its envisioning. Under the Salinas administration, the DGCME reversed that historical reluctance and through its engagement with Mexican-Americans, developed an accurate picture of the political possibility that such a lobby could represent. Through its engagement with Mexican-Americans, the Mexican government retrieved and reinterpreted a defining notion of the Chicano movement of the 1960s and 1970s-- that the Chicano people constituted a nation, a homeland which they called Aztlan⁶⁰, one which transcended political boundaries but where Chicanos were “free and sovereign,” bound above all—and above all laws -- by a duty to their people and their collective future (Gonzalez 1999; Gómez Quiñonez 1990; Santamaría Gómez 1994). The DGCME appropriated the concept of “a Mexican nation in the United States,” a national entity that was distinct from both Mexico and the United States, but renamed the homeland “Mejjamérica” and stripped it of its message of political resistance, defining nation instead as a “group of persons of the same ethnic origin, that generally speak the same language, and that have a common tradition” (DGCME September 11, 1990 & 1991). Based on this gloss of a Chicano concept, the Mexican government reformulated its outreach to Mexican-Americans as a clear foreign policy strategy rather than as a community outreach activity—a foreign policy strategy that was “of the highest national importance ...for the preservation of [Mexican] national sovereignty and for our prosperity in the coming century” (DGCME September 11, 1990). The DGCME informed Mexico's consuls that “Mejjamérica should be one of the

⁶⁰ As described the document that launched the idea, “The Spiritual Plan of Aztlan,” unveiled at a national convention of Chicano youth in 1969, Aztlan was quite literally viewed as a nation: “Before all the world,” closed the manifesto, “before all of North America, before all of our brothers in the bronze continent, we are a nation, we are a union of free pueblos, we are a nation, we are a union of free pueblos, we are Aztlan” (qtd. in Santamaría Gómez 1994: 15; Gonzales 1999: 204-205)

most favored nations for our country in its relationships of cooperation,” and that indeed, “[Mexico’s] independent future [was] at stake” (September 11, 1990).

Through its accermiento with “Mejiamérica,” and more directly, through its engagement with its Mexican-American “inhabitants,” the Mexican government was able to map out the rhetorical homeland. PCME program documents began to reflect a new comprehension of the crucial role that grassroots organizing, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, had played in the definition of a Chicano identity and in the development of the political base associated with it. The program memos expressed an explicit understanding of the fact that Mexican-American political leverage was not a natural or inevitable product of their growing numbers. To its recognition of the legal and political victories of the Chicano movement, it added a more sophisticated grasp of the historic processes of community mobilization through which Mexican-American had wrested their policy power and of the ways those processes, and the identities on which they were based, were still changing and on-going. “First as pachucos, then as chicanos, then as la raza unida, and now as Hispanics, they struggle to obtain the place that they deserve in North American society, a place that is proportional to their growing numbers and economic power” summed up one DGCME memo on the topic (DGCME 1991). Additionally, the Mexican government, already wise to the general potential that a Mexican-American lobby could represent, began to describe with acuity, unprecedented for the historically disinterested Mexican government, the specific leverage that Mexican-Americans could apply to affect political outcomes. DGCME reports refer, for example, to the fact that Mexican-Americans could provide swing votes in states like California or Texas with large electoral colleges and could, thus, determine the outcome of an American presidential election (DCGME 1991; DGCME September 11, 1990). Finally, PCME program documents began to reflect a recognition, articulated since the late 1970s amongst Chicano activists (“being Chicano is not being Mexicano” (de la Garza 1980: 575), that Mexican-Americans had developed a distinct set of cultural identities that were Mexican in affinity but hybrid at their core. However, the PCME papers also note that an essential part of that Mexican-American identity was an enduring longing and search for one’s Mexican cultural roots – “[Mexican-Americans] have an enormous desire...to be recognized in the land of their ancestors, which, for so many

years, treated them with contempt and forgot them” notes one PCME dispatch (DGCME September 11, 1990) – and that an essential part of building a relationship with “Mejiamérica” was responding to that need⁶¹. Significantly, the PCME papers also add the government could – and should -- respond to those cultural needs by forging economic ties with Mexican-Americans; and connecting Hispanic Chambers of Commerce and Mexican American entrepreneurs with Mexican business partners and banks quickly emerged as a major axis of PCME program activities (La Paloma, No. 1-7, dates; DGCME cites).

Based on the Mexican government’s rendering of “Mejiamérica,” Mexican-American organizations, in turn, gleaned new understandings of the potential that a collaboration with Mexico held for them as a political and economic group on the rise. In Mexican state recognition of the history of Mexican-American community organizing, Mexican-American groups saw the possibilities in recruiting Mexican state help in organizing lobbying drives (DGCME xxxx). Likewise, in the Mexican government’s eager analysis of sources of Mexican-American political influence, several Mexican-American organizations and leaders became aware of their bargaining power with the Mexican government and of their ability to petition Mexico for support on a range of political issues that affected Latino constituents (Acuña 1996: 231-254; Dresser 1993). Finally, in Mexico’s recognition of Mexican-American unique cultural identity and its overtures to Mexican-American business interests, Mexican-American entrepreneurs as well as a quorum of Mexican-American political organizations began to see the possibility of returning to their roots through investment (Rizo 1993). As relatively haphazard efforts to reduce trade barriers between Mexico and United States began to coalesce into a concrete proposal for a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA),

⁶¹ The DGCME was emphatic about the strategic importance of Mexican-American cultural longing to the Mexican government. In a dispatch to consuls, the DGCME cautioned: “If we do not engage with them now, if we do not carry out projects that are of mutual interest, we will lose Mexican-Americans for good because they will end up incorporating themselves into Anglo-Saxon society that discriminated against them but that gives them opportunities to work and to climb the socio-economic ladder. And they will incorporate themselves with resentment. Resentment, not against their poor relatives in Mexico, but toward the government and the Mexican institutions that never acknowledged them. This will be true, regardless of whether these institutions are the consulates, the service providers in the tourism sector, the police that docks them, the businessmen that won’t receive them. They will feel resentment toward us because we smirk with contempt at the Spanish that they speak and don’t realize that they were mistreated at school every time that they spoke it.” (September 11, 1990).

the insights that emerged out of the interpretive engagement between the Mexican government and Mexican-Americans would prove critical in drawing up a strategy to get the free trade compact passed in the US congress.

Operationalizing the lobby and passing NAFTA

In June 1990, Presidents George Bush and Carlos Salinas publicly announced their intention to pursue a free trade agreement between the United States and Mexico, and when Canada formally joined the negotiations in early 1991, the debate over a North American Free Trade Agreement began in earnest (Kehoe 1994; Mayer 2001). The Salinas administration beefed up its lobbying efforts in Washington dramatically, soon flexing “the most visible [international] lobbying muscle in Washington” (Dresser 1993: 93): in a matter of months, Mexico tripled the lobbying contracts it registered with the Department of Justice, and dispatched a small army of its own lobbyists and lawyers who “regaled [U.S.] lawmakers with the country’s efforts to modernize its economy, environment, and working conditions” (Dresser 1993: 93; Velazco 1997). To this lobbying blitz, the Mexican government added efforts to enroll the support of Mexican-American political and business groups for the proposed trade agreement. Before long, this turned into a collaborative enterprise, in which the Salinas administration and a quorum of Mexican-American leaders and organizations worked together to mount a targeted campaign to persuade Mexican-Americans that a free trade agreement was in their interest, and thus, bring Latino political influence to bear on NAFTA deliberations in the United States. The Mexican government and its Mexican-American allies jointly strategized about how to operationalize the insights that emerged through their renewed engagement in order to build a formidable Mexican lobby north of the border.

The DGCME orchestrated these consultations, with the PCME program staff traveling to meeting with Mexican-American business organizations and politicians. The Mexican office advanced the idea that Mexican-Americans stood to gain the most from NAFTA, arguing that the agreement “basically involves small and medium-size [sic] companies pursuing growth opportunities” (*La Paloma*, No. 4, March-April 1991), and in an interpretation based on its view of “Mejiamérica,” that “the Hispanic community will be a natural bridge between the U.S. and Mexico because of their natural advocacy,

cultural roots and knowledge of the language” (Diaz de Colossio, June 4, 1991). Their Mexican-American interlocutors countered that while the symbolism of the bridge was seductive, the Mexican government needed to do the grassroots organizing and high-stakes lobbying work amongst Mexican-Americans to construct it. More concretely, prominent Mexican-American leaders – including José Niño, Executive Director of the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Congressman Bill Richardson, and Raul Yzaguirre, Director of the National Council of La Raza among others—gave the Mexican government specific advice about how to intensify and to raise the profile of its lobbying efforts among Mexican-American community groups (DGCME, Internal memos, January 1991). For example, they suggested that Salinas meet personally with Mexican-American business groups, that the Mexican government invite Mexican-American organizations to Mexico for consultations with state offices that could address their specific concerns about the trade agreement, and that DGCME broaden its message past a narrow focus on Mexican-Americans to include Hispanics in general. An internal DGCME summed up the admonition it received as follows: “the message we received was that we should work this year more intensively with groups of political leaders and that at times the exclusively Mexican message that we project is at odds with the stage of political development of [Mexican-American] groups in the United States, where they have been trying for several years to integrate themselves as Hispanics” (Diaz de Colossio, January 16, 1991).

In response, Salinas, already planning to travel to the U.S. in April 1991 for a summit meeting with Bush, added several meetings with Mexican-American organizations and a string of appearances at Mexican-American community events to his agenda. Additionally, shortly after the president’s return, the Mexican government held a high-profile conference on NAFTA in Mexico City for Hispanic leaders, including representatives of Puerto Rican and Cuban organizations. The gathering was an opportunity for influential Latinos to consult with Salinas and other high-ranking members of his government, but it also provided a setting for those in attendance to cross Democratic and Republican party lines and strategize together about how to resolve differences over the trade agreement – particularly concerns over its impact on the environment and on workers – and mobilize the necessary support among Hispanics to

steer the pact through the U.S. congress. As one Hispanic politician observed, “True bipartisanship is occurring right here in Mexico City” (*La Paloma*, No. 4, April-May 1991). So successful was the conference that the Mexican government repeated the event every year until NAFTA’s ratification, and backed up the annual gathering with a packed schedule of individual appointments with Latino groups. Through these meetings and related networking activities, the Mexican government was gradually constructing the political truss to hold up the bridge that it claimed Mexican-Americans would be in an age of NAFTA. It also added economic cantilevers to the bridge that it claimed Mexican-American would be between the two nations: Salinas pledged \$20 million for joint business ventures between U.S. Latinos and Mexican nationals (Acuña 1996; 242). (*La Paloma*, No. 4-17, April 1991-January 1994; DGCME, Internal memos, 1991-1993).

Encouraged by the outcome of the high-level meetings with Latino groups, the Mexican government elaborated a program to institutionalize the political lobby it had assembled. In late 1991, the DGCME launched program to establish Mexican Cultural Institutes throughout the United States. The Institutes, their innocuous and somewhat misleading cultural designation notwithstanding, were set up, according to PCME program documents, as organizations that would make Mexico’s “policy of accerimiento permanent,” and that, significantly, would serve as “new instruments of political action” that would “promote [Mexico’s] national interests through political dialogue with Mexican origin communities in the United States” (Diaz de Colossio, DGCME, July 1991). Structurally, the Institutes were established as non-profit organizations, jointly funded by private donations and the Mexican government, directed by a Mexican government appointee (often the local consul), but advised by a board of directors composed of prominent Mexican Americans. The Institutes were networked in a sort of decentralized political action group, and the leadership of the soon-to-be twenty centers was brought together for bi-annual meetings with the Mexican government – with both high-ranking officials and consuls – to bring their activities in line with Mexican state priorities. The Mexican government had grand ambition for this web of lobbying instruments; as Diaz de Colossio, director of the DGCME, asserted about the role the Institutes could play and about the influence they could wield, “the only limit is our

imagination” (cite). (*La Paloma*, No. 5-25, July 1991-August 1995; Interviews, SRE, Mexico City, May 2003; Interviews, Consulate, Chicago, August 2003).

How critical a role Mexican government lobbying efforts played in ensuring NAFTA’s passage through the U.S. congress is difficult to establish and still a matter of considerable debate (Gonzalez Gutierrez 19xx, De la Garza 1997; Acuña 1996). What does seem to be clear is that Mexican state effort did have some impact, while it may not have been decisive. The Salinas administration's effectiveness in organizing of segments of Mexican-Americans, and of Hispanics more broadly, into a pro-NAFTA lobby left an imprint on the compromises Clinton struck to override labor and environment opposition to the trade pact. The most significant of these was the creation of the North-American Development Bank (NADbank): the bank was designed to finance environmental infrastructure and economic development projects along the 2,000 mile border, but was also authorized to fund “economic adjustment” to NAFTA in communities in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. The NADbank was proposed by Mexican-American lawmakers and activists as a means to the level the income disparity between Mexican workers and those north of the border, but as Acuña notes, it was also viewed as a means to continue to “build a power base for Chicanos” (1996:247).

The Zapatista rebellion, Proposition 187, and the collapse of a lobby

While NAFTA’s ratification may have pointed to the Mexican government’s success in organizing a Mexican lobby in the United States, the events that occurred once the trade pact went into effect made clear that Mexico couldn’t maintain a lobby without confronting the issues that had caused the Mexican government to break off its periodic accercamiento with Mexican origin communities in the past. More specifically, the Mexican government could not sustain its engagement with Mexican-Americans unless the state addressed their criticism of the PRI’s seven decade monopoly hold on power, and unless it dealt with the question of migration in all of its aspects, from the treatment of migrant workers in the United States to the state policies that compounded the economic underdevelopment of migration sending communities.

On January 1, 1994, the day the NAFTA went into effect, the Zapatistas rose up in revolt against the Mexican government in the southern state of Chiapas. With their

rebellion, they brought the limitations of Mexico's attempts to build a lobby to the surface. The Zapatistas, naming themselves after Zapata, Mexico's populist revolutionary leader, and armed with old rifles and wooden replicas, occupied the state capitol, San Cristóbal de las Casas, along with a number of smaller towns. They called for a repeal of NAFTA and end to the privatization of land. Salinas responded by sending the Mexican army to encircle and crush the rebellion (Davison 1994). Within days, Mexican and Mexican-American activists began protesting the harsh military response outside Mexican consulates throughout the United States in demonstrations that would continue for months, and by the 10th of January, Mexican-American activists had organized a delegation that traveled to Chiapas to document Mexican government human rights abuses against the rebels (Santamaría Gómez 1994: 332-335). The rebellion in Chiapas polarized the Mexican and Mexican-American communities in the United States. While support for NAFTA and the Salinas administration remained firm amongst a segment of Latino groups, the Zapatistas captivated Mexican and Mexican-American leftists, and confirmed the opposition many working class Latinos had toward NAFTA, lending credence to the misgivings that the Latino organizations that had supported the agreement's passage had quietly harbored. Moreover, just as it would in Mexico, support for the Zapatistas quickly morphed into a demand for electoral transparency in Mexico and for the end of the PRI's party dictatorship. Demonstrations in Mexico, at which protestors carrying signs reading "Electoral Revolution of the Country Will Rise Up" flooded the Zocalo in the capitol, were mirrored in cities north of the border (Santamaría Gómez 1994; Martinez Saldaña 2002; Houston Chronicle 1994). In a refrain of 1988, calls for electoral reform in Mexico soon broadened to include demands that Mexican migrants in the U.S. be afforded the ability to vote in the upcoming Mexican presidential election. To drive home their point, Mexican suffrage rights activists held parallel elections for the Mexican president in U.S. cities with large Mexican populations, most notably Los Angeles and Chicago, and thousands cast votes for their symbolic value. The Mexican government, through its engagement with Mexican communities in the United States, had once again laid itself open to challenges to its hegemony, and found itself fielding accusations that it had duped Mexican-American organizations with eloquent proclamations about political reform going hand-in-hand with the economic

reform that NAFTA would bring. (Silen 1995; Santamaría Gómez 1994 & 2001; Acuña 1996; Martínez Saldaña 2002; Calderon 2002).

The Mexican government's lack of response to Proposition 187, a virulently anti-immigrant legislative proposal on the 1994 ballot in California, revealed further problems with Mexico's lobby project. The proposition, titled "S.O.S – Save our state" and championed by California's governor Pete Wilson, would deprive undocumented immigrants of access to public services, including health and education, and would require social service providers to report the illegal status of immigrant clients to U.S. authorities so that they could be deported. The campaign for the initiative had been the most jingoistic mobilization in recent Californian history: with Wilson at the helm, the offensive called for "we Americans" to safeguard the state against "the invasion" of migrants, and ran television spots and newspaper advertisements that depicted Mexicans rushing the border under the heading "Every day they just keep coming" (Acuña 1996: 156-162). While the proposition targeted undocumented immigrants, the inflammatory rhetoric promoting the initiative made little distinction between Mexican-Americans, legal Mexican immigrants, and Mexicans who had crossed into the U.S. illegally, and Latinos throughout the state felt attacked. Mexican-Americans were bearing the brunt of tactics directed at Mexican migrants. In response to the crude racist trend that drove SOS, a broad spectrum of Mexican-American organizations joined forces with unions, social service providers, and democratic politicians to challenge the proposition. Mass demonstrations against SOS, drawing tens of thousands of protestors, took place in cities throughout California in the months leading up to the referendum on the measure, and participants waved the Mexican flag as they chanted against the initiative. When Proposition 187 finally came to a vote in November 1994, almost 80 percent of Latinos voted against the measure. Not an insignificant proportion of Mexican-Americans supported some or all of the measures in the proposition – polls a month before the referendum suggested that a little less than half of Latinos in the state, the overwhelming majority of which were Mexican-Americans, cast ballot in favor of 187 (Acuña 1996: 160) – but voted against it because of racist discourse attached to it. However, with Californians favoring the proposition by a two to one margin, 187 passed handily. (Acuña

1996; Santamaría Gómez 1994; Martínez Saldaña 2002; Gonzalez Gutierrez 1997; Olivares 1994)

Proposition 187 made jarringly clear that the position of Mexican-Americans in U.S. society and Mexican migration were inextricably linked. This was a connection that the Mexican government -- which had sidelined migrants in an effort to keep them invisible and which had built its strategy to create a Mexican lobby in the United States on a firm distinction between Mexican migrants and Mexican-Americans -- did its best to ignore. The Mexican government's silence on Proposition 187 and the anti-immigrant rhetoric that fueled its passage was deafening. Apart from officially registering its opposition to the measure on two occasions -- once when Governor Wilson attempted to attach anti-immigrant measures to NAFTA in 1993 and once during the heat of the campaign for the 187-- the Mexican government did nothing to slow the momentum of "SOS -- Save our state" (Robles 1994; Acuña 1996). The Mexican government's inaction stood in sharp and dismaying contrast to its intensive mobilization in favor of NAFTA, and the distance it maintained from Mexican-American organization battling the initiative and the racists propaganda associated with it was chilling when compared to the working alliances the Mexican state had forged with Mexican-American politicians and organization to get the trade pact ratified. The coverage the proposed legislation received in *La Paloma*, the government newsletter, only underscored the difference: compared to the pages upon pages devoted to meetings between the Mexican-American groups and the Mexican government and to the stacked columns that repeated redundant political pronouncements in favor of NAFTA, Proposition 187 received not a single line in all of 1994 (*La Paloma*, No. 1-21, September 1990-November 1994).

Instead of tackling the issues that had repeatedly caused the engagement between Mexico and Mexican communities abroad to fracture -- censure of the PRI's political hegemony and the question of Mexican migration -- the Mexican government, now under the leadership of Ernesto Zedillo, opted for its traditional response. It withdrew from any engagement with Mexican communities abroad that generated challenges for the regime. During the Zedillo sexenio, the Mexican government abandoned its organizing efforts to create a powerful Mexican lobby in the United States, and purposefully narrowed its engagement with Mexican-Americans to certain segments of that community --

specifically Mexican-American business interests and staunch supporters of Mexico's neoliberal economic turn. NAFTA had bound the fortunes of Mexico and the United States together, and that fact alone made a large organized Mexican lobby in the U.S. redundant. When Mexico's decision to let the peso float in December 1994 precipitated a financial meltdown and its worse economic crisis since the Great Depression, the United States needed little encouragement to put together a \$50 billion rescue package for its southern neighbor within a month (Lustig 1998). "Under Salinas, we built things up: there was a lot of activity, we created programs, new relationships, new institutions. Under Zedillo, we consolidated," tactfully concluded a program officer charged with emigrant affairs in the Secretariat of Foreign Relations (Interview, SRE, Mexico City, May 2003).

The Zedillo administration scaled down the outreach activities of the PCME, and tightened the reins on the institutions that embodied its engagement with Mexican-Americans. This was especially true for the Mexican Cultural Institutes. Despite the enduring rhetoric of the Institutes serving as a platform for community organizing, in practice, they reduced their already scant attention to working-class Mexican-Americans, focusing primarily on the Mexican-American elites that had been supportive of NAFTA. As a result, the throttled Institutes, in many cases under the firm control of local consuls, deteriorated into appendages of the consular system. Having turned away from one of the most important insights about "mejiamérica" – that it was constructed through grassroots mobilization – the institutes never grew into a vital base of political support for the Mexican government, and never became the dynamic networked lobby that the Salinas administration envisioned, after so many sexenios of Mexican government reticence. But they also never grew into a powerful political institution that could call the PRI to task, in any meaningful way, on its domination of the political system.

Under Zedillo, the Mexican government replaced its programmatic engagement with Mexican-Americans, mostly through the PCME, with a symbolic *acercamiento* with Mexican origin communities in the United States. In his National Development Plan for 1995-2000, Zedillo asserted that "the Mexican nation goes beyond the territory that is contained by the outlined borders" and referred to "*Mexico de Afuera*" in his speeches (Presidencia de la Republica, 1995, qtd. in Gonzalez Gutierrez 1997). After Proposition

187 sailed through the referendum in California, Zedillo pledged to “promote legal and constitutional reforms so that Mexicans can preserve their nationality, independent of the citizenship or residence they [have] adopted” and responded to a longstanding request by Mexican-American organizers that Mexico allow dual nationality, thus enabling Mexican immigrants to become naturalized United States citizens without losing their status as Mexican nationals (Presidencia de la Republica, 1995, qtd. in Gonzalez Gutierrez 1997). In consultation primarily with Mexican American organizations (although a handful of Mexican emigrant leaders were also invited), the PRI hammered out a legislative proposal for dual nationality – one that pointedly did not grant suffrage rights along with nationality. The necessary constitutional change for dual nationality was passed in 1996 and went into effect two years later.

In a compromise negotiated with opposition parties that now represented a significant minority in the Mexican Congress, a law that allowed Mexicans living abroad to vote was also passed that year. The PRD had pushed hard for a provision that would allow Mexican emigrants to vote in presidential elections as part of a larger electoral reform package, and threatened to block the legislation unless its amendment on migrant voting rights was included. As soon as the package became law, the PRI froze the migrant voting rights provision indefinitely by ordering the National Electoral Commission (IFE) to study its implementation. (Calderon 2002; Ross 2002)

By passing legislation to allow for dual nationality, the Zedillo administration transferred the onus of dealing with the ramifications that Mexican immigration had in the United States onto Mexican immigrants and onto Mexican American organizations who could enlist the newly naturalized voters into their election drives. Zedillo’s newfound rhetoric notwithstanding, his administration had eschewed the responsibility of addressing U.S. political campaigns against Mexican migrants by vesting Mexican-American groups with the constitutional tools to confront them themselves. (This point was not lost on the California Republican Party which mounted a letter writing campaign calling on the Clinton administration to oppose the Mexican constitutional reform on the ground that it represented an attempt “to influence U.S. internal affairs” (qtd in Leiken 2001: 38).) Moreover, the Zedillo administration remained conspicuously silent on accelerating emigration trends from Mexico, in the wake of yet another financial crisis

even more brutal than those before, doubling unemployment and reducing real wages by forty percent (Lustig 1998; Massey et al. 1992).

The Zedillo administration anticipated a huge response to the dual nationality amendment, but response to the measure was extremely low (Santamaría Gómez 2001; Interviews, Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, Mexico City, May 2003; Interviews, SRE, Mexico City, May 2003, August 2003) . The consulates received few petitions for the reinstatement of Mexican nationality, lost when Mexicans had adopted U.S. nationality, and naturalization rates – the lowest amongst any migrant group in the United States (Leiken 2001)--remained largely unchanged (Martinez Saldaña 2002). The magnitude of the disconnect between Mexican government expectations and weak reaction to the amendment reflected the Salinas and Zedillo administrations disengagement with Mexican migrants. Uninterested in accessing the political system in the United States through the acquisition of dual nationality, Mexican emigrants, in conjunction with the state government to whom the federal authorities had delegated attention to migrants and their families, had begun building political power through grassroots organizing (Gonzalez Gutierrez 1995). In an irony that would cost the PRI state level electoral contests, and ultimately the presidential contest in 2000, the Mexican government had overlooked the very dynamic it had identified as having created “Mejiamérica”: it did not pay attention to the community mobilization that was reshaping Mexican migrant political and economic influence in Mexico and in the United States.

Conclusion

In a pattern that grew chronic over three decades, the Mexican government would engage with Mexican-Americans whenever doing so seemed to offer a way to resolve the latest political crisis, regardless of whether the crisis was brewing within Mexico’s borders or whether it was produced by an escalation of tensions with the U.S. Each time the Mexican government re-initiated its interpretive engagement with Mexican-Americans, it drew upon the insights generated in the previous round of engagement. Together, Mexican-American and Mexican government reinterpreted those insights in the context of changed political realities and increasingly market-oriented economic policies. The insights and the occasional institutions built around them became the Rorschach

inkblots that jump-started the practice of interpretation on which the engagement was built, and through which yet another batch of insights was generated. Over time, both the Mexican government and Mexican-American groups developed the capacity to use already articulated insights as mnemonic devices that held the memory of their previous engagement as a way to restart their engagement.

In its dealing with Mexican migrants, on the other hand, the Mexican government adopted a condescending analytic approach, that is, if it even bothered to address migrant needs at all. It designed programs *for* migrants, instead of engaging *with* them. However, while the Mexican federal government looked the other way, Mexican migrants, supported by Mexican state-level governments and Mexican-American activists, would develop the political power to compel the federal authorities to engage with them. In a dramatic reversal, the Mexican federal government would draw on the capacity it developed to re-initiate interpretive conversation in order to forge an engagement with a constituency it had, for so long, deliberately excluded from interpretive exchanges.

Chapter 7
From Interpretation to Political Movement:
State-Migrant Engagement in Zacatecas

Introduction

From the sexenios of Echeverría through De la Madrid, the Mexican federal government had established a consistent pattern of engagement with Mexican-Americans and Mexican migrants. Successive administrations courted Chicano groups and leaders with decided ambivalence, engaging them when closer ties with the constituency seemed in Mexico's national interests, and rebuffing them when that engagement produced challenges to PRI hegemony. Mexican migrants, meanwhile, were treated with analytic distance, subject to repeated studies, but always excluded from the political discussions over their status.

At the state level, though, hints at a very distinct pattern of engagement with Mexican migrants began to emerge over this same period. In a handful of states that had long and intense traditions of emigration, like the center-west states of Zacatecas, Michoacan, and Jalisco, the local government began reaching out to emigrants. In most cases, the initiatives were tentative and awkward. Sporadic visits to the United States by local statesmen, either from the governor's office or from municipal centers, received a mixed reception from migrants, and essays at collaboration to address the concerns of migrants and their communities of origin disintegrated just as quickly as they began. (Interviews, Oficina de Atencion a Migrantes, Michoacan, December 2002; Interviews, Jalisco, December 2002, May 2003; Interviews, Zacatecas, Zacatecas & Jerez, Zacatecas, January- May 2003; Gonzalez Gutierrez 1995).

In Zacatecas, however, the state government efforts steadily gained momentum. Caught between a rural rebellion caused by the collapse of small-scale subsistence farming and a national economic crisis that slashed the state's budget, the state government of Zacatecas turned to migrant remittances as a source of funds for rural development. After a few false starts, Zacatecan migrants and the state elaborated a matching funds arrangement for the completion of basic infrastructure and other projects

in migrants' communities of origin. While the agreement channeled significant migrant resources for public works, the core of the collaboration between migrants and the state was not the projects they were together able to fund. Rather, it was the quality of engagement that the state established with migrants. Interpretive in character, the engagement, through the conversations that were its medium, produced the conceptual bases for an on-going collaboration between migrants and the state.

Several years later, at about the same time the Salinas administration was avidly courting Mexican-Americans in the hopes of pushing a trade agreement with Mexico through the U.S. congress, the state government of Zacatecas formalized its partnership with Zacatecan migrants. Even as the federal government steamrolled a particular neo-liberal economic model onto a struggling Mexican populace-- one that allowed for the movement of goods across borders but not of people-- the state of Zacatecas officially adopted a model of local economic development that not only explicitly recognized migration and migrants but also that built on migrants' economic and social connection to their communities of origin in order to provide basic services and reduce the isolation of villages throughout the state.

By reifying the informal matching funds agreement into a formal government program, the state of Zacatecas made its collaboration with migrant permanent but not static. The program provided an enduring structure for the relationship between the state and migrants, and more importantly, for the interpretive conversations that were the skeins of the ties between them. Within the program's frame, the interpretive engagement grew, and migrants and the state produced new conceptual understandings about migration. They articulated new relationships that captured the existing causes and effects of labor migration in their complexity and multiplicity, but also that opened new fields of action that neither migrants or the state had imaged prior to their engagement with one another. Over time, the state and migrant group collaboratively, even if at times confrontationally, created new institutions to support their insights. To accomplish this, they drew on federal resources and structures, using them instrumentally when federal government was unable to perceive the insights that drove their efforts. As this chapter will show, it was as if they had scavenged plywood and bricks from a federal construction site to build a home on another spot in which the state government and

migrants could hold their conversations. The institutions they built, by instantiating the relationship between migrants and the state, provided the former with new sources of power in their dealings with the latter. Ultimately, this would enable Zacatecan migrants to redefine their partnership with the state, reversing it from one in which the state mediated migrants' relationship to Zacatecas' economic development to one in which migrants mediated the relationship of the state to Zacatecas' economic and political future.

Meaning, structure, and power

Zacatecas' experience with a remittance-based matching funds program illustrates more than the way that interpretive engagement can enlarge and transform a relationship between the state and migrants. It also elucidates how interpretive conversations can affect the relationship between institutional structures and meaning, and between meaning and power. Institutional analysts have been especially attentive to how institutional structures depend on meaning for their legitimacy and their reproduction. Despite the significant differences they see in the role – and indeed – the existence of the subject in creating institutional structures, Foucault and Giddens both offer a nuanced depiction of how meaning is deployed to naturalize structures, and to give them an unquestionable “taken-for-granted” quality that invests them with legitimacy and allows them to serve as a basis for the exercise of power. For both theorists, meaning and structure, while not separate, are not the same. “It is necessary,” emphasizes Foucault, “to distinguish power relations from relationships of communication that transmit information by means of language, a system of signs, or any other symbolic medium” (2003: 135). Giddens, similarly, stresses that “signification” and “legitimation” are “resources” and as such, “are media through which power is exercised” (1984: 15-16). At the risk of gross oversimplification, this hairline fracture between meaning – “signification” – and structure in both Foucault's and Giddens' theories on the genesis of institutions provides a narrow, but indispensable, opportunity for resistance and institutional change. The critical site of resistance and change depends on each theorist's view of the subject and agency: for Foucault, there is no subject separate from the structures – the “disciplines” to use his terminology – that create her, and thus resistance

lies in asking “Who are we?” and rejecting the forms of power that constrain action and determine the meanings attributed to our lives and actions (2003: 130). It is broadening the range of possible actions by calling into question the limits that are placed like bookends in the spectrum of possibilities. For Giddens, the agent who participates in creating the structures that, in a recursive fashion, also shape his possibility for action, is eminently knowledgeable, and maintains a kind of impervious and rational core unaffected and unmuddled by the structures around him and that he himself participates in creating. Thus, the possibility for resistance lies in marshalling resources – in this case, meanings -- that enable his actions to have certain outcomes, including ones that ultimately change structures that constrain action. (1993: 227). Neither theorist leaves much to imagination – literally. The actions taken by Giddens’ knowledgeable subject may have unintended consequences that he may not have foreseen in his bounded rationality, but never ones that would have been unimaginable. For Foucault, the subject is so penetrated by structures – disciplines—that even her imagination is constrained by them, constraining even the imagining of meanings that challenge dominant power structures. (2003)

The evolution of Zacatecas’ matching funds program and its political reverberations suggest that it may be worth considering unimagined and unimaginable meanings as sources of power for the creation of new institutional structures. Through their interpretive conversations, the state of Zacatecas and Zacatecan migrants developed meanings and understandings that would otherwise have been inconceivable. Without their engagement, the insights they had would have been unavailable and indeed unimaginable to migrants and to the state. Those insights gave rise to institutions that both parties built to support them, as well as to support the process of generating further unimagined understandings in the future. The distinction between meaning and structure is still visible in Zacatecas’ experience. However, the relationship is reversed. As opposed to meaning lending legitimacy to structure, structure gives new and still very tenuous concepts legitimacy. The institutions constructed to implement the insights gave the new ideas weight, and in doing so, strengthened the engagement that produced them. This in turn supported further interpretive conversations, which generated more understandings, which were in time also supported with institutions. When the state of

Zacatecas discovered that this process had slipped out from under its control, it tried to clamp down on the engagement and define its terms. The migrants invoked the institutions built around new insights about migrants' importance to the development of their communities and state of origin to defend those new ideas. Structure was used to resist the desecration of the meanings already elaborated and to protect the interpretive process by which new as yet unimagined meanings would surface. Migrants invoked the formal policy that had acted as a container for their interpretive engagement with the state to defend their identity as actors in Zacatecas – who they were, as Foucault might put it – and the meanings their actions had in the state and in the nation—or as Giddens might view it, the resources those meanings represented for their ability to participate in the creation and reproduction of structures.

This chapter is divided into two sections. In this first section, I portray the emergence of the partnership between the state and migrants, tracing the process by which the state came to “see” Zacatecan migrants as actors for community development through the creation of an informal but vital partnership between migrants and the state. In the second section, I show how the understandings generated through the initial engagement were instantiated into a formal program, and demonstrate how the function and expansion of the partnership between migrants and the state depended less on program design than on the meanings that participants read into it. Finally, I also document how migrants grabbed hold of those institutional structures to defend their participation in the political and economic transformation of their communities of origin.

1. “We in Zacatecas have been visionaries”⁶²”

Rural unrest, migration, and maintaining the peace

In 1974, small farmers and landless peasants in Zacatecas began occupying vast tracts of privately owned land. They joined forces with student activists at the University of Zacatecas and a number of agricultural unions to form the Zacatecan Popular Front (Frente Popular Zacatecano). Together, they pitched tents and erected ramshackle huts of

⁶² Borrego, Interview, Mexico City, May 2003

tin siding and scrap wood in the middle of private fields and pasture land, and the shacks quickly grew into sizable shanty towns where peasants and activists lived side-by-side, and landless farmers used rocks and stakes to mark off small plots where they cultivated staple crops for personal consumption. (Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas, March 2003)

Behind the roadside weather-worn banners that had begun to sag and whose paint had begun to bleed after the rains, the peasant settlement became more entrenched as the squatters refused to leave until the government agreed to a large-scale redistribution program. The militant peasants and students also made a series of auxiliary demands: among these, access to agricultural credit, most of which had been siphoned off by a small group of ranchers backed by a formidable private militia, and the provision of basic infrastructure services featured prominently. (Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas 2003; Delgado Wise et al. 1991).

The poverty that had driven the peasants to act was crushing. The Mexican state's abandonment of Mexico's Green Revolution in the late 1960s in favor of industrial-based growth had a serious impact on Zacatecan agricultural production, and the progressive reduction of state support for small-scale ejidal agriculture crippled the state's already underdeveloped economy (Cross et al. 1981). By 1970, Zacatecas, a state which only a few decades before distinguished itself for its lucrative mining industry and one of the highest yields of beans and maize in the nation (1940), registered the second lowest per-capita income in the republic (after Oaxaca), a trend that continued into the 1980s when the state came in last. Zacatecas also display the highest unemployment and underemployment rate in the republic, and the lowest capacity to generate employment of all the states in the nation. Not surprisingly, the state also suffered Mexico's highest rates of malnutrition according to both the 1970 and 1980 censuses. This generalized poverty was accentuated by the geographical isolation which characterized rural Zacatecas. The level of population dispersion was acute: even in 1980, 95 percent of the townships (a category which includes cities) in Zacatecas had less than 1000 inhabitants, and 60 percent had less than 100. Moreover, the remote communities in which most rural inhabitants lived were equipped with minimal basic infrastructure: in 1970, almost 90 percent of rural households had no sewage lines, 80 percent had no source of electricity, and 60 percent had no ready access to potable water. (Delgado Wise et al. 1991).

Table 7.1: Zacatecas: Living Conditions, 1970-1995

Measure	1970	1990	1995
% of population residing in towns of less than 5000 residents	74,2	61,9	58
% of households without sewage and toilets	79,4	53,1	39,9
% of households without electricity.	66,1	13,3	7,2
% of households without potable water	56,6	27,1	17,6
% of households with dirt floor	56	NA	NA

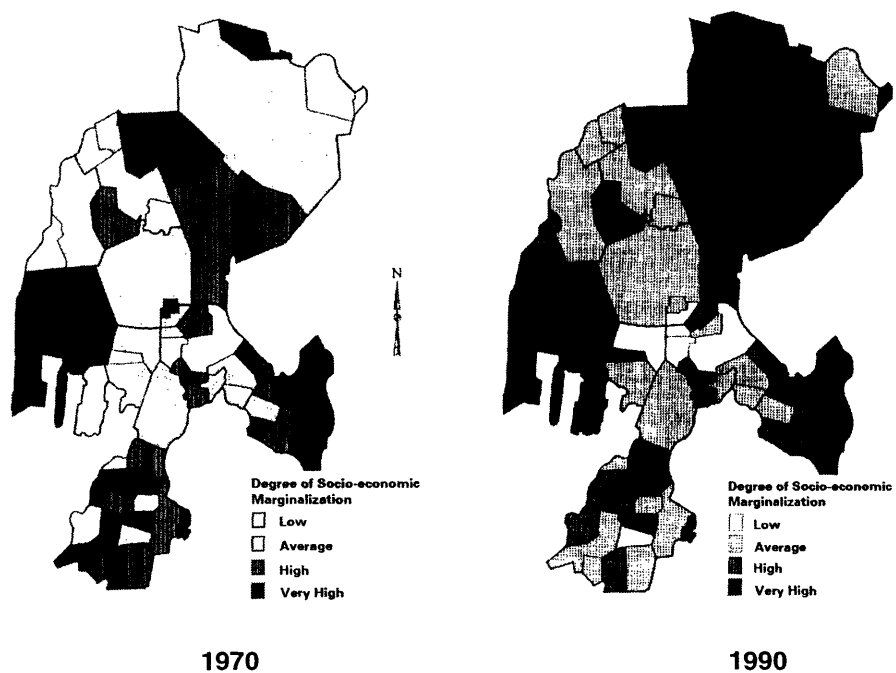
Source: Padilla 1998

Table 7.2: Zacatecas: Human Development Levels, 1970 & 1999

Degree of Socio-Economic Marginalization	1970	1990
Very High	11%	21%
High	16%	21%
Average	61%	47%
Low	12%	11%

Source: Padilla 1998

Illustration 7.1: Comparative Human Development Levels in Zacatecas by Municipality



Source: Padilla 1998

The call for land reform to poverty was as old as the Mexican revolution. Zapata's cry of "Land to the tiller!" was one of the most potent catalysts that brought an end to the three decades long Porfidiato and the crushing exploitation of the poor that characterized it. In the tumultuous years during and after the revolution 1910, modest amounts of land were redistributed, mainly as a stopgap measure to stem political rebellion. Lazaro Cardenas, president of Mexico from 1934-1940, incorporated this revolutionary call into the lexicon of Mexico's political establishment, making land reform central to the ruling PRI political platform. He seized hundreds of thousands of hectares for redistribution, transforming Mexico's grand haciendas into ejidos that were communally-owned⁶³, and transforming restive peasants, many of whom fought determinedly in Cristero wars, into campesinos, a large constituency loyal to the PRI and its institutionalized revolution (Boyer 2003). The Frente Popular Zacatecano's demand for land was thus already vested with a political legitimacy derived from its association with the (now stale) revolutionary discourse of the ruling party. In this case, however, land was not the answer: land reform would provide no relief from the arduous conditions under which the state's peasants lived and labored.

A major staging area for the battles of the Mexican revolution and of the bitter Cristero wars, Zacatecas had already undergone two major rounds of land reform, once immediately after the Mexican revolution and once during the 1930s and 1940s under Cardenas. As a result, the allotment of agricultural properties was unusually equitable in Zacatecas, with the lion's share of tillable land already parceled up into small tracts or enclosed in ejidos. If anything, land tenure patterns in Zacatecas made poverty in the state more intractable. The overwhelming majority of farmers used rudimentary agricultural techniques to cultivate their small plots of land with maize and corn, the proceeds from which were regulated (and depressed) by price control imposed by the federal government. Even in banner years, peasants were unable to earn enough to cover

⁶³ The term ejido is a colonial term that originally simply denoted public land. After the revolution, much of the land reform in Mexico consisted of giving peasants usufruct rights to private land, that nevertheless could not be alienated from its private owner. Cardenas' policy represented a radical shift because it gave ownership property rights to ejidatarios: instead of being mere users of the land, peasants, many of them formerly landless, would *own* ejidos, albeit communally. (http://www.lesl.man.ac.uk/multimedia/mexican_land_reform.htm)

their families' subsistence needs, much less invest technological improvement to increase their yields⁶⁴. Moreover, the land held by small farmers was substandard in quality, arid and rugged in terrain, making basic agricultural mechanization impossible: the topography precluded the use of a tractor in over 40 percent of all land in the state, with poor farmers holding most of the craggy plots (Delgado Wise et al. 1990).

To supplement their income, a significant proportion of Zacatecan peasants migrated to the United States. As Delgado Wise et al (2002) argue, the structure of agricultural production in Zacatecas, aggravated by growing population pressures, reoriented it from the production of crops to the production of labor for export. Land tenure patterns combined with backward technologies tethered Zacatecan agriculture production to labor markets north of the border as migrants traveled to the U.S. for temporary periods in order to subsidize and continue farming activities that were fundamentally unprofitable and unsustainable. Migration trends bear out this conclusion. Ever since the first bracero program during World War I, Zacatecans had been well represented amongst migrants to the United States, with emigration rates that were at least twice as high as those of states beyond the center west swath of migration-sending states, and it had always depended heavily on the remittances they sent back for its economic welfare (Cross et al. 1981). But by 1970, migration had become a life line for rural communities coming up against the limits of the Zacatecan agricultural model. The state registered the highest rates of out-migration in the republic: an estimated 5 percent of the total population left for extended periods of time, while an unknown but significantly larger number -- some estimates suggest that the ratio was as high as 5 to 1 -- migrated to the U.S. or Mexican cities for shorter, seasonal stints in more promising and lucrative labor markets (Delgado Wise et 1991). This trend would only accelerate in the 1980s and 1990s. Zacatecas' 1970 population of 1 million persons was almost a quarter lower than the population growth rate⁶⁵ would have predicted: Zacatecas had a population

⁶⁴ According to Mines' (1981) in-depth study of agricultural production in the Zacatecan village of Las Animas in 1977-1978, banner years by all accounts, each yunta – about 3.5 hectares of tillable land –earned between \$260 and \$355 per year. Less than a third of all farmers had enough land to meet their basic subsistence needs of their families, at a poverty line which he estimated at \$1,464 per year for a family of seven.

⁶⁵ The population growth rate factors in fertility, morbidity, and documented emigration. (Padilla 1998)

“gap” of 25,000 people (Padilla 1998: 16). Moreover, Zacatecas, in 1975, was receiving the highest remittance levels per capita in Mexico. (Delgado Wise et al. 1991)

As the squatter movement grew more entrenched and more militant, the state government under Governor Panama Escobedo, and heavily influenced by Echeverria’s use of land reform as a means to political restitution after the traumatic massacres of Tlatelolco, initially negotiated with the squatters. Initially, Panama Escobedo was mildly sympathetic, and agreed to a modest round of land redistribution, along with the creation of a research center to investigate the causes of the state agricultural collapse. But the land seizures escalated and rural unrest grew both more volatile and more destabilizing. By 1976, the government, with no land left that it could reasonably redistribute, used force to expel the squatters from private tracts. It called in the national army and enrolled private militias to expel the squatters from private tracts, and applied harsh measures against the Popular Front, including detentions, beatings, kidnappings and other forms of intimidation. Uncowed by these tactics, the rural unrest and land seizure movement continued through the 1970s into the late-1980s, flaring up into violent confrontation between the peasants and state on several occasions, and with protests staged increasingly in urban center. The movement posed a constant and at times significant challenge to state authority. (Del Alizal et al. 1995; Delgado Wise et al. 1991: 101-124).

To maintain a level of social peace, the state government resorted to traditional PRI-ista corporatists tactics, handing out subsidies and cash gifts to peasant participants in the land seizure movement, which, according to the memoirs of one government official during the late 1970s, “helped a great deal in calming the aggressiveness of people” (Murillo Belmonte qtd. in Delgado Wise et al 1991: 110). The state also began to address the demands other than land that the peasant movement made. In particular, the Zacatecan state and municipal government began to tackle the insufficiency of basic infrastructure with an unprecedented level of focus. Over time, the provision of infrastructure in rural areas would act as proof of government responsiveness to community needs. As one municipal president in Zacatecas explained, “Infrastructure is how people hold us accountable now. The more concrete we pour, the more votes we get” (Interview, Zacatecas, March 2003).

Remittances and infrastructure provision

The state government of Zacatecas, cash strapped, especially after the national liquidity crisis of 1982, and faced with the prospect of further unrest, began to explore the possibility of drawing on migrant remittances as a source of funds for basic infrastructure projects (Alizal et al. 1995). Zacatecas migrants, acting on their own initiative, had long financed the construction of infrastructure in their communities, and rural hamlets throughout the state boasted community projects, from the drilling of new wells to the renovation of the local church, funded through migrant donations (Moctezuma 2003; Goldring 1995; Interviews, Zacatecas, March-April 2003). This trend was intimately related to the patterns that defined emigration from the state. Zacatecan migrants were overwhelmingly – by a ratio of three to one in 1970 (Rivas 1989, cited in Delgado Wise et al. 1991: 71)– what Mines (1981) calls “shuttle migrants”: they left to work in the US for temporary, delimited periods, but did so on a repeated basis, “shuttling” to work in the U.S. to subsidize their agricultural activities in Zacatecas, to which they returned every year. The contrasts between the level of infrastructure provision in the United States and that in their home villages “arouse[d]” as Mines understatedly puts it, “interest in a higher standard of living” (1981: 157). Faced with government inadequacy in this area, migrants, the new rural elite of their villages, undertook the public works themselves (Interviews, Zacatecas, December 2002, March-April 2003; Mines et al. 1985). In the many instances where these endeavors required the consent of state authorities, the local *diesis* often acted as a behind-the-scenes intermediary with the municipal and state governments, negotiating the terms of the migrants’ contribution to public works. (Delgado Wise et al 1991: 94).

Additionally, the fraction of Zacatecan migrants who had settled permanently in the United States also gifted funds for community projects (Moctezuma 2003; Goldring 2002). Because of the way that employment networks and social networks were intertwined, with migrants accessing jobs through their friends and relatives in their home community, migrants from a given village tended to settle in the same area in the United States, creating what numerous migration scholars have termed “daughter communities” (Delgado Wise 2001, Smith, R. 1995; Leavitt 2001). Mines, in his study of the Zacatecan village of Las Animas and its daughter communities in Tijuana, Los Angeles

and San Francisco (1981), demonstrates, for example, that employment networks that Anime forged in Californian industry during and after the first bracero program after WWI enabled villagers who migrated north under the second bracero program to escape exploitative working conditions in Californian agriculture for jobs in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Small but enduring clusters of Animeños quickly established themselves in those cities; villagers who settled there brought family members and abandoned the shuttle pattern of migration, as well as many – but not all -- of the agricultural activities that temporary migration supported. (1981)

Zacatecan migrants in those “daughter communities” in the United States would often organize themselves into a hometown association for the express purpose of funding a community project. These clubs, created on-the-fly, were frequently instrumental and temporary, no more than informal collection drives, dissolving once the project was complete. One Zacatecan migrant who settled in Los Angeles and organized a club there in the mid-1970s remembered how spontaneous it was:

When I made good, I told my mother “I have a few dollars now, what can I get you to make you happy?” And she said, “son, what I want is for you to help me build a chapel in the village where we were born.” Nothing more, nothing less. So I started organizing migrants from our village, collecting money for the chapel, writing down names and donations on a piece of paper: Juan—fifty cents, Pedro—a dollar fifty... and that’s how we became a club, as simple as that” (Interview, Zacatecas, March 2003).

A handful of these groups, however, took on a more enduring character, serving as social clubs and mutual aid societies that institutionalized the social networks and relationships of reciprocity in the “daughter communities,” and often patterned on the *mutualistas* founded by the Mexican consulate during the heyday of consular support in the 1920s and 1930s. (Moctezuma 2003).

Failed partnerships: formal and informal initiatives to channel remittances

In its bid to use migrant remittances for infrastructure provision, the state government of Zacatecas launched a program for infrastructure development in 1982 that required a contribution from the beneficiaries, based on the assumption that community contributions would consist primarily of remittances. The program, incorporated into the state’s the Unifying Agreement for Development (Convenio Unico de Desarrollo) with

the Federal government, was, according to historians del Alizal et al., “ the first institutional attempt to channel a portion of the resources sent home by migrant workers to the construction of public works” (1995: 202). In addition to using remittance wealth available locally, there is evidence to suggest that municipal presidents in the late 1970s and early 1980s entertained the possibility of funding community projects jointly with migrant clubs. According to oral histories about these informal partnerships, the earliest attempts at such collaborations dates back to 1974, when the Tepetongo club of Los Angeles offered the municipal government of Tepetongo, Zacatecas a small grant to construct a sports field (Interviews, Zacatecas, April 2003).

Before long, both the formal and informal initiatives were abandoned: the program under Unifying Agreement for Development was discontinued after a couple of years and improvised partnerships between municipal government and migrants sputtered and broke down (Alizal et al. 1995; Interviews, Zacatecas, March-April 2003). The collapse of these efforts was due to two main factors. First, both the formal and informal initiatives conceptualized migrants as part of local communities. In a reflection of larger national political practice, migration was kept unacknowledged, and migrants were subsumed into local populations (Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas, March 2003). As Genero Borrego, who would become governor of Zacatecas in 1986, observed:

The topic of migrants in the 1980s was a taboo subject. No one wanted to touch it; it wasn't in the political discourse of the party. ... Especially in Zacatecas....Policy makers avoided it. There was no desire to recognize or deal with it as a reality, which, like all realities, has aspects that are both positive and negative. (Interview, Mexico City, May 2003).

The perception that migrants were full members of their communities was not totally erroneous: with temporary migration dominating Zacatecan emigration patterns, most migrants returned to their *ranchos* for extended periods during the year, and thanks to the income they earned abroad, they established themselves as the local elites. They purchased land or livestock, built houses and invested in agricultural inputs. However, because their wealth was primarily derived from wage labor in the United States rather than crops produced locally, emigration bifurcated the local village economically and socially, dividing local communities into two distinct classes, separating out migrants and their families from non-migrants and their dependents. Migrants disentangled their

economic welfare from all of the social relationships that local and small-scale agricultural production entails, which in turn began to unravel the village fabric of social reciprocity (Delgado et al 1991; Mines 1981 & 1985).

The slippage between the state view of migrants as ordinary members of their community and the economic and social realities produced by migration proved the Achilles' heel of the formal state initiative. Evaluations of the use of migrant resources for programs through the Unified Agreement for Development allude to accusations of mismanagement and the political redirection of funds. The available evidence seems to suggest the program fell into the grooves that migration had dug into communities, reinforcing the social and economic chasm emerging in many villages (Alizal et al 1995; Interviews, Zacatecas, March-April 2003). Informal partnerships between migrant clubs and municipal governments to build infrastructure also faltered because municipal government conflated migrants with the sending communities that they governed. Given that clubs were generally made up of migrants who had settled abroad in a more permanent fashion and who did not return as regularly or for extended periods of time, the failure to recognize migrants as a separate group, with distinct needs and concerns, created serious problems in the efforts at financial collaboration. Chief among those needs was a mechanism to hold the state accountable in their absence, and ensure that the municipal government would spend migrant funds as promised. (Interviews, Zacatecas, March-April 2003)

The second factor, related to the first, was mutual misunderstanding and mistrust. Both state and municipal governments perceived migrants' desire to exercise some measure of control over how the funds that they donated were allocated as an affront to their authority. However, this dynamic surfaced most explicitly in the informal partnerships between migrants and municipal government. Migrants working in the United States were at some distance from the place where the state was carrying out its activities were apprehensive. They were wary of graft, and they were concerned that the needs they saw in their communities would be sacrificed to satisfy those of local elites. Many of these elites were temporary "shuttle" migrants who were physically in the village many months of the years, and could, ironically with the resources earned abroad, pressure local authorities into redirecting settler migrant funds from projects with

important symbolic and cultural value, like the construction of church, toward projects that would be of greater benefit to them, like irrigation systems or roadways. The recollections of the man who had been mayor of Tepetongo during the early 1980s capture the mutual suspicion with which migrants and the state viewed each other, and illustrate how their interactions escalated the miscommunication between them. As the former mayor explained, the Los Angeles Tepetongo club wanted to build a sports field to honor and advertise the success of one of their members, a Tepetongo native, in a California minor baseball league, but also to demonstrate to the village their collective success through their donations for a public space that would always be associated with the Tepetongo migrants. Through the baseball diamond, the village's absent sons would remain very much present. However, as the mayor went on to recount, the project to build a sport field in their community of origin had been stalled for several years under his predecessor, due to "a lot of funny business, a lot of theft" (Interview, Zacatecas, April 2003). To resolve the dispute, the mayor traveled to meet with the club in Los Angeles in 1980.

I said to myself, I'm going to see what all of this is about. And it was during that trip that I uncovered a whole of lot of stuff. ...The migrants took me to the Casa del Mexicano. We had a meeting there. There were like ten people. We practically came to blows (*puro madrazos*). It was like being on trial. They wanted me to sign stuff. They asked me things...trick questions, and I answered them with whatever came to mind, nothing real, just to get out of answering. And then they asked me to sign something, and I signed like this [draws a scribble on a piece of paper] and they got mad. And I said, "well that's my signature." I mean, how was I going to sign a paper with off-handed answers (*pendejadas*) I gave them to the trick questions that they asked me. I mean, the whole thing was a trap.... Anyway, I decided that I didn't want to work with them because I didn't want to be accused of stealing their money. (Interview, Zacatecas, April 2003).

After repeated negotiations, the project was ultimately carried out, but only after the municipality agreed to let migrants maintain full control over their financial contribution, sending their money to a representative in the community rather than to the municipal offices. The completion of the sport field set a precedent, and other collaborative projects followed. However, the experience was short-lived: the municipal government never institutionalized the relationship between migrants and the state, and never created an

institutional container for the trust that the migrant club placed in the person of the municipal president. Once that particular municipal president left office, the partnerships petered out and the Telepongo club tore itself apart with in-fighting. (Interviews, Zacatecas, April 2003).

Nevertheless, despite their disappointing outcome, the formal and informal essays to draw on migrant remittances for infrastructure provision suggested the potential that a partnership with migrants might represent. The floundering attempts at collaboration transformed an initiative that the state explored out of political necessity, to address the grievances raised by the land seizure movement, into an idea that seemed commonplace and plausible. By the time Genero Borrego took office as governor in 1986, the political rationale for an engagement with migrants had been well established, and provided the new administration with the space to explore a qualitatively different engagement with migrants, one that allowed for interpretive conversations and for a genuine exploration of the role that migrants could play in the state's economic development.

Meeting migrants and the seeds of engagement

Chroniclers of the development of the various Federations of Zacatecan Clubs throughout the United States, now some of the largest and most influential organizations of Mexican migrants, cite 1986, when Borrego began his term as governor of Zacatecas, as the year that their engagement with the state and their efforts at community organizing began (Goldring 2003; Moctezuma 2003). The conversations that would grow into a nation-wide matching funds program for community projects and would radically revise views about the role that migrants could play in local economies and local political contexts began very modestly, almost haphazardly.

Borrego first made contact with Zacatecan migrants who had settled in Los Angeles during his campaign for governor. During a tour through rural Zacatecas, the future governor, encouraged by his friend and campaign manager, who had socialized with Zacatecas migrants when he lived in California, met with a group of migrants who had returned to Zacatecas for a time: "they told me about how they were doing," recalls Borrego. "About how they organized themselves, how they wanted to organize themselves, what ideas they had, what grievances they had, what discomfort they felt, what struggles they faced

every day over there in the United States, and what were their proposals, their concerns” (Interview, Mexico City, May 2003). The candidate invited them to meet with him once he took office to explore the possibility of capitalizing on remittances for rural development (Borrego, Interview, Mexico City, May 2003; Avila et al. 1995; UAZ, Interviews, Zacatecas, March 2003). The migrants took the governor up on his offer and one of them, Julian Estrada, traveled to the capital for an audience. The dialogue between Borrego and Estrada quickly expanded past negotiations over how remittances could be channeled to infrastructure projects. As the governor recalls:

Julian came to tell me, “We exist. We exist, we are Zacatecanos, we love our land, we hurt for her, we want her to develop, and we want to contribute to that. But at the same time, we have problems in the United States, no one listens to us, no one pays attention to us, we are strangers there, we suffer discrimination. In the consulates, they focus – especially at that time – on bureaucratic matters, but there is no political dialogue, no humanistic dialogue to deal with social problems that come up for us.” So I got really interested, so I asked Julian to put me in touch with others there [in Los Angeles].

The conversation initiated in that meeting soon gave rise to a plan for the governor to visit Los Angeles in order to meet with Zacatecan migrants in the Californian city. Borrego would not be the first Zacatecan governor to travel to Los Angeles; several of his predecessors, including governors José Rodríguez Elías in 1962 and Fernando Pánames Escobedo in 1978, had made official visits to the city (Gonzalez Gutierrez 1995: 77-78, note 24). However, Borrego’s exploratory approach transformed the visit from a politically ceremonial event into the inauguration of a sustained engagement with Zacatecan migrants; as the former governor explained:

I decided to make a formal visit [to Los Angeles] in my capacity as governor to meet with them *without a pre-defined agenda*. Simply and sincerely to let them know that I recognized them as Zacatecanos, just as if they were living here [in the state], and that I was the governor of the Zacatecanos over here, but I was also the governor of the Zacatecanos over there. To make a long story short, a date [for a trip to Los Angeles] was picked, and I invited several Zacatecanos who were interested to join me. (Interview, Mexico City, May 2003—emphasis mine).

The date for the visit was set for mid-November, 1986, arranged to coincide with a dance that a group of Zacatecan clubs had planned for their compatriots in the Los Angeles

area. (Interviews, Zacatecas, March-April 2003; Borrego, Interview, Mexico City, May 2003; Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas, March-April 2003; Gonzalez Gutierrez 1995).

Principles of a partnership

The heart of the encounter was a meeting between Borrego, the Zacatecan guests he invited (which included the bishop of Zacatecas, among others), and about fifteen Zacatecan migrants that lived in Los Angeles. They gathered in a meeting room that they had rented in a local hotel, and had an extensive discussion about the challenges that migrants faced in the United States, the needs that they and their communities of origin had, and the possibilities for collaboration between migrants and the state government of Zacatecas. The conversation which had been scheduled with no other goal but for Zacatecan migrants and the governor to get acquainted and to “try and put some our ideas in some sort of order,” as Borrego put it, generated three conceptual insights that would define the relationship between migrants and the state of Zacatecas for years to come.

The first of these was that migrants, and that permanent settler migrants that had made their home in cities like Los Angeles in particular, were a distinct group, with needs and identities that differed from those prevalent in their communities of origin. Second, unlike temporary migrants who were “on-site” in the village, the impact that settler migrants had on their communities of origin was tightly correlated to their level of community organization, both directly because it allowed migrants to combine their individual efforts to better their villages in Zacatecas, and indirectly because it gave them an advantage in navigating labor markets in the U.S and enabled them to perform better economically, which in turn allowed them to remit more money. Being organized empowered migrants to press for better working conditions as a group and reinforced the social networks through which migrants could access better employment opportunities. The third and final insight was that the state could magnify the impact that migrants had on their communities, by adding resources and by articulating their efforts with larger state plans for economic development, but that the state would only be able to play this role if it earned migrants’ trust. Moreover, not only did migrants have to trust that the state would not swindle them out of resources they donated for community projects, they had to trust that the state, in its function as an intermediary between migrants and their

communities of origin, would faithfully reflect migrants' intention to their villages in Zacatecas, and carry them out. These three insights were encapsulated in a charter that migrants and Borrego, as an agent of the state, hammered out at that first meeting in Los Angeles, and were embodied in two institutional structures they set up to continue their engagement.

Discerning migrants

Through the course of their discussion, the migrants and Borrego formulated a series of aims on which they could collaborate. At the end of their meeting, the participants wrote them down and committed to meet regularly to evaluate their progress in achieving them. The scribbled notes would serve as an informal charter that would govern the relationship between migrants and the state. The compact codified the three foundational insights produced through the conversation between migrants and the state: when summed, the objectives were essentially to foster migrant organization; to defend their rights as workers and as migrants and to protect them from violations to which their specific position as migrant workers made them vulnerable; and to create vehicles through which they could foster the development of their communities⁶⁶ (Interview, Borrego, May 2003; Interviews, FDZSC, Zacatecas, April 2003, July 2003; Interviews, Zacatecas, April 2003). Over and above the insights it encapsulated, the fact that a charter was drafted at all was in itself a recognition that migrants were a group distinct from their communities of origin. It was an acknowledgement that they had unique goals and needs,

⁶⁶ The charter laid five clear objectives. These were as follows: The first was to promote the grassroots organizing of migrants and their consolidation into a formal organization, "a network of solidarity" (Borrego: Interview, Mexico City, May 2003) that transnational in character, encompassed equally migrants and the communities from which they came. The second objective was to defend the rights of migrant workers. The definition of rights agreed upon included labor rights, human rights, as well as cultural and civic rights, and the participants committed "to us[ing] any means necessary... formal and informal, diplomatic and political, whatever was required" (Borrego: Interview, Mexico City, May 2003) to protect those rights and guard migrants from labor exploitation. The third goal was to ensure that migrants received fair treatment during their transit from their communities in Zacatecas to the United States and back, with a special focus on eradicating the abuses and extortion by Mexican customs authorities (Borrego: Interview, Mexico City, May 2003). The fourth was to create channels for migrants to foster the development of their villages of origin, that "the fruit of their labor, their sacrifice, their efforts should have a beneficial impact on their communities" (Borrego: Interview, Mexico City, May 2003). The fifth and final aim was the creation of employment in Zacatecas. (Interviews, UAZ, FCZSC, Zacatecas Planning Department, Zacatecas, March-April 2003; Interviews, Zacatecas, April 2003; Borrego, Interview, Mexico City, May 2003).

and that to access them, the state had to form a relationship with them that was separate from its relationship with their villages in Zacatecas.

The following evening, at the gala dance that the Zacatecans held in the Los Angeles area held each year – a huge affair according to the governor who was moved at the sight of a ballroom packed to capacity with his compatriots -- Borrego publicly announced the state's recognition that migrants were a distinct constituency to which, he emphasized, it had a undeniable responsibility, a declaration that represented a radical reversal of decades of government silence, especially at the state level, on the question of migration: "I am the governor of the Zacatecanos over here [in the United States] just as much as I am the governor Zacatecanos over there [in Zacatecas]" (Borrego, Interview, May 2005). He baptized the day of the event – the 11th of November—as the Day of the Migrante (Dia del Migrante) in Zacatecas and promised to return yearly to celebrate the occasion with them. He then presented the charter to the crowd, outlining its elements, and in doing so, declared in a public forum the state's commitment to building a lasting partnership with them as a Zacatecanos in the United States. (Interviews, Zacatecas, March-April 2003; Interviews, FDZSC, April 2003, July 2003; Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas, 2003).

Organizing migrants

At the same meeting held in the Los Angeles hotel conference room, the migrants and the governor agreed upon an institution that would serve as a vehicle for migrants' community organizing efforts. They chose the newly re-inaugurated Federation of Zacatecan Clubs. The Federation had organizational roots that stretched to 1972. That year, eight Zacatecas clubs⁶⁷ that had been sponsoring community projects in their villages of origin decided to form a loose association to help each other out with fundraising and to expand their social networks in Los Angeles past their connections with people from their particular little hamlet in Mexico. The Federation that they created met at the Casa Mexicana, the headquarters of Comité de Beneficencia Mexicana, a large and well-established mutual aid society that had been under the tutelage of the

⁶⁷ The clubs that belonged to this initial version of the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs included the Zacatecas Social Club, the Jalpa Club, the Fresnillo Club, the Guadalupe Victoria Club, the Jerez Club, and the Calera Club.

Los Angeles consulate since it was founded in 1931. The Casa Mexicana was the gathering place for Mexicans from a number of different states that had settled in southern California, and soon Mexican clubs from Durango, Michoacan, and Jalisco asked to join the Federation. In 1980, the alliance of Zacatecanos was renamed the Federation of Mexican Clubs to reflect its more inclusive structure, although it remained dominated by Zacatecan clubs, with five from the state and only three from the rest of Mexico. In anticipation of Governor Borrego's visit, the Zacatecan clubs broke with the larger Federation of Mexican Clubs and re-established their own state-based association. However, until the governor's arrival, the nascent organization existed only on paper and had never actually had any substantive meetings. (www.federacionzacatecana.org; Moctezuma 2003: 5-6; Gonzalez Gutierrez 1995; Interview, Borrego, Mexico City, May 2003; Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas, March-April 2003; Goldring 2003).

At the first conclave between migrants and the state, those in attendance decided that the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs would serve as the organization that would represent Zacatecan migrants in Los Angeles, and Borrego designated it as its interlocutor in its relationship with the *paisanos* of southern California (Interview, Borrego, Mexico City, May 2003; Interviews, Zacatecas, April 2003). In a recursive cycle, the state brought an organization into being by acknowledging it, which gave the fledging group the political legitimacy to engage with the state on behalf of Zacatecans in Los Angeles, which in turn justified the state's on-going interactions with the federation, closing the virtuous circle. In this sense, the state was a key participant in the grassroots organizing that created the federation; the association of Zacatecan clubs became a robust organization because of the exchanges between migrants and the state, rather than because of the efforts of either party on their own. The state and the migrants mutually constituted the Federation of Zacatecan clubs, and in the process, they redefined each other. Migrants became a visible constituency represented by an organized group vested with political recognition and, by extension, clout, and the Zacatecan state government became a partner and a vehicle through which migrants could assert their belonging to their state, and more indirectly, their villages of origin.

Sensitive to this recursive dynamic of mutual constitution, the governor was careful to vest publicly the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs with official sanction, and raise

the profile of the organization to the Zacatecans in Los Angeles, but also to the Angelene government authorities. The statesman announced the creation of the Federation in front of hundreds of Zacatecan migrants during the short speech he gave at the Zacatecan ball, and explained they would stay in contact with Zacatacans “*de aca --over here*” through his on-going conversations with their Federation. At a rodeo competition the following day, in an arena packed with Mexican migrants, the governor solemnly delivered a Mexican flag to each of the Zacatecan hometown association that belonged to the newly founded Federation. Los Angeles major Tom Bradley, who attended the event to meet with the Mexican governor, watched the whole performance: the governor’s ceremonial tribute to the Federation made it visible to the major as an important political organization representing the interests of Mexicans in his town. (Interviews, Zacatecas, March-April 2003; Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas, March-April 2003 Borrego, Interview, Mexico City, May 2003).

Building trust

During their first meeting, the migrants and the governor of Zacatecas drafted a matching funds arrangement to finance development projects in migrants’ communities of origin. While similar in form to previous Zacatecan plans to capture remittances for public works, building infrastructure was not the main goal of the arrangement. It was to foster trust between migrants and the state government. As Borrego clarified:

The objective was two-fold: to create an incentive to increase their contributions to community projects, and even more, to build trust (*para dar confianza*); If they contributed a dollar, and contributing that dollar involved some risk, well, it just seemed fundamental to me in terms of equity that I contribute a dollar and run the same risk. I wanted them to know that we were in it together. (Interview, Mexico City, May 2003).

The methodology that was used to select community projects reflected the governor’s aspiration to build migrants’ confidence in the state as an intermediary that could help migrants carry out the vision that *they* had for their villages of origin. In that initial phase, when the relationship between migrants and the state was still tentative and fragile, migrants were given absolute discretion over the projects that they wanted to fund, and the governor agreed to match their contributions on the spot, without the trying and often bitter negotiations that had characterized previous attempts using remittances

for public works. Moreover, the governor embraced the ad-hoc organizing style that migrants had used both to collect monies for community projects and to set up migrant clubs. At the same meeting in Los Angeles hotel room, a list of projects was drawn up; as Borrego recounts:

We said, “who here wants to do a project in their community?” And because they had already been organizing themselves, they responded, “well, some of us have a fund that we been collecting for months – sometimes years! – because we want to contribute to the lighting of public space in such and such a village.” “Okay, let’s write that down. How much do you have?” “This amount” “Okay, we’ll put together a budget, and once we have that, I’ll tell you how much more you have to collect, and I find the amount to match it. Okay, who else has a project? And who else?” And we took notes right then and there. So then, I returned back to Zacatecas with something like twenty projects that the migrants wanted to carry out. And we completed them all—within the year.

(Interview, Mexico City, May 2003).

Finally, the migrants and the governor also agreed to create citizens committees in communities of origin to oversee the completion of the community projects and to ensure that the resources that migrants contributed were accounted for. (Interviews, FDZSC, Zacatecas April 2003; Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas, March-April 2003; Interview, Borrego, May 2003).

The drive to support migrant community organizing and the careful labor of building a relationship of trust with migrants were mutually reinforcing. As migrants saw their projects completed, more clubs were organized and more projects proposed to the governor’s office. And as more clubs were formed and adhered to the Federation of Zacatecan Hometown Associations, the conversations that the state government had with migrants, through the Federation that acted as their representative, grew more substantive, addressing increasingly contentious questions like, for example, the responsibility of the Mexican state to protect the labor rights of migrant workers, or the measures the Zacatecan government could take to rescue migrant villages from their downward economic spiral, including the provision of agricultural extension services and the revision of price controls on staple crops. In another synergistic loop through which both the state and migrant mutually constituted their relationship, the breadth of those conversations and the quality of engagement with the state that they reflected endowed the Federation with community legitimacy, in Los Angeles as well as in Zacatecas, which

in turn encouraged migrants' involvement in larger projects. (Interviews, FDZSC, Zacatecas April 2003; Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas, March-April 2003; Interview, Borrego, May 2003).

While the matching funds arrangement remained informal for the duration of Borrego's six-year term, leaving no dedicated records to document the public works which were supported through migrant donations, the data available suggest that the projects were modest in size but significant in the precedent they set: 20 clubs, most with membership of only several dozen Zacatecanos, collected a total of about 200,000 dollars for projects ranging from the paving of roads, to the installation of potable water system to the renovation of local plazas and churches. Additionally, a number of Zactecan migrants, heartened by their new relationship with the state, invested privately in tourism projects the government promoted, with their contributions topping 2 million dollars (Paloma, No. 7, January-March 1992).

Borrego broadened the trust on which the state government's *accercamiento* with Zacatecanos in Los Angeles depended past the narrow confines of the matching funds program by fulfilling his commitment to work to resolve the problems that migrants faced *because of their status as migrants*. On repeated occasions, he advocated for his *paisanos* with the federal arm of the Mexican government. After corroborating migrants' complaints that the consulate in Los Angeles was negligent in addressing their needs and treated them with disdain, the governor traveled to Mexico City to convey their grievances to President De la Madrid and the Secretary of Foreign Relations. The consultations set in motion a redefinition of the role that consular offices could play in migrant communities in the United States. "It marked the beginning of a conceptual transformation about what a consulate should do to one that was built on the understanding that the consulate should be a center when integrated services are provided to migrants, a place where they are heard, and a place where they can seek protection," recalls Borrego (Interview, Mexico City, May 2003). The presiding consul in Los Angeles, whom migrants characterized as elitist and unavailable, was replaced with a diplomat that was "more disposed to interact and engage with the community" (Interview, Mexico City, May 2003). In meetings with federal authorities, Borrego also decried Mexican customs officers' flagrant extortion that migrants reported they

experienced every time they crossed the border. The concerns that the governor relayed, directly to President Salinas, according to the statesman's recollection, provided the impetus for a federal program – the “Paisano Program” -- to clamp down on abuses against migrants. (Borrego, Interview, Mexico City, May 2003; Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas, March 2003; Interview; SRE; Mexico City, May 2003).

***Confianza* after IRCA**

“What Borrego did that was groundbreaking was that he earned the trust – *la confianza* -- of the Zacatecanos in the United States,” concluded the director the matching funds program under Borrego's successor (Interview, Zacatecas, April 2003). After the passage of IRCA in 1986, the number of settler migrants in the U.S. shot up dramatically, and that *confianza* and the interpretive engagement that it supported would soon begin to transform the role of migrants in Mexico and in the United States. Through their partnership with the state, they would become constituted as agents that would shape the economic and political trajectories of villages, of municipalities, and of their state as a whole.

With the Mexican federal government accercamiento with Mexican-Americans, not to mention Mexican migrants, in ruins at the end of the de la Madrid administration, and with Cardenas gaining political ground in Mexican communities north of the border, the state government of Zacatecas was the only branch of the Mexican government that had any meaningful engagement with Mexicans abroad. Over the next decade, the Zacatecanos would create formal institutions based on the insights they gleaned from their engagement: institutions that would provide the building blocks for a radically revised federal policy toward Mexican migrants.

2. Institutionalizing insight

When Arturo Romo assumed the office of governor of Zacatecas in September 1992, he was determined to continue the engagement with Zacatecan emigrants that his predecessor, Genaro Borrego, had begun. The ad-hoc matching funds arrangement for community projects under Borrego convinced Arturo Romo of the potential that the partnership held for the development of the isolated villages where a large majority of

Zacatecas' population still resided, and the new governor had plans to expand the partnership. He sent a director from the State Planning Office to Los Angeles to lay the groundwork for the his victory tour in the Californian city and to schedule his meetings with Zacatecan migrants. What the director found when he got there was profoundly disquieting. Migrants in the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs were up in arms: they had painstakingly raised thousands of dollars for community projects, dollar by dollar, organizing raffles, holding dances, passing the hat amongst their friends and neighbors, and had handed over those funds to the state government for public works in their communities of origin, but the projects had never been completed. "The pipes we bought for the water network have been lying in the mud in the village for months, and the state still hasn't put in its share. Our money is turning into rust," exclaimed one migrant club leader (Interview, Zacatecas, April 2003). Many projects had not even been started. The migrants had no written documentation of their agreement with the state for the completion of the projects; their contracts with the state government were verbal, guaranteed by the *confianza* migrants had placed in the person of Genero Borrego. Their projects had fallen through the interstices of two governors' sexenios. The migrants felt deeply betrayed and were ready to cut off all engagement with state authorities. When the Zacatecan migrants' outrage was conveyed to the governor, Romo decided to formalize the matching funds arrangement into an official government program. (Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas, March 2003; Interviews, SEPLADER, Zacatecas, April 2003; Interviews, FCZSC, Zacatecas April 2003, July 2003; Interviews, Zacatecas, April 2003; Goldring 2002).

The state government's experience with formalizing the agreement into a program illustrates the role of interpretive conversations in the process of institutionalizing insights that have already been articulated. Under Borrego, the state government had matched migrant contributions by funneling federal monies to migrant-sponsored development projects without declaring it outright. To turn the ad-hoc arrangement with migrants into a state program, the government of Zacatecas had to make its use of federal funds explicit. Romo approached the federal authorities about the possibility of laying out a formal procedure for the appropriation of federal monies for migrant community projects. The result was a tripartite matching funds program, popularly called "Dos por

Uno” or “Two for One,” in which the state and federal governments each apportioned a dollar for every dollar contributed by migrants. The federal government, represented by Luis Donald Colossio as director of the Secretariat for Social Development (SEDESOL), Arturo Romo, and the president of the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California, met in Mexico City in the fall of 1992 to sign a binding convention formalizing the groundbreaking arrangement.

The negotiations with the federal government over the design and implementation of the “Dos por Uno” soon revealed that interpretive processes are just as critical to the crafting of policy structures as they are to the production of the insights which prompt them. Even though the federal government shared in the funding stream for migrant projects, it refused to participate in the interpretive engagement with migrants for which the project were merely a framework. As a result, it was never able to incorporate the understandings that the Zacatecas state government had developed about migrant and migration communities, and the federal version of the matching funds program, viewed as an extension of Salinas’ poverty reduction programs, was axed during the policy purges at the beginning of the next presidential sexenio.

In contrast, the matching funds program in Zacatecas expanded dramatically under Romo, acquiring a solid identity as a unique program that cemented the partnership between migrant organization and the state, but also that deepened migrants’ participation in political evolution and economic development of their communities – and their state – of origin. The program’s growth demonstrated that the federal government’s abstention from an interpretive engagement with migrants did not prevent the Zacatecan state authorities from using federal structures instrumentally. Armed with the conceptual understandings that emerged under the Borrego administration, the Romo government was able to exploit federal programs—especially the PCME – to foster migrant grassroots organizing in the United States and to deepen migrant ties with local communities in Zacatecas. The community mobilization among Zacatecan *paisanos* “*alla*” – “over there” -- was a joint effort between the state authorities and migrants, nourished by countless rounds of interpretive conversation. The structures they produced reveal the final relationship between institutionalization and interpretation. The institutions – organizations, networks, formal consultation mechanisms—reified migrant participation

in state economic development and transformed the power that they had acquired to shape meaning into solid organizational structures that could not be swept away when the political winds changed direction. Whether the Zacatecan state authorities – and the Zacatecan branch of the PRI – liked it or not, they were soon locked into an engagement with migrants: migrants had amassed the institutional authority to enforce it.

Interpretation vs. Translation: *Solidaridad Internacional*

From the start, the Federal government's participation in the "Two for One" program was built on a misunderstanding. For the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs and the state government, the program was the formalization of an existing relationship, and a contractual commitment from the state to continue to engage with migrants, for the development of their communities of origin, but also to support their organizing drives in the United States. It was, as government summary of the program explains, "a response to the concerns of the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs" and an institutional structure designed "so that the good intentions we [the state and the migrants] have articulated in our encounters be transformed into deeds...for the development of Zacatecas and Mexico" (Government of the State of Zacatecas n.d. circa 1996: 5-6). For the Mexican federal government, the "Two for One" agreement was an extension of its National Solidarity Program, a view captured most blatantly in the fact that it named the compact "Solidarity International," a name pointedly not used in Zacatecan state documents.

The National Solidarity Program – or *Solidaridad* – was Carlos Salinas' brainchild, and would become the "signature project" of his administration (Cornelius et al 1994: 12). The program, designed as an anti-poverty program to replace the social safety net hopelessly tattered after a decade of belt-tightening, was founded, in Salinas' words, on the notion of citizen "participation and co-responsibility" (qtd. in Diaz-Cayeros 2003: 3) and required communities to contribute to financing and implementing all *Solidaridad* projects. Moreover, the program called for beneficiaries to create *Solidaridad* committees to mobilize local resources for the initiatives. In principle, the more than 150,000 *Solidaridad* committee set up throughout Mexico were supposed to define the priorities for spending the estimated \$12 billion allocated to the program, but in practice, localities had little say and decisions were made by the Secretariat of Social Development

(SEDESOL) bureaucrats in Mexico City to meet what many analysts have argued were thinly disguised political goals (essentially to recoup political territory lost to Cardenas in the 1988 election) (Cornelius et al 1994; Dresser 1994; Diaz-Cayeros 2003; Kaufman et al 1997). When viewed through the lens of Solidaridad, migrant clubs were no different than citizens committees contributing to the completion of public works in their communities – public works that the federal government would have selected. So well did this arrangement seem to fit the program lines of Solidaridad that the SEDESOL also extended it to half a dozen other states (Goldring 2002).

Almost immediately after the convention for “Two for one” program -- or “Solidarity International”— was signed, frictions arose between the state and federal government over its implementation. Tensions flared because the state of Zacatecas’ goal was to intensify a partnership that rested on the three key insights that emerged out of the engagement between migrants and the state under Borrego, whereas the federal authorities were blind to those insights and were interested primarily in furthering a program that bordered on a national obsession (Garcia Zamora 1993: 204-247). The first of the three foundational understandings was that migrants were a group distinct but not separate from their communities of origin, and that they funded community projects for reasons that were complex and subtle: they donated funds for projects not solely to foster development, but also to maintain ties to the villages they left behind and to assert their identities as members of their specific *rancho* in the larger Zacatecan, Mexican, and multi-cultural context of Los Angeles, and more broadly of the United States. By supporting public works, they expressed their identities as Jerezanos, as Valparaisanos, as Jomulquillenses who happened to have settled in southern California. Through the lens of Solidaridad Internacional, the migrants were reduced to community members like any other, and their resources were considered no different than those contributed on-site, vested with no symbolism beyond a generic desire for development.

The second insight concerned the role of migrant clubs and their adherence to a larger federation. Zacatecan state’s sensitive engagement with the clubs reflected an understanding that they served a function much broader than the completion of a community project. They were organizations that enabled migrants to represent and defend their interests in their villages of origin, as well as in U.S. labor markets.

Moreover, they were the interlocutor through which the state could access an otherwise dispersed and invisible constituency, and converse with it about the role that migrants could play in the development of Zacatecas, but also about the ways the state could advocate for migrants in the U.S. and with the Mexican government. For SEDESOL bureaucrats, the clubs were indistinguishable from ordinary solidarity committees, most of which had a short life span, disbanding after their project was complete. Their approach to the clubs was brazenly instrumental: they were the vehicle through which the funds for public works were collected.

The final insight about the importance of building trust with migrants was also lost on SEDESOL. The state government of Zacatecas, in a very deliberate fashion, used the “Two for One” to strengthen the bonds of *confianza* between migrants and the state. State planning officials took pains to engage migrants in extensive consultations about the types of projects completed under the formal partnership, and about the vision for Zacatecas’ development that the projects implied. They did this both through formal channels, like a joint migrant-state working commission to evaluate proposed projects incorporated in the “Two for One” program design, and informal venues, like phone conversations, visits to United States, and meetings with migrants in Zacatecas. (“It seemed like I was in the United States every weekend,” remembered the director of the program under Romo.) The state government also demonstrated a recognition that migrant participation in the program was voluntary and earning their trust meant demonstrating that the state also trusted *them* as a partner. For example, the state was fairly flexible with migrants around the management of funds for the projects, often allowing migrants to determine how and when they would transfer their contribution to the state. Within the framework of Solidarity International, trust was irrelevant. Participation in the program was conditional on the contribution of funds, and both community deposits and federal disbursement of monies had to follow program norms. Moreover, to receive federal resources, the projects had to adhere strictly to the developmental –and arguably, even the political-- priorities defined by the federal government (Diaz-Cayeros 2003; Kaufman et al 1997).

Because of these frictions, “it took a full six months to get the first small project off the ground,” remembers a director of planning charged with “Two for one”

implementation. The federal government displayed little willingness to modify Solidaridad norms, much less engage with migrants in any meaningful way, which would have meant recognizing them as political and social actors, not just the recipients of services to which the federal government had reduced them. Disputes with the federal authorities immediately erupted over project selection, project design, and the procedure for migrant contribution of resources. A former state planning official captured these tensions in his characterization of interactions with the federal government over the completion of an electrification project in the following manner:

The Federal official was like, I am going to the site and I am going to lay out the project. But we were like, wait, this is a migrant project, we've already worked out a layout, we have it right here, why would you define the site plan? [He answered], that's the procedure. Just get the money, deposit it, and deal with the migrants however you like. The federal money is available, and you need my signature if you want it... There was a lack of trust: of the migrants toward the government and of the government toward the migrants, I mean, they were like, who are these people anyway? (Interview, Zacatecas, March 2003).

To resolve impasses such as the one described here, Zacatecan state officials leveraged the rapport that the Borrego, and increasingly, Romo administrations had developed with the migrants to comply with federal norms. "We talked to the brother of one, who talked to the cousin of the other, who was the president of the club [funding the electrification project], and we talked to the president of the Federation who relatives also lived in the village... In the end, we worked out that one of the elders (*ancianos*) in the *rancho* that everyone trusted would hold the money until the very last minute, and the day everything was ready to go, with all the government monies already there, he would deposit it in the account," explained the former "Two for One" director (Interview, Zacatecas, April 2003). The state also repackaged projects that were important to migrants but the federal government did not consider conducive to development so that they would match federal priorities more closely. Churches were recast as "community centers" and rodeo rings were filed as "sports centers." The state's robust partnership with migrants, invested with meaning and *confianza*, was translated into flat programmatic terms that the federal government could understand. (Interviews, Zacatecas, March-April 2003).

Because the federal government was reluctant to engage with migrants in an interpretive process and was thus unable to absorb the insights that had made the collaboration between Zacatecan migrants and their state government so effective, federal attempts to extend *Solidaridad Internacional* to six other states failed. From the start, the percentage of funds allocated to Zacatecas through *Solidaridad Internacional* was disproportionately large, at almost 30 percent. As a reflection of the difficulty that the SEDESOL was having with the program in other states, that proportion grew to 40 percent two years later (see Table 7.3; Goldring 2002). When National Solidarity Program, tainted with accusations that it had been deployed for political ends, was scrapped in 1995 after Zedillo took office, *Solidaridad Internacional* was swept away with it (Goldring 2002; Kaufman et al. 1997). Federal contribution to matching funds programs were discontinued in all states but Zacatecas, where the partnership with migrants depended, not on the federal program, but on a relationship developed locally. In the other states where *Solidaridad Internacional* was tried, matching funds arrangements with migrants became dormant, revived when Zacatecas' program was made national some years later (Interviews, Michoacan, December 2002; Interviews, Guanajuato, December 2002; Interviews, Jalisco, December 2002, May 2003).

Table 7.3: Zacatecas and Total Expenditures for *Solidaridad Internacional*, 1993-1997

Expenditure (in thousands of pesos)	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Zacatecas Two-for-One	1,877	3,769	3,905	7,066	16,826
<i>Solidaridad Internacional</i>	6,497	10,544	9,798		
Zacatecas Share of Total	29%	36%	40%		

Source: Secretaria de Planeación y Finanzas (1998) in Golding 2002: 75

Organizing interpretation: Expanding the “Two for One”

While the federal inability to grasp the conceptual bases of the “Two for One” program and unwillingness to engage with migrants undermined its ability to replicate the Zacatecas model in other states, the Zacatecan state government and Zacatecan migrants employed federal structures and resources to intensify their partnership. They used state programs as tools to build the new institutions to support their partnerships, the architecture of which that they elaborated iteratively and gradually through their

continued engagement. Specifically, the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs and the Zacatecas state government exploited federal programs to organize three additional Federations, one in the north of Texas, one in Chicago and one in Denver, and they stimulated the creation of unaffiliated Zacatecan clubs in Oklahoma, Nevada, and Florida. The state government consolidated new grassroots community groups, many of which appeared tenuous when they were first established, by immediately getting them to coalesce around the completion of a community project through the “Two for one” program. The proliferation of clubs and migrants projects in municipalities throughout the state soon raised the question about what role the municipal government should play in determining which projects were carried out and in contributing resources to complete them. “Project after project was getting done in villages, and the municipal presidents just stood by and watched. It was become very complicated for them politically, and they wanted to get involved,” remember one staff member from Romo’s Office of Planning (Interview, Zacatecas, April 2003). The state government began to devise means to draw municipal governments into the engagement with migrant groups, involving in community mobilization amongst migrants in the United States, in the design of public works projects under the “Two for One,” and in the informal contribution of resources – generally in-kind, like cement, the municipal truck, a few masons – for the construction of the projects. In that endeavor as well, the state government relied on the scaffolding provided by federal programs to make the ties between migrants and the municipal governments in the villages of origin more dense and more resilient. (Interviews, Zacatecas, April 2003; Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas, March-April 2003).

The main federal programs that the state government used to amplify its relationship with Zacatecan paisanos in the United State were those designed to provide services to Mexican emigrants. In particular, the Zacatecan authorities relied on the program structures erected under the PCME to extend health, education, and sports and cultural services to migrants. The DGCME increasingly began to delegate the provision of these services to state authorities; in its view, programs that targeted Mexican migrants were tangential to its main mission --which was the fostering of ties with Mexican-Americans and enrolling them into a lobby in the US that would press for Mexican interests – and was better carried out by Mexican state governments (Gutierrez et al.

1998; Gutierrez 1995; Interviews, Fundacion Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, Mexico City, May 2003). Before long, the state government of Zacatecas was an active participant in many PCME programs, most notably in educational services, with the state training teachers and supplying educational material. The state authorities also organized sports tournaments and obliged consulates and Mexican Cultural Institutes by supplying musical troupes and art shows for cultural expositions in the United States. (Gobierno de Zacatecas n.d. circa 1997; Interviews, Zacatecas, March-April 2003)

Involvement in the PCME provided a boon to the state government's efforts to strengthen its partnership with migrants in three main ways: first, it furnished the state with information on Zacatecan migrants in the United States. The PCME programs, along with applications for the consular identification card – *la matricula consular* – supplied the Zacatecan state government with names and addresses of Zacatecan migrants in various U.S. cities, information the state combined with its own informal registries collected by municipal presidents who interviewed relatives and neighbors of emigrants to discover where they had settled. Second, it offered the state government access to Zacatecan migrants who availed themselves of PCME services. Zacatecan state authorities were able to connect with Zacatecan *paisanos* who joined the baseball tournament or who sent their children to summer lessons organized by the state government under the PCME umbrella. Third, the PCME provided the Zacatecan state government with the funds to cover the travel costs of its bureaucrats and, as the state role in PCME service provision increased, of its municipal presidents. State employees took advantage of travel for PCME purposes to organize Zacatecan migrants and strengthen their partnership with the state as well. Even as the federal government proffered these resources to Zacatecan state authorities, they were unable to see the value of the community organizing drive taking place right under their noses. The goal of federal policy was to mobilize the Mexican-Americans of “Mejiamérica” and to keep Mexican worker emigration an open secret, invisible in policy realms.

The story of how the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs in Denver was formed exemplifies how the state of Zacatecas and migration Federations used federal government structures to further its interpretive engagement with migrants. In 1995, the DGCME held a meeting on the PCME binational education in Oaxaca to which it invited

state governments implementing aspects of the program, as well as consular staff and representatives from the Mexican Cultural Institutes. The following year, the director of the Mexican Cultural Institute of Denver approached Zacatecas state officials that he had met at the previous meeting about the possibility of putting together an exhibition about the art, culture, and tourism of the colonial state for a convention of that the Institute was hosting for the National Council of La Raza, a Mexican-American organization. The state government agreed, and immediately contacted the president of the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs in Los Angeles to prepare for an organizing drive in Denver. Municipal presidents were tasked with finding out whether they had a large population of migrants living in Denver, and if so, they were charged with discovering their addresses. The municipal authorities also prepared plans and budgets for modest but necessary projects that they felt were good candidates for the “Two for One” program. The Zacatecan delegation, which included the executive director of the “Two for One” program, the president of the Federation of the Zacatecan Clubs in Los Angeles, and the municipal presidents of Luis Moya and Ojocaliente, two municipalities well represented among Zacatecan migrants in Denver, traveled to Colorado at the federal government’s expense. (Interviews, Zacatecas, March 2003; Gobierno de Zacatecas n.d. circa 1997: 17)

The group perfunctorily delivered their presentation on Zacatecas to the Mexican-American organization during the day, and in the evenings, got to work mobilizing Zacatecan migrants in the area. Using home and work addresses they managed to collect from municipal governments, along with those gleaned from consulate lists, the group went knocking on doors; they got airtime on the local Spanish language radio station to advertise that they were in town; and they invited all the Zacatecanos in town to a dinner meeting at a local Mexican restaurant. In a repeat of Borrego’s trip to Los Angeles a decade earlier, the meeting began with open-ended discussions about who the migrants were and what relationship they wanted to have with the state. “We talked about Zacatecas, about all of us as Zacatecanos, about the times they came home for feast and holidays, about how they lived in Denver, about their work – everybody there seemed to work for the same landscape company,” remembered the “Two for One” director (Interview, Zacatecas, April 2003). The migrants were encouraged to form clubs, and the municipal presidents presented their proposals for public works projects the migrants

could support, complete with budgets, drawings, and emotional appeals about what the project would mean for the people of the municipality and how the bridge, the electricity network, and so on would serve as a memorial to the villages' *hijos ausentes* – the absent sons – who had sacrificed for the good of their communities. The president of the California Zacatecan Federation explained the importance of creating an umbrella organization, and provided a point by point “how to” model to establish a Federation of Clubs.

Over the next several months, the Zacatecans of Denver modified the proposals they had received, choosing to consolidate them into a couple of larger highway and potable water projects, establishing themselves with that move as a significant factor in the local development of their municipalities. They also continued to work closely with the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs from California to build the fledgling Denver federation into a resilient network that could marshal political influence tailored to the contexts of Luis Moya and Ojocaliente, of Zacatecas, and of Colorado. Variations on the Denver experience were repeated in cities throughout the United States (Interviews, Zacatecas, March-April; Interviews, FCZSC, Zacatecas, July 2003; Secretaria de Planeacion y Finanzas, “Two for One” records, 1996-1998).

These collaborative organizing efforts, and the repeated interpretive cycles on which they were based, transformed the partnership institutionalized in the “Dos por Uno.” By the end of Romo’s administration in 1998, Borrego’s improvised matching funds agreement had expanded into a major vector for public works financing. Migrant clubs and their federations in the United States had funded 137 community and infrastructure projects in villages throughout the state, in the amount of approximately \$20 million dollars (Secretaria de Planeacion y Finanzas, “Two for One” records, 1993-1998.) “The ‘Two for One’ program has gained such momentum,” noted Rodríguez Márquez, director of planning and development under Romo, “that in practice it has come to be considered as an alternative source of funding for municipal development programs” (qtd. in Moctezuma 2003: 24; see Table 7.4).

Moreover, migrants emerged as key constituents that increasingly defined development strategies in Zacatecan municipalities. This was due to the convergence of two key trends. First, under the New Federalism that Zedillo championed after he took

office, federal funds for local development were increasingly channeled through municipalities. The new policy strategy was designed to promote decentralized decision-making, but also engineered to draw a thick line between poverty reduction and political manipulation, in the hopes of shedding the stigma that had tainted the Solidaridad program as a classically clientelic scheme to buy votes in the guise of providing services. Federal funds for the “Two for One” program in Zacatecas were no exception, and were funneled directly to municipal government (Goldring 2002). Second, as growing numbers of municipal presidents participated in organizing drives amongst *paisanos* in the United States – under Romo’s tenure, presidents from at least a third of Zacatecas’ 52 municipalities made trips to the U.S. to meet with migrants—direct, vital relationships were forged between Zacatecan migrants and municipal authorities. Interpretive conversations between the migrants and the Zacatecan state government expanded to include municipal authorities.

Table 7.4: “Two-for-One” and “Three-for-One” Program Budget and Projects, 1993-2002
(In thousands of pesos—in 2002, 10 pesos equaled approximately 1USD)

Year	Investment	Investment in pesos of 2002	Number of Projects	Counties Benefited	Average
1993	\$ 1,877	\$ 7,026	7	No data	268
1994	\$ 3,769	\$ 13,176	30	No data	125
1995	\$ 3,905	\$ 8,983	34	No data	114
1996	\$ 6,946	\$ 12,512	61	17	113
1997	\$ 16,825	\$ 26,192	77	No data	218
1998	\$ 772	\$ 1,013	8	7	96
1999	\$ 48,179	\$ 56,296	93	27	518
2000	\$ 60,000	\$ 64,344	108	28	555
2001	\$ 72,000	\$ 73,956	130	30	553
2002	\$140,000	\$140,000	240	35	583

Source: Secretaria de Planeacion, Zacatecas, and Moctezuma 2003

As Goldring (2002) reports, those conversations were contested, often difficult, and mired in misunderstanding and ambiguity. “The negotiations were confusing,” observes Golring (2002). Migrants and municipal governments engaged in heated

discussions over which projects would be funded, what their implications were for local development, and what ramifications that would have on local political contests, in an era of fierce elections battles. However, those conversations produced new understandings of how local municipal economies were tethered to U.S. labor markets, and about how community life was shaped by migrant social and cultural practices across the border – that the rodeo ring favored by migrants, for example, was as important to the municipality’s development as a new sewage system. The rodeo ring brought migrants back and made the need to lay down sewage lines clear to them. Municipalities expanded their partnership with migrants past the confines of the “Two for one” program, and initiated ad-hoc matching funds arrangements through other funding streams which they received from the federal government, negotiating a sliding scale of migrant contribution depending on the project: from fifty percent for a project like remodeling a church to twenty percent for “poverty alleviation” projects like electrification. (Interviews, Zacatecas, Municipal governments, March-April 2003; Survey, Municipal Presidents, April 2003; Interviews, FCZSC, Zacatecas, July 2003; Interviews, Zacatecas, April 2003; Goldring 2002; see Table 7.5).

Table 7.5: Distribution of Matching-Funds Shares by Funding Scheme and Project Type

Share Paid	Dos por Uno With New Federalism (%)	Other Federal Funding Streams		
		Small Infrastructure Education (Fondo 1) (%)	Paving Roads %	Rodeo Rings, Sport Fields %
Migrants	33	20	35	50
Municipality	33	70-80	55	40
Federal	33	0-10	10	10

Source: Goldring 2002, from Secretaria de Planeacion y Finanzas, Zacatecas

The events in Zacatecas were emulated to varying degrees by state government in areas with high emigration rates. Borrego’s and Romo’s visits to meet with migrants in Los Angeles, and eventually in other areas of the U.S., were followed by a cascade of visits from other governors in the Mexican Republic. By 1995, Los Angeles alone

received the governors of Jalisco, Sinaloa, Nayarit, Michoacan, Aguascalientes, San Luis Potosi, Tlaxcala, and Guanajuato (Gonzalez Gutierrez 1995). Their visits prompted the creation of umbrella organizations, and by 1996, the Mexican consulate reported that the California city was host to six functioning Federations or Associations of migrant hometown clubs (Goldring 2002; see Table 7.6). The trend was most pronounced in southern California, but was quickly taking root in areas with large concentrations of Mexican migrants, such as Chicago, Dallas, and Seattle. The Federation of Zacatecan Clubs from Southern California worked with the nascent federations, helping them get organizing drives off the ground, instructing them on how to register as a non-profit organization, and advising them on how to establish an engagement with their Mexican state governments that was built on dialogue and exchange. In Los Angeles alone, the number of clubs jumped from a little over 100 in 1995 to nearly 250 five years later (Leiken 2001). While no state other than Zacatecas had been able to develop a substantial matching funds arrangement by 1998, migrant federations from other states did donate monies for community projects and emergency assistance to municipal and state authorities in a small scale and ad-hoc manner. (Interviews, Mexican Consulate, Chicago, August 2003; Interviews, Jalisco, May 2003; Interviews, Michoacan, December 2002; Gonzalez Gutierrez 1995; Leiken 2001; Goldring 2002; Zabin et al. 1998)

Ironically, the Mexican federal government's attempts to delegate service provision for migrants to state governments only accelerated this process of emulation. DGCME officials organized a number of conferences for municipal and state authorities on PCME program provision, and encouraged the creation of state *Oficinas de Atención a Migrantes y sus Familias (OFAM)* -- service centers for migrants and their families— which they then networked into an overarching commission (*CONOFAM*) (Interviews, SRE, Mexico City, May 2003, July 2003; Interviews, *Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-America*, Mexico City, May 2003; Gonzalez Gutierrez 1998). States varied in their institutional commitment to the OFAMs: states with large emigrant populations set up separate, although generally understaffed and poorly resourced, offices, whereas states with new or paltry emigrations streams made only symbolic attempts to comply. “In some states, they just added an inbox label OFAM on some desk in the corner, and that was their OFAM.” (Interviews, *Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-America*, Mexico City,

May 2003). However, the network the federal government established in the CONOFAM, and the regular conferences of OFAMs it sponsored, allowed state to exchange information about how to deal with their emigrant populations: they shared information about how to support bilingual education, and about the logistics of the transportation of the bodies of deceased migrants back to their home villages for burial, but they also shared knowledge about migrant clubs and their organizations into federations, about the possibilities of partnering with them for public works projects, and, tentatively, about the political sway that migrants – as an organized constituency with local credibility– could wield in municipal and state electoral contests. (Interviews, SRE, Mexico City, May 2003; Interview, Michoacan, Jalisco, December 2002; Interviews, Zacatecas, April 2003). Ironically, federal attempts to farm out what was considered a less desirable portfolio diffused information about how to engage with migrants among migrant sending states and helped bring the potential of migrants as political force to the attention of state governments. The Zacatecan gubernatorial elections at the end of Romo’s term would soon make the full weight of migrant influence abundantly clear.

Table 7.6: Mexicans and Hometown Associations in Los Angeles

State of Origin in Mexico	Est. % of Mexicans in LA ^a	Hometown Associations in LA, 1996	Satewide Umbrella Orgs. In LA
Aguascalientes	1	1	
Baja California	3	1	
Chihuahua	2	4	
Colima	1	2	
Durango	4	11	Yes
Distrito Federal	5	0	
Guanajuato	5	1	
Guerrero	3	1	
Jalisco	29	30	Yes
Michoacán	15	6	
Nayarit	3	27	Yes
Oaxaca	2		Yes
Puebla	3	9	
San Luis Potosí		11	Yes
Sinaloa	4	12	Yes
Sonora	1	1	
Tlaxcala		1	Yes
Yucatán		2	
Zacatecas	10	45	Yes
Others	<9		
Total	100	165	8

Source: Goldring 2002 from Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores

Institutionalized political power: Monreal, the PRD, and the Frente Civico Zacatecano

Zacatecas, an agricultural state penetrated by a dense corporatist root bed, had long had the dubious distinction of being the most PRI-ista state in the Mexican Federation (Delgado Wise al 2002; Moctezuma 2003). Ricardo Monreal's winning campaign for governor as the PRD candidate shattered that image: not only did the renegade candidate defeat the PRI but Zacatecas became the first state in the nation to have a governor from a leftist opposition party (Robles 1998). Zacatecan migrant support of his candidacy was decisive; Zacatecan groups in the United States backed the candidate with funds and with aggressive lobbying tactics on both sides of the border. "It's thanks to them [the migrants] that I became state governor," Monreal would later freely acknowledge (qtd in Lizarzaburu 2004) With their candidate's victory, the migrants demonstrated the political influence they had acquired through community mobilization and through their deep-- financial and planning -- involvement in state and municipal economic development strategies. The "Two for One" program, with all of its attendant organizing, instantiated into institutional structures the power that migrants had acquired in their interpretive engagement with the state to shape meaning. A brief overview of Monreal's campaign illustrates this.

In the early phase of the governor's race, the PRI initially chose Ricardo Monreal Ávila as its candidate for governor, and the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs in Los Angeles, by this time formally called the Federación de Zacatecanos Unidos del Sur de California and the largest and most powerful of all Zacatecan Federations (it claimed to represent 45,000 Zacatecan families (Goldring 2002), officially announced its support for the candidate. The PRI, however, changed candidates mid-stream, and designated José Antonio Olvera Acevedo as its nominee for governor just a few months before the election. Just like Cuahtemoc Cardenas had before him, Monreal remained in the race, running first as independent backed by a patchwork of smaller parties, and eventually becoming part of the PRD. In true Mexican-style corporatist fashion, the president of the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California retracted his support for Monreal and pledged allegiance to the PRI's new candidate. This switch opened up an enormous

rift in the Federation, between a minority who remained loyal to the PRI and a large dissident majority that complained that Romo was increasingly trying to bring the Federation of Southern California, as well other Federations throughout the U.S., under government control. The Federation hemorrhaged members and the dissidents founded the Frente Civico Zacatecano – the Zacatecan Civic Front – as a political action group to back Monreal⁶⁸.

In a reflection of its members organizing experience in the Federation, the Frente Civico was dynamic and immediately effective. It donated generously to the Monreal candidacy and campaigned vigorously for the renegade politician, both in Los Angeles and in their communities of origin, advertising on local village radio shows, calling home, traveling back to their village to encourage people to vote for change in Zacatecas⁶⁹. While both candidates were well aware that winning the governorship meant winning over Zacatecanos in the United States and both traveled north to push their tickets, the Monreal camp displayed a more prescient understanding of the political leverage that migrants could represent and made strengthening their participation in Zacatecas a central component of his platform. More to the point, the candidate promised to institutionalize their involvement in their communities of origin by creating a series of additional formal structures to support and augment it.

Cognizant that Monreal, a long-shot candidate who could not even get PRI party bosses to take him seriously, sailed into the governor's office on a wave of organized and well funded migrant support, the new PRD administration fulfilled its campaign promises to Zacatecan *paisanos* north of the border. As soon as Monreal was instated, the state government more than doubled the budget for the "Two for One" program and ratcheted up the matching funds program into a "Three for One" arrangement, adding a dollar from municipal governments to the two state and federal dollars already apportioned to match

⁶⁸ The Frente Civico Zacatecano was formally registered as a PAC in 2000 (Goldring 2002).

⁶⁹ Monreal campaign manager recalls how migrants mobilized their support for Monreal as follows: "the network [of migrants supporting Monreal] grew and grew and grew, and in the end they financed a lot of Monreal's campaign. They organized visits for Monreal in all of their communities, paying for all of the governor's expenses out-of-pocket. Those that could not attend just sent their funds to relatives for the governor's campaign. They would call into radio shows here in Zacatecas and they would say, "This is so-and-so, and I just want to tell all of my relatives in the town of such-and-such that all of you have to vote for Monreal because of this and this and this, and he came to see us in the US, he spent time with us. Don't lose this important opportunity. Don't be afraid of the PRI. Vote for Monreal." (Interview, Zacatecas, April 2003).

migrant donations. This revision institutionalized municipal participation in the program and provided additional incentive for municipal presidents to foster the organization of clubs. To restore the bonds of *confianza* after a traumatic race, the new administration expanded the consultation procedures for project selection, giving migrants more ample say over various aspect of the projects (including things like quality control and bidding procedures), and negotiated with the federal government that migrant clubs be able to deposit their contributions into accounts that they controlled rather than into the state treasury. Finally, Monreal named a cabinet-level liaison with migrants in the United States and opened a Zacatecan state office in Los Angeles. The consummate politician, Monreal also brokered a truce between the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs and the Frente Civico, such that the Federation would concentrate on “Three for One” projects, and the Frente would take on issues identified as explicitly political⁷⁰. And take on political issues it did.

The Frente Civico quickly established itself as a major political advocate for Mexican migrants in California and the United States as a whole. The organization joined a number of campaigns to back pro-immigrant legislation or policies, ranging from a proposed amnesty program and defending undocumented immigrants’ access to driver’s licenses. The Frente also forged close ties with the AFL-CIO, supporting the labor federation in its organizing drives amongst Mexican immigrants and endorsing its resolution for the legalization of immigrants and the repeal of sanction against those who hire undocumented workers. Additionally, the Zacatecan PAC backed the political campaigns of numerous Latino and Mexican-American candidates for a range of public offices, from Lou Correa (of Zacatecan ancestry) for the Orange County Board of Supervisors to Cruz Bustamante’s bids for Lieutenant Governor and Governor. As a further indicator of its lobbying skill, the Frente, a small PAC representing predominantly lower middle class Mexican immigrants, many of whom were undocumented, established high-level contacts in the United States government, securing regular access to then

⁷⁰ Within a couple of years, the Federation and the Frente Civico had reconciled so well that leadership actually moved from one organization to the other and back again. The most explicit example is that of Guadalupe Gomez who was president of the Frente Civico until 2000 when he left to take office as president of the Federation.

Governor Gray Davis and obtaining several meetings with presidential candidates at the time, Al Gore and George Bush⁷¹.

The Frente, in partnership with the Federation, held enormous sway in Zacatecas, shaping numerous pieces of state legislation that affected migrants but also their communities of origin. The Frente and Federation, often conflated in Zacatecan communities, had tremendous popular appeal: Moctezuma recounts that when Guadalupe Gómez, president of the Frente, and after 2000, president of Federation, visited his native municipality of Jalpa to promote various “Three for one” projects, “he received a massive reception in numerous communities, as if it were the Zacatecan governor himself who were visiting” (Moctezuma 2003: 31). (Moctezuma 2003; Goldring 2002; Bacon 2001; Interviews, FCZSC, Zacatecas, April 2003, July 2003; FCZSC, Washington, February 2003).

In a variation of the partnership that Zacatecan migrants and the Zacatecan state government had forged for community public works projects, the Frente and the Monreal administration established an alliance to advance the political rights for emigrants in Mexico and in the United States. That coalition quickly became an important venue through which Mexican emigrant suffrage activists from throughout the Republic pushed for their cause. A few months after assuming office, in November 1998 the Monreal administration, the Zacatecan Autonomous University and the Frente Civico held a major voting rights conference, attended by representatives of Mexican migrants groups, scholars, and Mexican politicians. The meetings were one of an avalanche of conferences on the topic as Mexico was approaching the national elections of 2000, but the quality of engagement between the Zacatecan state government and Zacatecan migrant organization – an engagement which increasingly involved the historically leftist and activist Autonomous University of Zacatecas -- attracted activists to it as an institutional channel that would transmit their demands with fidelity. A conference on voting rights was again held in Zacatecas in 2001, and at that meeting, the suffrage

⁷¹ The Frente Civico and the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs from the South of California have also established strong ties with important think tanks, like the InterAmerican Dialogue, and development banks in Washington, like the Inter-American Development Bank, largely based on its development of the “Three for One” program. But, as Manuel Orozco of the InterAmerican Dialogue has noted, the recent attention on remittances and the effects that it can have for development through matching funds programs like the one elaborated in Zacatecas have a legitimizing effect on migration. (Interviews and meetings, Washington, February 2003).

advocates penned their manifesto, which they titled “The Declaration on the Political Rights of Mexicans Abroad,” but which was more commonly known as “The Declaration of Zacatecas.” In an echo of the insights first articulated during the initial encounters between Governor Borrego and Zacatecan migrants in 1986, the Declaration states that Mexican migrants’ lack of political voice is “the major obstacle that we face to obtain the recognition of our dignity and to exercise our influence on the development of the country where we live and of our country of origin” (in Ross 2001: 176). (Ross 2001; Santamaría Gómez 2001: 172-175; Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas, March-April 2003).

Through their engagement, the migrants of Zacatecas and their state government together managed to accomplish what the Mexican federal government had struggled unsuccessfully to do for decades. The state government and migrants of one of Mexico’s poorest and most agricultural states, with a population of a little more than 1 million in a country of 100 million, had created a powerful lobby that was determining political outcomes in the United States and in Mexico. The federal government’s reluctance to “see” Mexican migrants and address the phenomenon of migration domestically and bilaterally, much less to view migrants as potential partners for the Mexican state, and its refusal to relinquish control over the engagement with the Mexican-American partners that it did, at times, court, tragically hobbled its efforts. Yet, even as the political movement of Mexican migrants was gathering momentum, the federal government – and more specifically, the PRI – chose to ignore it, pretending that the political storm gathering on its horizon did not exist. The PRI and its government stubbornly maintained this illusion even while the migrants helped drive them out of power.

Conclusion

Through a matching funds program for infrastructure provision that began as an improvised partnership, the state government of Zacatecas and Zacatecan emigrants fostered an interpretive engagement that would radically redefine the role of migrants in shaping the political and economic trajectory of their state. The interpretive conversations would lead to the construction of institutional structures both to solidify the matching funds arrangement and to support the exchanges that it held. When those interpretive processes were threatened, emigrants used those structures to protect the

interpretive engagement through which they had come to define themselves as protagonists that could help author Zacatecas' future. Increasingly, they began to draw on those structures as a resource in national struggles over their right to participate in the envisioning of new prospects for Mexico's economic and political development – over their right to contribute their voices to the definition of Mexico's transformation.

Chapter 8

The Relationship between “Seeing” and “Interpreting”:

The Mexican Government’s Interpretive Engagement with Mexican Migrants

Introduction

Shortly after 11pm on July 2, 2000, Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo announced: “the next president of Mexico will be Vicente Fox Quesada” (qtd. in Preston 2000). With his terse statement, Zedillo conceded that his party, the PRI, had lost the presidency for the first time since its creation in 1929. The PRI’s seventy year vise on power had finally been loosed. Fox supporters streamed into the streets of Mexico city, chanting “Vicente Presidente!” and serenading the president-elect with boisterous renditions of “Las Mañanitas,” a traditional Mexican song in praise of birthdays and new beginnings (Collier 2000). Over the coming days, cities throughout Mexico saw celebrations over the election results: news bulletins of the events reported tens of thousands of people dancing in the streets, mariachi bands playing, and flags waving, and roaring cheers of “Yes we could! – Si se pudo!” in state capitals throughout the republic (Amador 2000; The Australian 2000; Collier 2000; Preston 2000). The celebrations in Mexico were matched by festivities in numerous cities in the United States. In Chicago’s Mexican neighborhood, Fox supporters poured into the streets and “cheered, hugged, sang Mexico’s national anthem, and even cried” (Jackson 2000); in Cleveland, Mexicans rejoiced openly in community centers and social clubs, making statements to eager visiting reporters about the hope they felt for Mexico’s future: “Now Mexican people have a choice” (Kaggwa 2000); in California’s Bay Area, Mexican migrants who had been glued to their televisions set watching the results come in celebrated in the streets and taquerias of the San Francisco’s mission district, and in heavily Mexican towns of Northern California, residents hung homemade posters from lampposts that read “Yes we could! Si se pudo!,” echoing the victory cry that rose up south of the border (Fernandez et al. 2000).

For Mexican migrants, Fox’s electoral upset represented more than the end of the PRI’s 71 year rule. It marked the end of the political invisibility under which they had

struggled for over three decades. With Fox's victory, they strode onto Mexico's political stage. During his political campaign, the PAN candidate had avidly courted migrant support and after his win, he continued to solicit their political backing, making numerous trips to the United States and promising to institute policies to involve migrants in the political and economic development of their country of origin. Throughout his campaign and in the months after his victory, Fox's pronouncements had significant credibility because of his attention to migrants during his tenure as governor of Guanajuato. Even before Fox took office, the state government of Guanajuato began elaborating policies directed at Guanajuantenses in the United States. As governor, Fox continued and amplified them. On the presidential campaign trail, which he pushed north of the border, Fox called migrants "Mexico's heroes and heroines" and invoked Guanajuato's policies to demonstrate that he was prepared to walk his laudatory talk. He pledged that building a relationship with migrants would be one of his administration's top priorities.

In the PAN candidate, migrants who had become increasingly organized, in large part following the Zacatecanos' lead (see Chapter 7), saw a bridge across which they could bring their local initiatives and local mobilization to the federal level. They saw him as a means to make the interpretive engagement that was emerging between migrants and a small handful of state governments national. Ultimately, the instinct of migrant leaders who backed Fox proved correct, and migrants were able finally, after decades of federal neglect, to establish an interpretive engagement with the Mexican government. However, they only succeeded because Fox failed.

The Fox administration's approach to migrants both in Guanajuato and at the federal level was solidly analytic. His PAN government strove to track, tabulate and measure migration and migrant remittances in order to control, direct and channel them to meet state priorities for economic growth and political development. In classic analytic style, the state defined the potential that migration and migrants represented for Guanajuato, and then for Mexico as a whole, and designed policies to manipulate that potential to achieve what the state determined was maximum gain. Migrant leaders were right in deducing that Fox and his state, and then federal, administrations did perceive migrants and were willing to stand by their political visibility. However, because of the

analytic approach to policy-making deployed, the state under Fox “saw” only what it wanted to see, a fact that would quickly become obvious to migrants. Migrants were reduced to a economic and political resource – into objects of policy – and were excluded from the process of policy design and from the generation of the conceptual understandings on which the policy was built.

Fixed meanings and disconnection

Judith Jordan, in her work on relationship and disconnection (2004), argues that engagement based on fixed definitions of the participants involved inevitably leads to the collapse of that engagement. Participants adhere to preconceived meanings, and over time, marshal increasing resources to defend those meanings as those definitions become further and further removed from the actual realities of the relationship and its context. This, suggest Jordan, eventually leads to an impasse, at which point the relationship is either abandoned or one party consolidates its power over the other in an effort to keep increasingly scripted and unreal meanings from shifting. In Jordan’s terms, the Fox administration stuck to its definitions of who migrants were, the resources they represented, and the role they could play in Mexico; and as Jordan would have predicted, the relationship that the Fox administration tried to establish with migrants reached a breaking point within months of his taking office. Instead of a bridge that would allow migrants to engage with the Mexican government in an interpretive fashion, the Fox administration was revealing itself to be much more of a barrier. The tentative relationship migrants had established with Fox began to disintegrate rapidly as migrants began eschewing dealings with the Mexican state.

The failure of the relationship the Fox administration had tried to construct with analytic tools discredited many of the meanings and definitions that it had superimposed onto migrants and migration. But it did not -- and indeed could not -- make the increasingly political organized and powerful migrants invisible. The state could not deny having seen a constituency it had taken pains to make visible without incurring significant political cost. The relationship’s collapse, however, cleared the way of analytically fabricated meanings about migrants that were limiting, inconsonant, or simply incorrect. This enabled Mexican migrants and the Mexican government to engage

interpretively, and collaborate in the construction of meaning around migration and the political and economic role that migrants could play in the country of origin. In yet another re-interpretation of remembered practices of interpretive engagement, federal bureaucrats resuscitated and re-invented the institutions and methods that had used to foster interpretive conversations with Mexican-Americans. Except that this time, they applied them to create conversations that included Mexican migrants as well as their familiar Mexican-American interlocutors. The conversations broke old paradigms about migration in Mexico, and led to the articulation of new connections. Those insights, and the policies they have inspired, have recast the relationship between migration, development and political power in ways that are likely to have significant ramifications for Mexico's political and economic future.

The implosion of Fox's analytically constructed rapport with migrants and the emergence of a vital interpretive engagement with migrants out of its ruins illustrates the relationship between analytic and interpretive modes of policy formulation: analysis made migrants visible, and interpretation transformed state practices of seeing. This chapter traces succession of events that bring this relationship between analysis and interpretation into relief. It is divided into three sections: the first section describes the emergence and elaboration of analytic approach to migrants in Guanajuato under Fox and his predecessor. The second section depicts migrants' enthusiastic embrace of Fox as a means to carry innovations they developed in partnership with state governments – particularly in the case of Zacatecas, and then shows the progressive collapse of the relationship between migrants and the Fox administration. The third, and final, section discusses the re-invention of past state practices to create an interpretive engagement with migrants. It also documents two out of the many the radical ways it has transformed migrants' political and economic role in Mexico: migrants are now active participants in economic development and investment planning in states throughout Mexico, and migrants will be voting in the 2006 Mexican presidential election.

1. Analyzing migrants

Legal status, labor protest, and visibility

On April 1, 1993, 140 mushroom pickers in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania walked off their jobs, demanding wages increases and the recognition of their organization into a union (Slobodzian et al 1993). The strikers, like the rest of the mushroom pickers in the tiny capital of the U.S. mushroom industry, were almost exclusively from Guanajuato, most of them from a handful of small *ranchos* in the municipalities of Morelia, Uriangato, and Yuriria (Garcia 1997). Though small, the strike was the first organized expression of simmering labor unrest in the agricultural enclave. Even since an estimated 4,000 Mexican undocumented laborers in the area regularized their status under IRCA and the Special Agricultural Workers (SAW) program in 1987 (Bustos 1989), migrants laborers who did not simply leave their jobs in search of better employment began resisting the worst of the illegal labor practices common in the mushroom hothouses. Shielded with their newly acquired legal status and not longer afraid of deportation, Mexican workers began to protest low wage levels, unpaid overtime, abysmal working conditions and the frequency of on the job injury, and they began to demand the improvement of seriously substandard employer-provided housing, especially the lack of running water, electricity, and toilet facilities in the trailers. (Bustos 1991; Barrientos 1993; Henson 1993).

The strike, mobilized with the help of a New Jersey farm workers' group (Comite de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agricolas -- CATA), was endorsed by larger unions like the AFL-CIO and the Teamsters, as well as the American Friends Service Committee, and received extensive coverage in local and national press (Slobodzian et al 1993; Interviews, Philadelphia, August 2003). Within a couple of weeks of the walkout announcement, Cuahtemoc Cardenas, having received a call from a Mexican labor organizer and gearing up for his 1994 presidential bid, visited the Guanajuatan strikers. With Mexican press in tow⁷², Cardenas offered them his public support, and held up the strikers as heroes resisting the endemically poor conditions under which Mexican

⁷² Univision, for example, produced an in-depth television report on the strike in 1993. (Interviews, Philadelphia, August 2003).

migrants labored (Slobodzian et al 1993; Interviews, Philadelphia, August 2003). True to form, the PRI, unnerved by all of the attention that the migrant workers were garnering, sent representatives to meet with prominent Mexican-American and Mexican business in the area in order to devise a solution to the conflict and make the whole mess – and especially the migrants -- disappear. “It was all very secretive. We met in the [Philadelphia] consulate on a day it was closed” remembered one businessman who attended, “they kept the curtains pulled shut the whole time” (Interview, Philadelphia, August 2003).

The Governor of Guanajuato, Carlos Medina Plascencia, also traveled to Pennsylvania “to let the *paisanos* know that their state government was supporting them and backing them,” as he put it (Interview, Mexico City, July 2003). Medina was from the PAN party and Guanajuato was still only the third state with an opposition governor. Notoriously inept at courting migrant support and weak in the rural areas from which many migrants heralded, the PAN sought to emulate Cardenas’ strategy and build a loyal base amongst Mexican workers in the United States. The headline grabbing mushroom pickers’ strike provided an ideal opportunity. (Interviews, Philadelphia, August-September 2003; Interviews, Guanajuato, July 2003).

Reducing migrants from subjects to objects: the beginnings of Guanajuatan policy

Medina, named governor in 1992 instead of the party’s candidate, Vicente Fox, after a negotiation between the PRI and the PAN over contested election results, was already developing an interest in migration. Appointed to the post unexpectedly, the former major of Leon embarked on a tour of his state, visiting municipalities with intensive emigration patterns. “For me, in that moment, it was a surprise,” recounted Medina, and he approached the issue with analytic zeal: “I told my staff that I wanted to know exactly how many migrants there were in the United States, and exactly where they had settled. Numbers and locations, that’s what I wanted” (Interview, Mexico City, July 2003). Based on the data collected, the governor’s office laid out a plan to set up Guanajuatan centers in the United States, which would follow the federal model of Mexican Cultural Institutes. Just like the Institutes, they would serve as the hubs of a lobbying network, that, as Medina specified, would be “in keeping with the philosophy

and doctrines of [the] National Action [Party]” (Interview, Mexico City, July 2003). Moreover, the centers, to be called *Casas Guanajuato*, would explicitly foster a state-based, and not a municipal, identity. As the former governor specified, this was part of a statewide strategy to build cultural cohesion in Guanajuato in order to promote economic integration, but more importantly, to create a political base for the right of center opposition party:

In the northern part of the state, we ha[d] municipalities that ha[d] a very low level of economic development, and some municipalities had closer economic ties and activities with bordering states than with the rest of Guanajuato itself. So what we saw was that we needed to reinforce the Guanajuatan identity of Guanajuatenses. We wanted people to look toward Guanajuato and its government for their future. And that’s why we decided that the Casa Guanajuato should have a larger state identity, rather than be identified with a given municipality. And anyway, how much can a municipality really do for migrants? (Interview, Mexico City, July 2003).

Once in Kennett Square, the governor met with the striking workers, but squandered the opportunity the protest represented to initiate an interpretive conversation with Guanajuatan migrants. In contrast to the open-ended engagement of the Zacatecan government, Medina’s interaction with migrants skimmed the surface: he made several speeches in support of the strikers, perceived to be genuine by the mushroom pickers, but displayed little interest in the concrete details of their lives and in building a relationship with them. Instead, Medina’s approach was to solve the problem at hand. He consulted with growers about addressing, as the statesman and former businessman saw it, “flaws in their human resource management system” (Medina, Interview, May 2003). He also talked with county government officials about Guanajuatan workers in Kennett Square. Based on information about the prevalence of HIV amongst the migrant workers that he received from Chester county public health workers, corroborated by a anomalous cluster of cases in isolated *ranchos* in the municipality of Moreleon, the governor drafted a system with U.S. authorities to map out migrant networks and to track the movement of disease along them. The disease control program, appropriately named the Binational Health Information System for Epidemiological Surveillance of Mexican Migrant Workers, was launched as a pilot project for the exchange of health information between Mexican and United States authorities, and the Guanajuata government, satisfied with the

results, later replicated for Guanajuatan migrant population in Texas, Colorado and Illinois (Velasco-Mongragón et al. 2000; Interviews, COESPO, Guanajuato, July 2003).

He also established a Casa Guanajuato for the migrants – the first to be built off the blueprints drawn up in Guanajuato state offices. Although the Casa was set up to give migrants a venue to “gather and meet” (Medina, Interview, May 2003), the governor specified that the concern about the spread of HIV to Guanajuatan ranchos and the resulting desire to canvass migrant populations was the main impetus behind the program: “It was the catalyst that really got the Casas Guanajuato Program going. It’s why we decided to finally allocate funds to the project after so many months of tinkering with the design” (Interview, Mexico City, July 2003). This thrust was maintained as a central mission of Casas program; as the director of the program under Medina successor, Vicente Fox, emphasized: “Casas Guanajuato is where we have been monitoring and assessing the location and networks of the migrants” (Ramon Flores, qtd. in Smith, M. 2003).

Upon his return back to Guanajuato, the governor formally established a separate government agency, the Dirección General de Atención a Comunidades Guajuatenses in el Extranjero (DACGE), to implement the Casa program and to design other interventions for migrants. The formal mission of DACGE was broad -- offer migrants “connection, communication, support, and services” (Pa’l Norte, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 1994)—but the purpose it serve in practice was two-fold: first, to trace emigration from Guanajuato, assess and map its impacts on local communities and mitigate the negative effects where possible; and second, to capture the political capital that migrants represented. The DACGE’s newsletter, Pa’l Norte, makes these two goals explicit through its regular publications of articles on migration flows from Guanajuato, bulletin with preventive health tips, and its invariable message from the governor wooing Guanajuatenses abroad with generic expressions of admiration and support, all of them tinged with a hint of condescension in their vague over-the-top praise⁷³. (Pa’l Norte, 1994-2001; Interviews, DACGE, Guanajuato, July 2003; Smith, M. 2003).

⁷³ When Fox began his drive to enroll migrants for his presidential bid, his message echoed this same tone of vague praise laced with a condescension. In a interview published in 1998 volume for distribution north of the border, the presidential hopeful says that he’d like to send the following message to the paisanos in the United States: “I’d like to tell them: We love you very much, we respect you, we are very very proud of

Casas Guanajuato: Ramshackle lobbies

The Casa Guanajuato in Kennett Square did not even survive long enough to make it into the government official records on the Casa program. It disintegrated soon after the governor left Pennsylvania, largely because the migrant mushroom pickers did not see themselves primarily as Guanajuatenses, but identified instead with their communities or origin, and at the most, with the municipalities in which those communities were located. Nevertheless, the DACGE doggedly continued to set up Casas Guanajuato throughout the United States, pouring substantial resources into the initiative: the DACGE staff traveled to the US to set up the Casas, provided with standardized mimeo-ed charter with only the names of the Casa president and treasurer left blank; granted them seed money; regularly supplied them with materials to foster a Guanajuatan identity, ranging from books of Guanajuato history to artisans that would conduct workshop on Guanajuatan crafts; and eventually founded a branch of the DACGE in Illinois to provide the Casas with more “hands-on” support (Interviews, DAGCE, Guanajuato, July 2003; Interviews, DAGCE, Chicago, August 2003; DAGCE Casas program documents 1998-2002; Pa’l Norte, 1996-2001). At its peak in 2000, the program could boast only 18 Casas throughout the U.S., although the Fox claimed 33 during his campaign (Orozco, G. et al. 2000; Hegstrom 2000). (Interviews, DAGCE, Guanajuato, July 2003; Leiken 2001).

Despite the considerable financial and human resources dedicated to the program, , the Casas had extremely short life spans. They almost invariably met the same fate as the first Casa in Kennett Square, falling apart within months of their creation. The DAGCE heroically tried to prop them up with more funds, and patch them together in face of the reams of letters that they received from Casa members accusing each other of graft and power-mongering, but the agency met with little success. “So many of them were just empty shells, with one or two people claiming to represent dozens and collecting state money,” commented one DACGE staff member in Illinois (Interview, DAGCE, Chicago, August 2003). The Casas were shadowed by a network of

each and every one of you. We know that you have taken a great chance and have gone through many difficulties” (1998; 39)

Guanajuatan migrant organizations that were independent of the state government, patterned after the municipality-based hometown clubs initiated by the Zacatecans and copied by migrants from states throughout Mexico. (Interviews, COESPO, Guanajuato, July 2003; Interviews, Consulate, Chicago, August 2003). By 2000, Mexican consulates reported that there were at least 24 known clubs to 18 government-sponsored Casas (Orozco, G. et al. 2000). The DAGCE dragged its feet on recognizing Guanajuatan clubs, and without migrant organizations that could act as interlocutors with the state, the government agency turned its attention to the provision of services. The DAGCE progressively morphed into a state-level expression of the PCME's social service approach toward Mexican migrants, a development which the federal government was only too happy to support as it increasingly delegated service provision for migrants to state governments. (Interviews, DAGCE, July 2003).

Channeling Remittances: The Comunidades Program

The Guanajuatan state government's attempts at building collaborative programs with Guanajuatan migrants fared even more poorly than the ill-fated Casas. Championed by Fox who became governor in 1995, the government's main priority with these programs was to capitalize on the remittances that migrants sent to the state, tallied with analytic precision at \$ 1.36 million a day (INEGI in Delago Wise 2001). However, these efforts invariably collapsed because the state defined where and how those remittances would be used.

The government's most famous effort at building a partnership with migrants to foster development was its Comunidades program, launched by the Fox administration in 1996 and heavily promoted by the presidential hopeful. The initiative, heralded by policy makers, scholars, and international development banks alike as a new model for development, would collect migrant funds for investment in small maquilas that would be located in migrants' communities of origin (Torres 2001). Designed as an extension of the maquila boom in the state, drafters of the initiative had visions of turning isolated and impoverished migrant-sending hamlets into high-end garment production centers patterned on the success of Middle Italy (Smith, M. 2003). Thanks to a public relations blitz amongst Guanajuatan migrants, the state raised the money for 13 maquilas, each

requiring a minimal investment of \$60,000, and matched the funds with generous technical assistance, wage subsidies, and discounted loans.

Within five years, with Fox already in office as president, the program was a obvious bust: ten of the maquilas had closed and the remaining three were barely hanging on by a thread, with migrant-owners and managers sending home additional remittances to subsidize the unprofitable garment firms. The maquilas failed for a number of very fundamental reasons: the small outfits were geographically isolated, cut off from major production and distribution centers by substandard infrastructure, from barely passable roads to unreliable phone lines; they were tenuously, if at all, connected to the commodity production chains for garment production, and as a result, had little access to mechanism which would help them improve quality; there was a shortage of workers in the villages, as residents found the pay and work options at the maquilas seriously lacking when compared with job possibilities north of the border, which were almost equally accessible thanks to well-established migration networks; and finally, and perhaps most importantly, migrant firm owners found themselves torn between complying with a business model and fulfilling social obligations to their relatives and neighbors, giving them jobs and pay advances in lieu of the remittances they had sunk into the maquilas. The garment firms' bankruptcy had grave consequences. Not only did the program wipe out the life savings of dozens of migrants who pooled their resources to participate in the venture, but it wiped out any *confianza* that migrants had provisionally placed in the state government thanks to its provision of services to migrants and its enthusiastic promotion of the Comunidades program (Iskander 2005).

Dissatisfied, the Guanajuatan migrant clubs that the state was reluctant to recognize pressured the government into emulating the "Three for One" matching funds program in Zacatecas. By early 1999, the program had already spread to a couple of states in Mexico center-west migration sending area: Jalisco and Guerrero began to offer their paisanos the option of collaborating with the state of infrastructure projects in their communities of origin (Interviews, SEDESOL, Mexico City, December 2002; May 2003; Interviews, Jalisco, **Office**, May 2003). In 2000, with Fox's presidential campaign well under way, the state government conceded to migrant demands and created its own version of the "Two for One" program. In the Guanajuatan adaptation, every dollar

contributed by migrants would be matched by two from the state government, rather than the established pattern of the state and federal governments each supplying a dollar. The PAN, which governed Guanajuato, was by that time in a dead heat with the PRI in the presidential race, and had no interest in begging resources from PRI-dominated federal government. Furthermore, Guanajuato applied a distinct style of program implementation. The state government used rigid criteria for the projects to be funded, decisively prioritizing projects it viewed as catalyzing development and discouraging projects which they viewed as an extension of the dead-end consumption patterns they attributed to migrants. State officials set up so many bureaucratic hurdles to filter out so-called “un-productive” projects, like plazas and churches— the number of bureaucratic steps required to get a project approved has recently been reduced from 56 to 32 – that it took migrant communities almost the entire fiscal year to get their project authorized, leaving only a few weeks at the end of the year for the project to actually be constructed, before the municipal authorities had to return any unused funds. So frustrating was the process that participation in the “Two for One” -- and now Guanajuato’s version of the federal “Three for One” – remained sluggish and, at times, actually dipped. (2x1 GTO data; Maxwell 2003)

The Guanajuatan government’s response to these failures has been stubbornly analytic. After each blunder, the state government ordered a new batch of studies. Most recently, it has partnered with the Colegio de La Frontera Norte to conduct two extensive and detailed household surveys on migration, and its social and economic impacts-- two of the largest surveys of their kind ever conducted in Mexico. “Our programs weren’t working and we were at a loss. So we decided we needed to know more, about migrant and their families, and that’s why we embarked on this study,” explained the director of the surveys at Guanajuato’s State Council on Population (Consejo Estatal de Población – COESPO; Interview, Guanajuato, July 2003). It has also subjected each of its policy failures to several – and arguably redundant --rounds of evaluation. The Comunidades program, for example, has undergone at least four extensive formal evaluations, one internal, two commissioned from local and international research centers, and one comprehensive independent study (Brynes 2003). Finally, the state government, in an expression over its confusion over the source of the mismatch between its programs and

the migrant population that it was targeting, restructured the organization that carried out its migrant programs. In 2001, the state government split the DAGCE portfolio into two: it left the agency with the services for migrants, but apportioned services for migrants' families in communities of origin to new division called the State Commission for the Support of Migrants and their Families (Comisión Estatal de Apoyo Integral a los Migrantes y sus Familias). The reorganization reflected a clear misunderstanding of the relationship between migrants and their communities in Guanajuato: the state government saw a divide between migrants in the United States and their families in the Guanajuato. As the director of migrant services at the Commission put it, "migrants leave behind families, dependents with lots of problems. And we are left to take the responsibility of solving them" (Interview, Comisión Estatal de Apoyo Integral a los Migrantes y sus Familias, Guanajuato, July 2003).

2. A Brief Engagement: Migrants and Mexico's Democratic Revolution

Voto para el cambio: The electoral contest of 2000

Even as his programs for migrants were ailing, presidential candidate Vicente Fox paraded them, during his campaigning north of the border, as proof of his engagement with migrants. In his large, energetic rallies in cities throughout California, and his swaggering march through Calle 26, the Mexican heart of Chicago, he invoked his programs repeatedly to show that he understood migrants and their relationships with their communities of origin (Oppenheimer 2000; Interviews, SRE, Mexico City, May 2003). This aspect of his campaign message, though subtle, was critical to gaining migrant support. Both opposition parties had begun courting migrant backing early on: in 1999, the PRD and the PAN proposed joint legislation that called for the Federal government to implement the measures necessary to allow migrants to exercise their right to vote in the 2000 election. The bill was defeated by PRI, but both opposition candidates took up the cause in their presidential campaigns and made granting migrants the ability to vote in Mexican elections a central tenet of their platforms (Quinones 1999). Cardenas and Fox both made campaign promises about using government resources to protect migrants from a variety of abuses and negotiating changes in U.S. policy toward

Mexican immigrants. But by the time the election campaign was drawing to a close, and Cardenas and Fox were barnstorming through the United States so intensively in May 2000 that their schedules practically overlapped (Robles 2000), a distinction between the two candidates seemed to be emerging. (Labastida, the PRI candidate, in rebuff to Mexican migrants that only underscored the ruling party's dense reluctance to engage with them, vowed not to leave Mexico until the elections were over⁷⁴ (Leiken 2000).) (Belluck 2000)

To migrants, Fox seemed to distinguish himself as the candidate that grasped that migration was a local phenomenon: that it had local causes, and very specific local effects. Guanajuato's Casas and Comunidades program, their shortcomings still unclear to observers beyond Guanajuato and even to many observers in the state, were viewed as evidence that his pledge to be the president of "118 million Mexicans" (qtd. in Gonzalez)—100 million in Mexico and 18 million beyond its borders – was more than rhetorical, and that the presidential hopeful's direct experience with programs for migrants and their communities meant that he had a pragmatic vision of what that commitment would look like in practice. Moreover, Fox's campaign promise to take the hugely popular "Two for One" program national, and to raise the government contribution to three dollars for every dollar migrants gifted, was seen as an indication that Fox saw a role for government in supporting migrant ties to their communities of origin (Interviews, SRE, May, July 2003; Interviews, FCZSC, Zacatecas, July 2003; Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas, 2003; Hegstrom 2000). The existence of programs for migrants in Guanajuato, and the promised expansion of the matching funds program, were cited in informal public opinion surveys of migrants as reasons they were backing the charismatic PAN candidate (Cites). In Fox, an overwhelming majority of migrants saw their best hope to unseat the PRI, and end 71 years of its uncontested rule. Indeed, as Leavitt et al. note, "in simulated elections organized among emigrants, Fox got 10,985 votes; Cardenas got 2,673; and PRI candidate Labastida got 1,789" (2003).

⁷⁴ Fox used Labastida's refusal to travel north of the border to his advantage in a characteristically provocative – and effective – public relations move. He told the Mexico City daily *La Reforma* that he was going to "visit Mexican's expelled by Labastida's PRI, that had to leave because the regime is murdering them in their own land with starvation" (qtd. in Leiken 2001: 20).

But many migrants also saw in him a bridge to take local initiatives – and the partnerships that migrants had established with local governments in particular– to the federal level (Interviews, SRE, May, July 2003; Interviews, FCZSC, Zacatecas, July 2003; Interviews, UAZ, Zacatecas, 2003.) In his barnstorming throughout the United States and in his campaigning in Mexico, Fox clearly signaled his interest in connecting with migrants and addressing their particular concerns, as well as the dynamic of migration writ large. So, while the Fox campaign mobilized to use migrants as source of political influence in Mexico, migrants were also using Fox to achieve policy objectives important to them. These objectives were mainly concerned with new economic and political *relationships* that migrants wanted to forge with government and with their communities of origin. However, the relationships migrants were interested in cultivating and strengthening had gone unaddressed in Guanajuato, if they had not been severed. The analytic frame that Fox and the government of Guanajuato had used to make policy for migrants blocked from view.

Although thousands of valiant migrants streamed back into Mexico to vote in the historical contest, the direct effect of migrants on the election was infinitesimal. (Out of 37.6 million ballots cast nationwide, migrants are thought to represent less than 50,000 (Fitzgerald 2004).) However, their indirect effect may have been more significant. Fox told the Washington Post that “[Migrants] are the people who are sustaining the economy [in their hometowns] and they have the moral authority to influence votes” (qtd in Leiken 2001), and he urged migrants at every opportunity to tell their relatives and friends to vote the PRI out of power. His campaign machine in the U.S., spearheaded by Mimexca (Migrantes Mexicanos por el Cambio), a counterpart to *Amigos de Fox* in Mexico, distributed millions of postcards for people to send home and phone cards so that migrants could personally exhort family members to “vote for change” (Leiken 2001; Levitt et al. 2003). There is some circumstantial evidence to suggest that migrants may indeed have had an effect on the electoral outcome. According to a statistical analysis run by Joseph Klesner (2005) in which he controlled for the demographic, socioeconomic and religious factors that favored the PAN, Fox did unexpectedly well in the center-west region of Mexico, the region with the highest emigration rates in Mexico, both historically and at the time of the election. However, irrespective of the actual magnitude

of migrant influence on the electoral outcome, Fox and his team viewed migrants as a very important political group that had not only help bring them to power, but that would continue to shape political events.

V.I.Ps – Very Important *Paisanos*

Before even formally assuming the office of President, Fox announced that he was establishing an Office for Mexican Migrants Abroad, to be headed by a director that would have a cabinet-level position. At a meeting with 70 leaders of Mexican migrant organization in Los Angeles in November 2000, an event that was itself politically unprecedented, the president-elect told them that the office, patterned on the DACGE in Guanajuato, would “address your demands and your proposals on a daily basis, so that you can remind us every day of our obligations [toward you]” (qtd. in Amador 2000). Adding that the office would be directed by “migrants themselves, I don’t want intermediaries to represent them” (qtd. in Amador 2000), he named Juan Hernandez, the Mexican-American wheeler-and-dealer who had campaigned for him in the United States, as head of the Office. Fox also renewed his pledge to fight to get migrants living abroad the ability to vote in Mexican elections. Soon afterward, two hundred presidents of Mexican migrant organizations received invitations to the inaugural festivities in Mexico City. Policy meetings to discuss future steps with the president and with Juan Hernandez were to follow the ceremonies. (Not coincidentally, perhaps, fifteen Mexican migrant leaders from Los Angeles were also invited to the inauguration in Washington, D.C.) “Never had we initiated a relationship this close and this good with a [Mexican] president” (qtd. in Amador 2000), beamed Rafael Barajas, president of the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California when asked about the developments. (Amador 2000)

Despite their optimism about their budding relationship with the federal government, the Mexican migrant leaders left the meetings in Mexico City feeling a bit apprehensive. Many of them publicly expressed their concern that Hernandez had an incomplete understanding of the realities that migrants and their communities faced, and also intimated that Fox’s grasp of the programs he had pushed on the campaign trail was less than perfect. In their interviews with *La Opinión*, a Los Angeles Spanish language

daily newspaper, they concurred that Hernandez “isn’t familiar with the whole situation [of migrants and their communities]” and one of them flatly added that “he is unaware of the real problems of Mexicans, simply because he is a Chicano and doesn’t represent Mexicans” (qtd. Amador 2000). Even more disappointing was that Fox displayed a murky understanding of how the “Two for one” matching funds program worked, and seemed to be advocating a revision of the programs fundamental purpose. More specifically, Fox’s comments seemed to herald a downgrade of the program from an arrangement that offered two or three dollars that migrants already received in the states where the program was in force, to an agreement that only offered a single dollar for each migrant dollar. Furthermore, they seemed to presage a redirection of funds toward projects that the government viewed as productive rather than the cultural and social public works migrants favored. “For every dollar that you want invest in your communities, building maquilas, creating jobs, creating these types of opportunities for your children, your families en these communities, the government will match your dollar,” Fox told the migrant leaders (qtd. in Robles 2000).

Migrant fears were soon confirmed. The Fox administration, with Juan Hernandez as it spokesman, seemed to view migrants primarily as a source of capital, rather than as people who had complex and multifaceted relationships to their communities of origin, as well as having specific needs for consular protection in the U.S. Remittances were reduced to money: they were stripped of their significance as the language through which migrants reasserted their ties to their families, their communities, and their villages in Mexico. And migrants were became invisible behind the dollar signs. Hernandez announced that migrants were “VIPs – Very Important *Paisanos*” and would be treated as such “because they are creating wealth” for Mexico, not because of the Mexican state had any inherent responsibility toward them (Amador 2001). In addition to repeating ad nauseum the amount of remittances migrants send Mexico every year – between 7 and 9 billion dollars according to the Office for Mexican Migrants Abroad in 2001-- the proposal advanced all focused on channeling those funds to firm creation. Hernandez shamelessly touted the 3 remaining Comunidades maquilas in Guanajuato, all of them on the verge of foreclosure, as the embodiment of a best practice the Fox administration wanted to extend to the rest of Mexico. “We did in it Guanajuato

and we are going to reproduce it in all 32 states. Within a hundred days, we are going to be opening the maquilas” (qtd. in Amador 2001). In conjunction with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Nacional Financiera, a Mexican development bank, the Fox administration set up a program for small firm creation using remittances: a program which has to date shown mediocre results (www.iadb.org). An additional program devised by the Fox administration to capitalize on remittances was is “Padrino” -- literally “Godfather” -- program. Oblivious to the power dynamic written into the design of the scheme, also called the “Adopt-a-community” program like the “Adopt-a-highway” program in the United States, the plan was to get wealthy Mexican-Americans businessmen to invest in job-creating partnerships in impoverished, migration-prone micro-regions in Mexico. It was soon abandoned as the business ventures in the isolated communities failed. (Migration News 2001-2002)

From “Three-for-one” to “Citizens Initiative”

In 2002, the Fox administration finally made the matching funds program so popular with migrants a national program under SEDESOL. The scale of federal program was patterned after the Zacatecan version, the “Three for One,” which matched each migrant dollar with a dollar for the federal, state, and municipal governments. However, in a major change, the federal government opened the program to all Mexicans, migrant or not, and renamed the program “Iniciativa Ciudadana” – Citizens Initiative. In essence, by doing this, the government had transformed a program that had served as the vector for migrant community mobilization into just another poverty alleviation program. Iniciativa Ciudadana became just a recycled version of Salinas’ Solidaridad program, complete with the same embedded misunderstanding of migrants and their relationship to their communities of origin. Migrants were again subsumed into their communities, treated merely as the elites of local hamlets, and given no special access to the matching funds arrangement. There was no recognition of the function the program served over and above the simple construction of public works: there was no appreciation the program had provided an institutional structure for migrants, their communities of origin and the state to generate new understandings about the relationship between migration and development, between citizens and the state, and between economic and political

locations in the United States and economic and political locations in Mexico. There was no acknowledgement of the program as a institutional where those new understandings about the relationships between sometime very disparate dynamics and settings could be incorporated into policy and acted upon. As if that were not problematic enough, the federal government, just as in the original Solidaridad program and in Guanajuato's "Two for One," applied its own development criteria in selecting which programs would receive funding, dismissing as "unproductive" and unnecessary "consumption" the projects, like churches and plazas, that were dear to migrants, and in doing so, paternalistically dismissing migrants' vision for the development of their communities, effectively excluding them from conversations about their own futures. (Interviews, SEDESOL, Mexico City, December 2002, May 2003; Interviews, SEDESOL, Zacatecas, April 2003).

Not only did the federal demotion of the program show a lack of engagement with migrants, but the policy move was beginning to undermine the very dynamics that had made the matching funds program valuable to migrants and local government in the first place. Nowhere was this shift more poignant in Zacatecas, the state where local government and migrants had together imaged and grown the program as the container for a partnership that was much larger. Leaders from various Federation of Zacatecan Clubs, who, under the new federal guidelines, were no longer formally included in project selection, traveled to the state capital on their own initiative to remind Zacatecas government authorities of the understandings that had transformed the program into a political and economic catalyst for Zacatecanos on both sides of the border. "Keep the projects for the migrants. This is our program. We were started it. We negotiated it. Every one in the room here today knows that," asserted one Federation representative at a plenary meeting with the state planning officials and the 50 municipal presidents in attendance. "You need to help us out," he continued. "We need this program to help us organize, and fight for our rights as workers there [in the United States]" (Plenary "Three for One" Planning Meeting, Zacatecas, March 2003). The President of the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs in Southern California, Jose Guadalupe Gomez, also cautioned clubs were disbanding because they no longer felt motivated to participate in a program that ensnared projects that defined as unproductive in miles of red tape, stalling them for

months on end; at least 20 Zacatecans clubs in California of an estimated 130 nationwide dissolved in 2003 out of frustration with the “Iniciativa Ciudadana” program (Amador 2003; Orozco, M. 2003). “We need to be more demanding with the Mexican government so that projects that the community considers priorities are supported, and not only those that the authorities determine are worthwhile,” asserted the president of the largest and most powerful Mexican Federation of Clubs in the United States (qtd. Arredondo 2003). The program no longer embodied a relationship in which the state and migrants mutually constituted their partnership; it embodied a clientelistic power dynamic, in which migrants had to appeal to an authoritative state.

The collapse of a relationship

Within two years of Fox taking office, the Mexican migrants who had been so enthusiastic about their relationship with an administration that finally saw them after so many decades of neglect – “*que nos toma[ba] en cuenta*” (qtd. in Amador 2000) -- were thoroughly disillusioned. “We thought that... the relationship and the dialogue [with the Mexican government would grow, but it didn’t happen. There is a real disenchantment,” commented one Mexican leader at a conference of Mexican and Mexican-American intellectuals (Serenses qtd. in Arredondo 2002). The Presidential Office for Mexicans Abroad seemed a vehicle for much talk but little substantive engagement with migrants. Moreover, apart from modest pressure it applied to private remittance transfer companies to get them to lower their fees, the Fox administration had made no progress on its other campaign promises to migrants: the PAN had yet to submit legislation to enable migrants vote in Mexican elections, and despite a few symbolic gestures, had made no headway in negotiating new migration agreements or an amnesty with the U.S. government. Migrant groups in the United States began to threaten “remittance boycotts” to protest the Mexican government lack of responsiveness to migrant needs and its failure to fulfill Fox’s campaign promises to give migrants greater representation in Mexico, most directly through the vote. (Kammer 2002)

Additionally, low grade war of attrition between Juan Hernandez and Jorge Casteñada, Secretary of Foreign Relations and thus responsible for Mexico’s networks of consulates, was further undermining services to migrants. Perhaps in an attempt to give

Hernandez the rope with which to hang himself, the Secretariat of Foreign Relations (SRE) staff significantly reduced their outreach activities and concentrated instead on providing existing services to Mexican migrants through the still-existing Programa para Mexicanos en el Extranjero (PCME) (Interviews, SRE, Mexico City, May 2003). The Presidential Office for Mexicans Abroad did not have the staff or the budget resources to make up the difference, and Juan Hernandez's ambitious plans were shown up as just talk. In the summer of 2002, the Presidential Office for Mexicans Abroad was eliminated and Juan Hernandez dismissed. Casteñada did not survive the skirmish and was replaced soon afterward.

Replacing the Presidential Office for Mexicans Abroad

Despite the damage control in the media, the Presidential Office's closure was an implicit admission of the failure of its disorganized outreach to migrants—an effort that was more a public relations campaign than it was a substantive engagement. It also was an acknowledgement of the limits of the analytic style with which the Fox administration had approached migrants. The Fox government, in a break from past Mexican administrations which had resolutely tried to keep migrants in the political shadows, was not only willing to “see” Mexican migrants but also perceived the political usefulness of forging a relationship with them. However, the Fox administration was also determined to define the terms of its engagement with them, and strictly at that. The relationship it sought was one-way: it would engage with migrants, directing them to channel their resources, financial and political, for uses the Mexican government identified, but it would not create the space for migrants to engage with the government and to determine how it might collaborate on projects migrants and their communities viewed as essential to their welfare. With the implosion of Fox's analytic approach, his administration was forced to respond to Mexican migrant demands for a substantive engagement, similar to the one that had blossomed in Zacatecas and that was starting to emerge in other states in the Republic – demands they backed with the clout garnered through increasingly mobilized grassroots organizations, and also, ironically, through a more precise awareness of their economic contribution to Mexico thanks to the Fox administration tabulation and advertisement of remittance levels.

Within days of the closure of Presidential Office for Mexicans Abroad, Fox announced that an Institute for Mexicans Abroad – Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Extranjero (IME) -- would be created. The institute was the product of an agreement negotiated within the government at the end of the turf war between the SRE and the Presidential Office for Mexican Abroad. The Fox administration spun the new agency as evidence of the president's renewed commitment to Mexican migrants. Most commentators both inside and outside the government, however, acknowledged that the proposed institution was a last ditch effort to salvage whatever was left of the Fox administration's – of the PAN's – credibility with the ever more influential emigrant population – a population that was increasingly organized and was still aggressively lobbying for the vote in the next presidential elections: "It's our last chance. There won't be another one. We have to get this one right or we will have lost the migrants forever," conceded a program officer at the new Institute (SRE, Mexico City, 2003).

3. Institute for Mexicans Abroad: Bringing together "seeing" and "engaging"

The Mexican government envisioned the IME as an "institutional strategy [that was] more modern and effective in generating policies" for Mexicans abroad (SRE 2002). Created at a moment of crisis in the relationship between migrants and the state, the new institute represented both an abandonment of well-worn government strategies to assert political control over the state's engagement with migrants, and with Mexican-American before them, and the surrender of the willful blindness the federal government historically claimed toward Mexican migrants. The IME, which would be housed in the Secretariat of Foreign Relations, would instead blend the strengths of the new PAN-ista Fox administration and the capacities developed by the successive PRI administrations before it. It would merge the Fox administration's willingness to acknowledge migrants – to "see" them and to discern them in all of their specificity -- with the SRE decades long experience in fostering and reinventing interpretive engagement that was generative of new insights and new sources of power, even though that engagement was always with Mexican-Americans to the exclusion of Mexican migrants.

The executive order that authorized the IME's establishment made this amalgam of strengths explicit: the new strategy would combine the Presidential Office for

Mexican's Abroad ability to "connect the President of Mexico with Mexican communities abroad and to detect their most pressing concerns, demonstrating the importance of a government body dedicated to connecting with those communities" with the SRE's "significant experience" that the "SRE developed since 1990 through Program for Mexican Communities Abroad [PCME] ... [elaborating] strategies of *accercamiento*" with Mexican origin groups in the United States (SRE 2002). Moreover, the official mandate recognized that combination of these capacities was critical to respond to "new demands" that migrants would have in the future in a host of areas, from "political representation" to "health and education" – demands that could not be anticipated because they had yet to be identified and articulated. (SRE 2002)

Institutionalizing relationships: Conceptual bases for the IME

To erect an organizational structure that could fulfill the vision laid out in the IME's official mandate, the Mexican government, and the SRE in particular, resuscitated remembered knowledge of how to host an interpretive conversation. Just as it had done every time it wanted to reinitiate its engagement with Mexican-Americans after having closed it down for stretches of time, the Mexican federal government recovered the knowledge about the institutional architecture necessary to support interpretive exchange, knowledge that was encapsulated in the insights those exchanges had produced. Just as before, it was forced to reinterpret knowledge held in practices that had been abandoned and that existed only in institutional memory. And just as it was each time the Mexican state tried to restart its conversations with Mexican-Americans, that act of re-interpretation was situated in specific historic and political contexts. With the creation of the IME, that context required the Mexican state to recognize and embrace relationships it had studiously tried to ignore and even negate in order to keep Mexican labor migration politically invisible.

Chief among these relationships was the connection between Mexican-Americans and Mexican migrants. For decades, the Mexican government had maintained the dual fallacy that Mexican-American and Mexican migrants were either two completely separate groups, and thus could be effectively dealt with using radically different strategies (analytic vs. interpretive), or that they could be subsumed into a single group,

with Mexican-Americans representing the interests of Mexican migrants, thus required the Mexican government to engage only with Mexican-Americans. However, to support an interpretive engagement that included Mexican migrants, as mandated by the Fox administration and as demanded by the increasingly powerful migrants, the IME's structure had to reflect an acknowledgement that Mexican-Americans and Mexican migrants were not wholly distinct but were also not the same, that they were bound together by multiple relationships that were complex and sometimes not of their own creation, and that alliances and frictions arose among and between them in unexpected ways around the dynamic of Mexican labor emigration.

The second relationship that the IME had to build into its structure if it was to foster meaningful exchange with Mexican migrants was that of migrants to their communities of origin. In its approach, the Mexican federal government had historically discounted – had chosen not to “see” – the myriad and densely woven ties between migrants and the communities from they heralded. The federal government either suspended them above their communities, treating them in their service provision as migrants with generic Mexican identities, a habit the analytically oriented state of Guanajuato also adopted, or it subsumed them into their villages of origin, addressing them as the elites of the village who participated in the local economy (and in the social relationships that were its infrastructure) in a straightforward way. To break with this distorted by politically expedient view, the IME's structure had to reflected a recognition that migrants were integral members of their communities of origin, but that they were also divided from them by space, social environment, and economic context, and thus also had separate existences, experiences, and interests. Relatedly, the IME organizational format also had to recognize that migrants needs and aspirations were defined as much by the local, even parochial, contexts of their villages, as they were by national and international politics, most especially by the asymmetrical relationship between Mexico and its overbearing northern neighbor.

Finally, the IME could not be set up in a way that included Mexican migrants in interpretive exchange without an explicit avowal of the relationship between the participation in interpretive engagement with the state and the development of political power. As the Mexican federal government had discovered through its engagement with

Mexican-Americans, once that engagement enabled new connections and new insights to be articulated, they could not be “unsaid.” The only way to neutralize those insights (and the ramifications they had for state action) was to pull out of the engagement, an abrupt tactic to which the Mexican federal government resorted over and over again. While disengagement was possible with Mexican-Americans, who after all were United States citizens, it was not an option in quite the same way as a strategy for marginalizing Mexican migrants to whom the Mexican state had a juridical responsibility. Once relationships were articulated, particularly relationships that underscored the connection between emigration and domestic economic and social processes and that, as a result, made migrants role in Mexico visible, the Mexican government could only disregard them and disengage with Mexican migrants at significant political cost. To address this dynamic, which the Mexican federal authorities perceived as a political hazard, the IME provided clear institutional channels for Mexican migrants to hold the state accountable and exercise the political power they would accrue through their engagement with the Mexican government.

Structuring engagement: Organizational profile of the IME

Concretely, SRE, drawing on its past experience, instantiated the relationships into an institutional structure that stood out as one of the most -- perhaps the most -- innovative in the Mexican government as a whole. The IME consisted of an executive body flanked by two advisory councils, one representing the federal government, the National Council (*Consejo Nacional*), and the other representing Mexican origin communities in the United States, the Consultative Council (*Consejo Consultivo*). The role of the executive body, made up of a small staff of about a couple of dozen bureaucrats, was to facilitate interpretive conversations between the councils and amongst their members. As the legislative decree that mandated the IME stated, the institute function was “the creation of meetings space and opportunities and to foster the communication with and between Mexican communities that live abroad” (SRE 2003).

The National Council for Mexican Communities Abroad was composed of representatives from twelve major secretariats in the Mexican government, with responsibilities as different as those of the Secretariat of Health and the Treasury

Department⁷⁵. The secretariats sat on the board of the National Council because their portfolios touched on the issue of migration or on the interests of migrants either directly or indirectly. They were the implementing agencies for any policy recommendations that emerge out of the conversations supported by the IME. Their participation in the institute represented the recognition that the needs and contributions of migrants were multifaceted, local and national, affecting everything from local agricultural development to Mexico's international relations.

The Consultative Council for Mexicans Abroad was essentially an advisory board, made up of three constituencies: approximately 100 Mexican migrant and Mexican-American community leaders⁷⁶; representatives from 10 prominent Mexican-American and Hispanic organizations in the United States⁷⁷; and representatives from 32 state governments. The breakdown of the Council's membership encapsulated the Mexican state's acknowledgement of the relationship between Mexican-Americans and Mexicans by bringing members of both groups into the conversation: out of an initial 100 community leaders, 72 were Mexican migrants, and 29 of those were leaders of federations of Mexican clubs or club presidents (Morales 2003). Furthermore, twelve of the community leaders were identified as community activists that engaged in political activity on both sides of the border, mobilizing communities in Mexico as well as in the United States (Morales 2003). Community leaders were voted in through elections held at the Mexican consulates throughout the United States in which people of Mexican origin who had registered could participate —both Mexican migrants and Mexican-Americans (although participation was overwhelmingly Mexican migrant) (Interviews, SRE, Mexico City, May 2003). The representatives were apportioned to the number of

⁷⁵ The government department represented on the National Council for Mexican Communities Abroad include Secretariat of the Interior (Gobernación); Foreign Relations; Treasury and Public Credit; Social Development; Economy; Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Nutrition; Environment and Natural Resources; Health; and Tourism, Work, and Social Security. (www.sre.gob.mx/ime)

⁷⁶ The number of community leaders has varied during the IME still short existence at the time of this writing. It opened with 100 community leaders but by the summer of 2005, that number had grown to 105. (www.sre.gob.mx/ime)

⁷⁷ At the time of writing (2005), these organizations include Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs, the Hispanic National Bar Association, the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Association for Bilingual Education, the New American Alliance, the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the United Farm Workers. (www.sre.gob.mx/ime)

Mexican-origin people living in a given area of the US, such that the consulates of Chicago and Los Angeles held elections for 13 and 17 community leaders respectively, whereas the Boston consulate held elections for 2 representation and the Philadelphia consulate held a contest for a single community leader (www.sre.gob.mx/ime). The elections not only gave the council significant legitimacy in Mexican communities in the United States, but was viewed by many as a break from the Mexican federal government habitual clientelistic condescension to Mexican migrants. “This is a historic event,” exclaimed the secretary general of the Federation of Clubs of Michoacan in California. “For the first time, we were able to vote and select the people that are going to bring the agenda of Mexicans abroad back to Mexico” (qtd. in Amador 2002). It was also significant because it belied the government persistent assertions that organizing migrant participant in an electoral contest was logistically unfeasible for the Mexican government, an illustration that whose consequences would become clear very soon.

Mexican-American organizations represented on the Council were, on the other hand, selected by the SRE. The criteria were two-fold: first, that the organization had a history of engagement with Mexican government, and had, as a result, acquired an institutional knowledge of how to participate in interpretive conversations with the Mexican state. Groups like the National Council of La Raza and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) had engaged with the Mexican government since the late 1970s, and would thus be able to help resuscitate the practices of interpretive dialogue by drawing on their own institutional memories. The second criterion was that the organizations should be “the most representative in the United States” and explicitly address needs of both Mexican-Americans and Mexican migrants. (Interviews, SRE, Mexico City, May 2003; www.sre.gob.mx/ime).

The SRE also selected the state governments that would be represented on the council, choosing states that had some of the highest emigration rates in the nation and some of the longest emigration traditions, stretching back in some cases before 1900. Their selection manifested the SRE’s admission of the importance of involving state governments in developing conceptual insights behind policy for emigrants, rather than simply delegating to them the implementation of prefabricated services for migrants, as the federal government had done in the past. Initially, the SRE allotted seats on the

advisory board to representative from ten states: President Fox's home state of Guanajuato, Michoacan, Jalisco, Chihuahua, Durango, Mexico State, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Puebla, and, of course, the trendsetting state of Zacatecas (Morales 2003). However, the IME quickly grew into such an influential institution in shaping policies that affect migrants, and through them, the regions from which they herald, that state governments began to petition the federal authorities for slots on the council. By mid-2005, the number of states represented on the council had expanded to 32 (www.sre.gob.mx/ime).

The director nominated for the IME also embodied the Mexican government's explicit recognition of the relationships it had tried to ignore. In an unprecedented move, Fox appointed a Mexican migrant as Director of the IME and as steward of the interpretive conversations it was established to support. Candido Morales, a native of Oaxaca and president of the Mixteca club of Sonoma California, was chosen after an exhaustive search during which the Mexican government considered *only* Mexican migrant candidates, and not Mexican-Americans (Robles 2002; Interviews, SRE, Mexico City, May 2003).

Morales stressed that the IME's mission to "advise the government of Mexico in the design and formulation of policies for Mexican communities in the United States" (qtd. in Robles 2002). It was pointedly not to build a lobby that the Mexican government could direct to further specific political goals. Moreover, the former migrant club leader, who had opened interpretive spaces in his community and in his village of origin, made explicit the value of an inclusive interpretive engagement that included Mexican migrants, Mexican-Americans, and government authorities to that undertaking. In doing so, he signaled to the Mexican communities abroad that the federal government was finally willing to engage with migrants in a relationship that was mutually constitutive, where participants shaped each other and each others future practices. "We have sought to open the process of the exchange of ideas and different opinions as wide as possible," explained Morales to *La Opinión*, Los Angeles' Spanish language daily newspaper. In an interview with me, Morales identified the multiplicity of experiences and views as the source of the Consultative Council's generative capacity:

This consultative council has a lot of diversity, it has teachers, it has businessmen, it has community leaders. This group has fresh ideas, especially for us as the consumer of those ideas, so that the programs that emerge become more and more attuned to the needs

of the communities they are created for, and that we don't produce formulaic policy that the bureaucracy here thinks is good for people. That's the main difference that differentiates this approach from previous ones. (Mexico City, May 2003)

The former migrant organizer was also cognizant that the Mexican government had given Mexican migrant short shrift, historically providing only skeletal services and edging out of the process of program design. "In Mexico, for decades, we were not heard by the government and our human rights, our social rights and our political rights were not a priority for the national authorities," Morales reminded the participants in the Consultative Council (Morales 2003). For that reason, Morales emphasized the importance of bringing the Consultative Council and the National Council together was essential for operationalizing the insights and turning them into actionable policy, backed by government resources. The Secretariats represented on the National Council, he explained, "can bring the budget necessary to implement [the ideas], to make these proposals concrete, so that they don't stay in the realm of the rhetorical, so that the programs become solid and real, so that we move from words to action" (Interview, Mexico City, May 2003).

In addition to championing the inclusion of Mexican migrants in the federal government's interpretive engagement with Mexican communities abroad and underscoring the importance of their involvement to policy formulation, Morales boldly broadened the scope of the discussions that Mexican migrants could hope to have with the Mexican state. Shortly after accepting the position of director, he announced that he anticipated that one of the "principle themes" he expected that the IME and their advisory councils would address was that of "the situation of undocumented migrants" and the measures that the Mexican state could take to ameliorate it. He also added that he foresaw the conversations addressing both the actions that Mexican-Americans and Mexican migrants could take in the United States to tackle challenges that they faced, and the ways the Mexican state could support them in their efforts. (Amador 2002).

Practices of engagement: Operating procedures of the IME

In addition to creating a structure in the IME that was supportive of interpretive engagement, the SRE also set up a series of procedures to foster the generative conversations that were its medium. The IME used practices the SRE had previously

employed to engage with Mexican-Americans as models, but re-invented them to fit its new broader constituency and its new mandate of developing Mexican policy.

In March 2003, the IME held its inaugural plenary meeting in Mexico City. The conference brought together both advisory councils in their entirety, and President Fox formally recognized and welcomed their members. The conference, in its grandeur and in the interactions it orchestrated between high level Mexican government authorities and representatives of Mexican communities abroad, echoed the conferences sponsored by the Salinas administration a decade before during its frenzied efforts to drum up a lobby that could push NAFTA through the U.S. congress. The profile and tone of the IME conference was different, however. Instead of a meeting with a select group of Mexican-American representatives who were seduced with promises of cultural belonging to their ancestral homeland through economic investment, Mexican migrant leaders were in full force and the tenor of government pronouncements was much more humble, laden with references to collaborative work and exchange. “I want to express my gratitude for your presence in Mexico,” announced Fox,

I want to express my gratitude for your having accepted the great challenge of joining with us in doing the work of being close, of bringing together the Mexicans that are here, on this side of the border, and the Mexicans that are over there, on the other side of the border...From now on, I give you my full commitment to work alongside you, shoulder to shoulder, to be close and to support you the way that you deserve (Fox 2003).

The meetings did in fact involve quite a lot of work. The Consultative Council was divided into six working groups, with each one addressing a different facet of Mexican migrant and Mexican-American concerns. The groups, called commissions in an evocation of the commission that the federal government had set up to engage with Mexican-Americans under Lopez Portillo, tackled economic and business issues, educational issues, legal issues, political issues, community-building issues, and issues related to health, culture, and the border. During that first plenary conference, the commissions met intensively, and drew up lists of recommendations for the various Secretariats in the National Council. The government bodies on the National Council committed to responding to – but not to acting on-- each of those recommendations. The IME coordinated that exchange, posting both the recommendations and the responses on

its website in a sort of virtual conversation, and sent out almost daily bulletins reporting the exchange to anyone who subscribed to their list.

The IME plenary conferences were repeated twice a year, and at the time of writing in mid-2005, the Institute had already held four gatherings. Just as in the first conference, the Mexican migrant and Mexican American representatives met with high level government officials, and the National Council and Consultative Council are brought together for substantive discussion. The six commissions submitted new recommendations as well as iteration of previous suggestions, in light of Mexican government responses. Between plenary sessions, the commissions met regularly to discuss and hone proposals in their areas of focus, and IME staff, often accompanied by bureaucrats from the government offices relevant to the topic, traveled to participate in the discussions. In this sense, the commissions acted analogously to the network of organized Mexican-Americans that the Salinas and Zedillo administration had envisioned but had failed to create with the Mexican Cultural Institute. Through their attempts to control the content of the conversations and to censor the articulation of the key relationship on which the IME was not built, the previous administration had strangled the Institute, cutting off the oxygen of ideas and exchange of views that was so necessary for to take root and flourish.

Re-interpretation in action: From “Iniciativa Ciudadana” to “Four-for-one”

By mid-2005, after only two years in existence, the IME had facilitated the transformation of policies in myriad areas that affected Mexican migrants, as well as Mexican-Americans. The interpretive conversations fostered by the Institute led to the re-conceptualization and re-formulation of state practices as they related to issues ranging from the health of Mexican communities in the United States to customs duties to the political rights of migrants in Mexico (www.sre.gob.mx/ime). Nowhere was the impact of these interpretive processes more dramatic than in the case of the matching funds program that had so important to migrants, both as a means of participating in their communities of origin and as vehicle to organize and develop the political power that had compelled the Mexican government to enter in a conversation with them in the first place. Not only did the conversations hosted by the IME reverse the federal

government's demotion of the "Three for one" matching funds program from a framework for a partnership between migrants and the state to a run-of-the-mill (and neo-liberal) poverty alleviate scheme, but it reinvented it as a transnational forum for participatory community development planning.

At the time the IME was set up, Mexican migrant clubs and the federal government were at an impasse over the "Three for One" matching funds program, which the federal authorities has renamed the "Initiative Ciudadana" – "Citizens Initiative." "The program has been spoilt," the president of the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California, "Inicitativa Ciudadana has significantly reduced the importance of migrant participation." The SEDESOL, implementing government agency, countered with frustrated assertions that the government could not legally and ethically extend a program to certain segments of the population and not to others (Interviews, SEDESOL, Mexico City, December 2002, May 2003). And while the migrant clubs continued to submit proposals from church construction and plaza renovations along with projects for basic infractruture, the SEDESOL viewed its role as educating migrants about the type of project that the agency considered conducive to economic development – "mak[ing] them more civilized about the type of projects that they want to execute" as the secretarial staff put it (Interview, SEDESOL, Mexico City, May 2003).

At the very first plenary meeting of the IME in March 2003, the economic issues commissions submitted a series of recommendations regarding the matching funds program. These were essentially two-fold: first, the commission requested that the SEDESOL revise the operating rules for the program, to give preference in the selection of projects to those proposed by migrant clubs over those submitted ordinary citizen's committees formed solely for the purpose of building infrastructure. Moreover, the commission asked that the SEDESOL clarify its criteria for the funding of projects, and specifically asked it to explain why it did not consider the construction of churches, plazas, and rodeo rings – spaces which migrants viewed as critical for community-building and community dialogue, on both symbolic and practical levels – useful for economic and social development. Second, the commission entreated the SEDESOL to run training seminars for migrants in the United States on the matching funds program, asking the Secretariat in effect to support grassroots mobilization through the program

much like the state government of Zacatecas had done since it initiated the arrangement in 1986. (<http://www.sre.gob.mx/ime/>)

The submission of these requests started an intensive conversation between Consultative Council economic commission and the SEDESOL, one that was often but not always mediated by the IME. Through this exchange, the federal government began to understand that the “Three for One” had a function that was much broader than infrastructure development: SEDESOL officials began to perceive that the program organized migrant interlocutors in the form of federations of clubs, and that it enabled the state to mediate migrants’ relationship with their communities of origin. They also began to grasp the political power and economic clout that migrant federations were starting to represent, and the kind of impact they could have on political and economic outcomes in Mexico. Federations of migrant clubs, in turn, assimilated the government view of their potential and broadened their vision beyond their villages and their states of origin and began to contemplate the role they could play in the development of the nation of Mexico as a whole. (Interviews, UAZ, Mexico City, November 2004).

The results of the conversation were almost immediate. Within months of receiving the commission’s suggestions, SEDESOL responded: it extended an informal pledge to prioritize projects submitted by migrants clubs, and it created an institutional mechanism to give migrants greater say over the project funded. Specifically, SEDESOL mandate the establishment of project selection committees with equal representation from the three levels of government contributing funds and migrants for each state participating in the program. In an explicit recognition of the economic and organizational capacity that migrant club federations had achieved, it also raised the ceiling for federal contribution per project substantially, from 250,000 pesos (\$25,000) to 500,000 pesos (\$50,000), and in doing so, doubled the possible size of projects from \$100,000 to \$200,000. The SEDESOL also partnered with migrant clubs and consular authorities to hold workshops in cities throughout the United States for Mexican migrants about the matching funds program. By the end 2004, the SEDESOL had completely rewritten the program guidelines, and scraped the title of “Iniciativa Ciudadana,” renaming it the “Three-for-One Program for Migrants.” As the slightly modified but rehabilitated name indicated, the SEDESOL formally limited the participation in the

program to migrants who were organized in clubs, and privileged as one of the three goals of the program, “the development of ties of identity between [Mexican] nationals residing abroad with their communities of origin” (SEDESOL 2004: Section 2). It also increased once again the maximum federal contribution for projects from \$50,000 to \$80,000, and upped the total budget for the program from the \$10 million allocated in 2003 to \$16 million for 2005. (<http://www.sedesol.gob.mx>).

The conversation between the federal government and migrants over the program did not end with its restoration and amendment. Instead, it expanded past the Consultative Council economic issues commission and the SEDESOL to include other conversations about the program and its potential for economic development that had been occurring at about the same time. These conversations had been taking place primarily – but not surprisingly – in Zacatecas and in its communities in the United States. Throughout 2004, the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California, in collaboration with University of Zacatecas (UAZ), the University of Southern California, and the Rockefeller foundation, held a series of workshops which brought migrants, state and municipal government officials, entrepreneurs (from Zacatecas and from the United States) and academics together to discuss the possibility of linking migration with the creation of investment opportunities (Garcia Zamora 2005). The conversations produced several interesting pilot projects: among them, a proposal to modify the “Three-for-one” guidelines in Zacatecas to fund business investments and 26 business plans for small firms that could be supported under the matching funds program, and a proposal for the creation of an Advisory Center for Community and Business Development that would be housed in the University of Zacatecas and would be steered by a board that included migrants, community leaders, government officials, and representatives from a number of industries with bases in the state (Garcia Zamora 2005).

As the conversations between the federal government and migrants expanded, they incorporated many of the innovations produced through the discussions in Zacatecas. Not only did the Zacatecan pioneers inform the federal government of these proposal, many of the participants in two conversations – the one in Zacatecas and the one at the federal level – were the same. They brought to their interpretive engagement with the federal government the insights behind the proposal and an intimate familiarity

with the process of conceptual development that produced them – a process that still contained insights that had not yet been fully articulated. (<http://www.sre.gob.mx/ime/>)

As a result of the new directions the conversation between the federal government and Consultative Council were beginning to explore with respect to the matching funds program, SEDESOL and the economic issues commission set up a special working group at the end of 2004 tasked with formulating ways the “Three for One” could be expanded to include business ventures. Specifically, the working group was charged with investigating the feasibility of expanding the program to a “Four for One” program, with investors adding their dollar to a pot which already included a dollar from migrants and from the federal, state, and municipal levels of government. More significantly, however, the working group explored the relationships on which such a collaboration would need to rest. Still in existence at the time of writing, the working has been gauging the interest and concerns of possible investors, and has been identifying the social connections that need to be forged between migrants, communities, investors and government as well as the physical connections in terms of communications and transportation infrastructure that need to be laid down for the projects to work (<http://www.sre.gob.mx/ime/>). In a sense, what the working group has been trying to do through their conversations is to re-invent Guanajuato’s Comunidades program. It has appropriated the idea of using migration as a catalyst for economic investment. Instead a program that, like Comunidades, was defined and directed by government that paid scant attention to the social context of its scheme, it has been endeavoring to create an initiative that is built with the weave of mutually constituting relationship, where the participants together, through an interpretive process, choose the projects and envision their function in a broader context of community development.

Interpretation for political change: Getting the vote

The IME supported a similar interpretive conversation between migrants and the state on Mexican migrant suffrage rights. Procedurally, it resembled the exchange around the matching funds program. However, the conversation about Mexican migrant franchise rights dramatize the between interpretive engagement and political power. By definition, the state cannot control and censor the production of meaning in interpretive

engagement; it cannot restrict and contain the insights generated and the relationships articulated. Migrants used this aspect of interpretive engagement to re-examine and call into question rationales the state offered up for not extending suffrage rights to them. Through repeated cycles of interpretive exploration of this issue, they discredited and exhausted the fount of state pretexts and reveal the political motives to prevent migrants from voting that those excuses were obfuscating for what they were.

The conferences and political meetings to promote the vote for Mexican migrants that Fox had used to his advantage during his campaign continued once he took office, and literally dozens of such forums were held in Mexico and throughout the United States (Amador 2003; IME 2005). Legally, Mexican migrants had been granted the right to vote with the constitutional reform of 1998 (see Chapter 5), but the government had yet to solve the logistical and budgetary issues to allow them to exercise that right in practice. As the PAN dragged its feet on setting up a system for migrants to vote in Mexican elections from the United States, the PRD moved to the forefront in advocating for migrants' suffrage rights, and in early 2004, began organizing PRD committees in the United States in anticipation of the 2006 presidential contest (Interviews, PRD, Chicago, August 2003; IME 2005).

At the second plenary meeting of the IME in August 2003, the Consultative Council, through the political issues commission, submitted a request for bi-national forum about the vote for Mexican migrants. The political momentum created by the conferences held independently on the topic – as well as the PRD's sponsorship -- made it impossible for the IME to delay responding to the migrants' demand any further without undermining its own credibility as a non-partisan institution designed solely to facilitate dialogue. In April 2004, the IME hosted a series of conferences on the topic in cities throughout the United States -- most notably in Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston -- and brought together legislators from the Mexican Congress and Mexican migrants. The discussions at the IME conferences gave migrants an opportunity to call government officials to task on their waffling, but more importantly to suggest solutions to the obstacles that legislators argued stood in the way of allowing Mexicans to vote from the United States. Mexican migrants members of the Consultative Council offered, for example, to subsidize the logistical costs of balloting from the United States with a

portion of their remittances. The IME meetings thus enabled Mexican migrants to discredit the government's – and more precisely, the PAN's – excuses for not providing migrants with a means to exercise their right to vote. In December 2004, at the fourth plenary session of IME, the Fox administration time to act was clearly running out: the Consultative Council drowned out the Mexican President's welcome with chants of "Voto! Voto!" – "Vote! Vote!." Mexican-American leaders joined Mexican migrants in demanding the vote; "Mexicans are not Mexicans without the right to vote," announced Hector Flores, the president of LULAC during a visit to Mexico City in early 2005. The Fox administration failure to act on the vote was seriously damaging its renewed relationship with migrants and threatening the survival of the IME, the institution it had described as its "last chance" to engage with Mexican emigrants. (IME 2005)

Soon thereafter, the Chamber of Deputies in the Mexican Congress overwhelmingly approved a series of reforms to the laws that dictated the logistics of electoral procedures, making it clear that it was politically possible to move the necessary bills through Mexico's legislative bodies. Without the approval of the Senate and the President's ratification, the passage of the amendments remained symbolic. However, as the elections of 2006 neared – and with them the deadline for changes in electoral procedure-- the political costs of not acting appeared increasingly steep. In an attempt at political damage control, PAN-headed state governments, like those of Jalisco and Puebla, began the process of moving bills allowing Mexican migrants to vote in state elections through their own legislative bodies. (IME 2005)

In late June 2005, the political momentum had become impossible to withstand and, in an extra-ordinary session, the Mexican Senate and Chamber of Deputies approved a negotiated revision of the earlier amendments. Passed with 455 votes in favor, 6 against, and 6 abstentions, the new law allowed Mexican migrants to vote via absentee ballot in the future presidential elections, including the election of 2006. However, the amendments also stipulated that campaigning beyond the nation's borders would henceforth be illegal, a condition designed to dampen the exponential growth of migrant political influence. Nevertheless, the delegation of fifty Mexican migrant leaders that had traveled to Mexico City to witness the vote in the Chamber of Deputies greeted the passage as a historic victory for Mexican migrants who had been politically invisible for

decades. As the results came in and passage gradually emerged an undeniable fact, chants of “yes we could! Yes we could! Yes we could!” rose up from the public boxes in the Congress hall. When passage was formally announced, “the migrants embraced each other, left the legislative auditorium mad with happiness, ... and began to shout in unison: Mexico! Mexico! Mexico! Mexico! Mexico!,” reported the Los Angeles paper, *La Opinión*. (Robles Nava 2005).

Voting to cement the IME: Political power and protecting interpretation

During the legislative debates over the bills that would enable Mexican migrants to vote from the United States, the Fox administration invoked a 2003 study completed by Marcelli and Cornelius, which estimated that only a small fraction of migrants that lived north of the border would actually participate in an election. According to the survey analysis, only between 125,000 and 1.1 million expatriate Mexicans -- or between 1.5 and 12 percent -- would vote in 2006 presidential election. (A finding less publicized by the PAN was that less a quarter would vote for the PAN) (Marcelli et al. 2003). A more recent study released in 2005 by the Hispanic Center, however, suggests that the proportion of Mexicans that would be likely to vote would actually be significantly higher. The study showed that nine out of ten Mexicans who registered for a consular identification intended to vote in the 2006. Much of the disparity in the results can clearly be attributed to the sampling methodologies the researchers used: Marcelli et al. used random household data from a Los Angeles County survey whereas the Pew Hispanic Center interviewed migrants who were applying for consular ID's. However, some of the difference may actually be due to an increase in Mexican migrant interest in voting, precisely *because* of the conversations on the topic that the IME and other organizations have hosted. As migrant organizations, especially federations of migrant clubs, have become more involved the issue of suffrage rights through their participation in the IME, their constituencies may also have developed a keener desire to exercise their right to vote in upcoming presidential elections. The extent to which this hypothesis is true matters only in degree. With the vote, migrants have come out of the political shadows and have become undeniably visible political actors in Mexico as well as in the United States.

In describing the objectives of the IME, its director stated that the institute had been set up as an enduring governmental structure, that would “lend more permanence to the effort [of engaging with migrants] so that whatever we create now does not end at the end of this presidential term” (Interview, Mexico City, May 2003). It was not the first time that a Mexican government official charged with nurturing the Mexican state’s relationship with migrants had uttered such a pledge. Mexico’s history of engagement with migrants was strewn with the wreckage of institutions established with the same promise of permanence only to be abandoned when they ceased being politically advantageous for the federal government. For the first time, however, the right and the ability to vote has given migrants the political leverage to hold IME director Morales to his word. The vote has made retreating from an engagement with migrants politically costly for any party at the helm of the federal government. Depending on the level of migrant participation in elections and on the closeness of electoral contests, it may even prove to be political suicide. Through a series of interpretive engagements with the Mexican government, first at the state level and then at the federal level, Mexican migrants have developed the political power to compel the Mexican state to continue the conversation indefinitely.

Conclusion

When Fox rode into the presidential office on a wave of opposition to the PRI, his approach to migrants was distinctly analytic. As governor, he had championed a compendium of programs to link migration to development, but all of them had been based on analytic processes, and most of them failed. However, his analytic treatment of migrants made them visible, and emigrants capitalized on that visibility to use Fox as a bridge to bring interpretive engagements elaborated at the state level into the halls of federal government. After a few months of conflict and struggle, emigrants succeeded in their bid. Not only did they draw the federal government into an interpretive exchange, they transformed state practices through which the Mexican government “saw” them and staked a permanent claim to seat at the table where Mexico future was discussed, imagined, and built.

Chapter 9

Conclusion:

Interpretation, Innovation, and Globalization

In this thesis, I have traced the processes through which migration and development policies emerged in Morocco and Mexico over four decades. I have demonstrated that the policies now being used as “best practice” templates were never planned, and that their effects were not anticipated or often even imagined. They were not drawn up using an analytic method typically applied to policy challenges: the problem to be solved was never identified beforehand, a discrete social phenomenon that policy would target could never be defined and thus a treatment could not be applied, and, consequently, its effects were never evaluated. Rather, the policies now renowned as exemplars of innovativeness grew out of interpretive engagement between migrants and the state. Though varied in form, the policies were based on the insights that were articulated in interpretive conversation, and they were enacted through the relationships that were forged in interpretive exchange. The importance of interpretation to evolution of Moroccan and Mexican migration and development policy makes a strong argument for ending the dominance of the analytic model in policy making. It suggests the need to create forums to support interpretive exchange between the state and social actors. However, any proposal for what those forums should look like, and the qualities they should display, must begin with a review of common assumptions about the context in which policy making occurs, especially assumptions about globalization, the role of social actors, and time.

1. Globalization and opportunities for interpretation

International labor migration, and low-skilled labor migration in particular, has been lauded as globalization from below. The millions who cross national borders each year, legally and illegally, in search of work or opportunity, to join family, or to escape political or social oppression have been portrayed as a popular force that countervails the rapid and rapacious movement of capital around the globe. In a characterization that has garnered increasingly political and academic appeal, migrants are described as having set

in motion flows that rival those of investment capital in scale and in impact, through their own movement across borders but also through the money that they remit (Orozco 2001, de la Garza et al. 2002), the knowledge that they transfer (Saxenian 2005; Guarnizo 2003), and the social values and cultural norms that they transmit (Levitt 2001). Moreover, migrants have been characterized as resisting a global order which enables maximum mobility of capital while confining labor to national territories, enclosing workers behind the high (and increasingly material) walls of national borders. A growing body of literature on transnational communities fills in the details of this general picture by documenting “the initiatives of common people to establish durable economic and other ties” that stretch across national boundaries (Portes 2003: 875).

Much of this scholarship has tended to overlook the state, implicitly suggesting that migrants have been able to “rise above” state constraints and pressures for assimilation to create vital and coherent communities that exist in “transnational social fields” (Levitt 2001) seamless and seemingly suspended above borders (Basch et al 1994; Kearney 1991; Portes et al. 1999; Smith, M 1998). When it has turned its attention to the state, this scholarship has theorized how migrant social practices, along with the identities and relationships they embody, traverse a terrain made challenging, even treacherous, by the institutions and policies that not just one, but several states erect to establish their control and legitimacy (Goldring 2002; Smith, R. 2003; Levitt 2003; Guarnizo 1998). They have shown either how state structures have directed migrants’ political activities and social identities (Kastoryano 2002; Brand 2002; Taylor 2002), or how migrants have challenged and even torn down state obstacles – set up in both sending and receiving countries -- that have prevented them from accessing political rights and achieving economic security (Smith, R. 2003; Goldring 2002; Moctezuma 2003; Argun 2003). For all of their richness and subtlety, these accounts firmly maintain state structures as analytically and actually separate from migrant community practices.

The narrative I present in this thesis differs from these accounts in that it demonstrates how migrants and the state *together* fashioned the state structures that mediated emigrants’ relationships to their countries of origin. The state structures described in this study were created by both state *and* migrant practices. In Morocco and Mexico, migrants and the state engaged in *shared processes of interpretation* through

which they developed state practices and constructed state institutions. Through their participation in interpretive conversations, they generated new meanings, new identities, and new relationships that provided the bricks and mortar through which they constructed policy innovations. Moreover, migrants and government bureaucrats in both Mexico and Morocco engaged with one another so intensively that their exchanges began to wear away the boundary between state and society. Even as they built up new structures to support their innovative collaborations, their interpretive exchanges eroded the barriers that separated the state from migrants, as well as from society more generally.

Furthermore, migrants and the state *mutually constituted* one another through their interaction: their interpretive engagement redefined the functions – and responsibilities -- of the state, extending its purview into new social, geographic, and national arenas, while also curtailing its reach and its authority. The interpretive exchange also changed the role of migrants in their communities of origin, and more broadly, in the nation from which they came. It recast them as protagonists who were full members of their communities but whose experiences as migrants and whose place of residence in receiving countries nevertheless made them distinct. In both Mexico and Morocco, migrant were constituted as agents who could act from their position in relationships that stretched across national borders and spanned the boundaries between state and society, and who could, as a consequence, bring together political, economic and geographic spaces typically conceived of as separate.

Finally, in addition to producing the state and migrant actors who participated in them, these interpretive exchanges allowed new understandings of economic development to emerge. They generated notions of social and economic change that took as their field of action not a specific place or a national economy but that were instead *situated in relationships* – in the relationships that linked migrants to their communities of origin in Mexico or Morocco, as well as to their communities of choice in receiving countries, and in the relationships that connected migrants and the state. Furthermore, the concepts of development spun through interpretive conversation used as their fibers processes of learning and innovation rather the division of labor for economic production, and privileged the generation of knowledge over the extraction of wealth.

The policies that migrants and the state crafted together in Mexico and Morocco did more than determine the possibilities that migration represented for communities of origin and for the sending nation as a whole. They also stood out as institutions and actions that pointedly did not fit prevailing models of development in an age of globalization. In a representation that has grown almost ubiquitous and that underlies most theories about transnational communities, globalization is depicted as the acceleration of flows: flows of money, flows of information, flows of merchandise. The increasing ease and speed of these flows makes the relocation of production-- and thus of the nexuses of economic growth -- facile, even trivial. Local areas are the passive recipients of these flows. In what Gillian Hart (2002) calls an “impact model” of globalization, the “local” enjoys the benefits that “global” flows can bring, but it also bear the brunt of their negative consequences, as well as torched landscape of that “slash and burn” styles of global investment and production often leave in their wake. In the context, the role of the state in promoting development -- or a consortium of states for that matter -- is to facilitate and attract flows that may catalyze economic growth, and times, create friction that make it more difficult for those flows to be redirected toward another locality. The assumption is that the flows can be channeled, but they cannot be changed. It is on this “impact model” of globalization that migration scholars depend when they assert that migrants transform themselves from commodities whose movement other people determine into actors who create their own flows by crossing borders and sending resources home, setting “globalization from below” in motion.

This thesis joins the growing chorus of voices that critique this “impact model” of globalization (Hart 2002; Amsden 2001; Ong 2005). It concurs with the emerging argument that social actors do more than merely direct flows: they determine what those flows actually are. Local actors, with the state chief among them, faced with intensified global integration, rework local contexts, forge new relationships, and build new institutions. These situated changes in practice and structure are what the “impact model” of globalization construes as flows. The emergent practices and structures are stripped of the complex and often contentious social processes that created them, and the charged power dynamics that course through them are neutralized. They are recast as flows that are as impartial, as economic, and as inevitable as any flip of the wrist by the

market's invisible hand. However, not only are the changes in situated practices more than the simple manifestation of global flows and their effects. They are what constitutes those flows, making them what they become (Hart 2002). Resources do not travel on their own. Actors move them, and in doing so, they give those resources meaning, value, and function. The engagement of migrants and the state in Mexico and Morocco around remittances –considered by many a straightforward flow of money – is just one example of those presented in this thesis that illustrate how those resources were constituted, and made what they became. In Morocco, the engagement between the state's Banque Centrale Populaire and emigrant workers transformed wages earned in Europe into capital could be invested for national development priorities and into services on which migrants could draw to protect their financial security as well as to assert their identities as Moroccans abroad. In Mexico, a matching funds arrangement between migrants and the state for infrastructure provision transformed monies migrants gifted for public works in their villages of origin into catalysts for a community organizing campaign that soon gained enough momentum to help sway presidential elections.

The further away one moves from a view of globalization as flows, the less amenable the changes wrought by globalization become to analytic approaches of policy making. If globalization is the sum of changes produced by situated practices, and if the resources that travel in an increasingly integrated world are being constituted by local actors in an on-going way, then an analytic approach that singles out a flow of resources and then designs an intervention to channel it is doomed to failure. The analytic model is bound to be frustrated for two reasons: first, there is no independent flow of resources that moves through contexts unaffected. Second, the application of an intervention will in fact change the essence of the resources that it is designed merely to direct. In contrast, a view of globalization as the product of situated practices that bring multiple places into relationship opens up myriad possibilities for intervention through interpretation. As situated practices change the resources that “flow” and as the movement of those as “flows” (and the practices they embody) bring different places and contexts into contact, they create ambiguity and flux. The moments and places of indeterminacy and change represented opportunities for interpretation. They offer opening for interpretive conversations that can bring together different voices, and

different perspectives to generate new insights and new relationships, so that actors can constitute globalization flows in novel ways.

As the Moroccan and Mexican experiences with interpretive policy making traced in this thesis demonstrate, interpretive conversations represent a set of social practices that are uniquely powerful in constituting global flows. The practice of interpretation can weave together previously divided socio-economic and geographic areas, and can bring actors that conceive of themselves as autonomous into relationship. It can call into question assumptions or assertions so ingrained that they have been made to seem natural, like the separation of the “Maroc utile” – the useful Morocco – from the rest of the Kingdom that defined development planning in Morocco, and the hard and fast distinction between Mexican migrants and Mexican-Americans maintained by the Mexican government for so long. It can unearth forms of power so sedimented that they appear to be part of the social bedrock rather than contingent practices used for specific ends: the interpretive engagement between migrants and the state in Morocco undermined the representation of migrants as homogenized purveyors of remittances without ties to local villages and challenged state neglect of migrants’ communities of origin, and in Mexico, the interpretive engagement between state-level government authorities and migrants took on the federal government’s habit of pretending, with a wink and a nod, emigrants did not exist. It can foster new insights and new ways of relating that would have been inconceivable to the participants before they engaged with one another. In Morocco, the Ministry of Interior engaged with migrants who had organized to build electricity networks in their villages of origin, and as a result of that interaction, the Ministry, responsible for the heavy-handed repression of any form of social mobilization, soon began promoting autonomous community mobilization as key to the success of national infrastructure programs. Government authorities from the Mexican state of Zacatecas met with Zacatecan migrants in a Los Angeles hotel room, and through their interpretive exchanges, hashed out the beginning of a model for labor organizing in the U.S. that was based primarily on migrants’ identification with their communities of origin in Zacatecas rather than on their employment in the US. As the Mexican and Moroccan cases described in this thesis demonstrate, interpretation can

allow the unimaginable to be imagined, and as a result, global flows can be constituted into resources vested with qualities that were previously unforeseen.

If globalization is more than just the acceleration of resource flows, then economic development has to be more than just the attraction of those flows. It has to be more than a set of policies that make a given locale alluring to global resources, in the hopes that their impact will jump start economic growth. Defining globalization as the product of situated practices that bring disparate places into connection allows for a different view of economic development and of the strategies designed to promote it. If development is the elaboration of new knowledges and new practices to constitute global resources in ways that create possibility for economic growth, then development strategy has to be based on the processes that can produce those new knowledges and practices. Interpretive engagement -- and the interpretive conversations in language and practice that are its medium—is uniquely generative of those necessary innovations. So reliable does interpretation open up a new possibility – sometimes radically new possibilities – for development that it may be fair to say that interpretation is poised to supersede the alignment of factors of production as a determinant of development in today’s globalizing world.

2. Organizing for interpretation

The histories presented in this thesis bring the role of interpretation in promoting development into high relief, but they also demonstrate emphatically that development is a highly political process. As the Moroccan and Mexican experiences with interpretive approaches to policy formulation illustrate, the innovations that interpretation produces depend heavily on who is included in the conversations that support it. The interlocutors with whom the Moroccan and Mexican states engaged depended which actors’ state practices were made visible, as well as on how those state practices were construed. In Morocco, the state carefully tracked the movement of emigrant workers, documenting their financial contributions to the Moroccan economy in particular. Correspondingly, the state engaged with Moroccan emigrants in interpretive conversations that focus on migrant remittances and the role they would play in the Moroccan national economy. In Mexico, the federal government chose to ignore Mexican migrants, and was consequently

able to keep its engagement with migrants minimal until very recently. The participants in interpretive conversations were determined by the power relationships that visibility and invisibility produced by the state reflected.

However, the state informed who participated in interpretive conversations with the state, it could not completely restrict who joined the interpretive discussion, nor could it smother interpretive conversations that it did not initiate. As the Moroccan and Mexican experiences described in this thesis demonstrate, migrants were able to compel the state to engage with them in interpretive conversations that would ultimately undermine the foundations on which the legitimacy of the state rested. Migrants drew the state into interpretive exchanges they had begun; they broadened and redirected conversations already underway; and they inserted their voices into interpretive discussions from which the state endeavored to exclude them.

The tactics that migrants used to resist state attempts to control—or manage—its interpretive engagement with them were situated. Migrants' strategies were informed by the ways that the state had made them visible or invisible, and by the ways the state engaged with them or marginalized them. In Morocco, where the state was eager to engage with emigrants over their remittances and created numerous institutions to support the exchanges that would transform workers into a source of capital for national economic goals defined the regime, migrants resisted state control of the conversations by engaging in practice. Through interpretive processes that they began in their communities of origin, migrants elaborated new practices to fulfill functions associated with the state, like the provision of electricity and other basic infrastructure. They drew the state into those practices, and through those practices, changed state structures. The practices that migrants initiated transformed major state bureaucracies, not just amending the methodology deployed by those administration to provide basic services but also revising the very fundamentals of how their tasks were conceptualized. By engaging in practice, migrants asserted their right to participate in defining the structures those practices would produce, and in envisioning the kind of economic development those structures would support.

In Mexico, migrants, who had been made invisible by the federal government and who had been excluded from its interpretive exchanges with Mexican Americans,

invoked the insights and structures produced through their engagement with local government authorities to stake their claim to participate in interpretive conversations with the state. They drew on the structures as evidence to prove that including them in interpretive conversations with the state produced positive outcomes for Mexico's economic development. The structures made their contributions manifest and incontrovertible, and they used them to insist on their right to participate in the interpretive practices that generated policy innovations and new prospects for economic development.

If interpretation becomes increasingly important to development, then the stakes for participating in interpretive conversations also rise. The centrality of interpretation in envisioning new development prospects and shaping how globalization manifests in local areas suggests a new and growing role for political organizing. The importance of labor and community mobilization may extend beyond the specific demands around which workers and communities organize, and the specific struggles in which they engage. The significance of worker and community mobilization may lie in the fact that it is way to make themselves visible to the state as interlocutors. By organizing, they assert themselves as social actors that should be included in the interpretive conversations that generate the practices and the structures that will determine the future of their local contexts. Moreover, as the experience of Moroccan and Mexican migrants demonstrates, organizing enables workers and communities to challenge stratagem to exclude them from interpretive conversions, from the generation of state technical and administrative knowledge, and from the definition of what development and globalization can and should mean for themselves and for their localities. Over the long term, this visibility, and the participation in interpretive conversation that it enables, may have a greater impact on state policy and may prove more transformative for workers and communities than the gains for which they may mobilize at any given moment.

3. Interpreting time

The effects of participating in interpretive conversations with the state may only become clear over time, however. In both Morocco and Mexico, the full impact of the insights and relationships developed through interpretive conversation took years to

become clear. The conversations considered in this study meandered, intensified and weakened, alternately traveled across space and became anchored in a particular place, for quite a while before they congealed into the policies now celebrated as “best practices.” Moreover, at various points in time, those conversations seemed to produce only failure. In Morocco, for example, the conversations that reformed national infrastructure provision started in the south of France, during a labor mobilization against layoffs in French heavy industry, a labor fight that was ultimately lost. If only the immediate effects of the conversation that workers initiated in an attempt to keep their jobs were evaluated, the interpretive exchange would seem like a bust. However, when followed over a longer span of time, the conversation emerges as an interpretive thread that is woven into the local contexts of migrants’ village of origin, and eventually into state bureaucracies, changing those bulky administrations in fundamentally and politically radical ways. Similarly, in the Mexico case, the Zacatecan matching funds arrangement that would grow into a nation-wide program that would mobilize Mexican migrants throughout the United States began as an informal agreement that was put down in writing. If it had been evaluated when it was still nascent, the arrangement might have appeared at best as an instrumental use of migrant funds to put down just enough infrastructure to ensure social peace, or at worst as an instance of government corruption, with the governor diverting funds from other program to capture a new constituency. However, when considered over time, the arrangement’s institutional function as a container for interpretive engagement becomes apparent, and its role as a catalyst for the creation of formidable migrant organization becomes clear.

Conversely, only considering policies in their finished form, once they have been established as successes, is also unsatisfactory. This approach, adopted by “best practice” proselytizers who are eager to copy only “the policies that work,” erases the lineage of policy innovation. It obscures the multiple unfinished and blurry iterations that successful policies first went through. In doing so, it also conceals the role that non-state actors played in generating the policies, and in producing the insights and forging the relationships on which those policies are based. Non-state actors are marginalized, banished to a society upon which the state, the fount of all innovation, acts. The divide between state and society is once again established.

While a long-term vision is indispensable for understanding how interpretation leads to policy innovation, a long-range perspective stands at odds with the representation of time in current discourses of globalization. In most depictions of globalization, time is deleted (Hart 2002). The rapid, almost instantaneous, movement of resource flows around the world is one of the defining characteristics of new global realities. Capital and information ricochet around the world as fast as high speed data connections will allow, and companies can pull the stakes of the manufacturing outfits almost as fast, especially since outsourcing has reduced the number of stakes they actually have to yank out of local soil and carry to another place. The only slow movers in this picture are low-skilled migrants who have to rely on traditional and often low-end means of transport, but they make up for their slowness with their large numbers. (High-skilled workers can migrate virtually via telecommunications, if they chose). Time, in this view of globalization, is a constraint that is increasingly easy to overcome.

This representation of time as it relates to globalization, with its emphasis on the instantaneous, erases the gradual. It elides the processes that produce innovation, processes that always occur over time. This representation implicitly equates innovation with information, and assumes that it is all already out there in the world and that it is just a matter of finding it. In this modular take on innovation, it is reduce to a matter of combining pre-existing chunks of information in new ways. Because of the assumptions on which it is based, the abridgement of time has serious consequences for how we conceptualize innovation. Erasing time forecloses the opportunity for the as-yet-unimagined, for the innovations of which we have not even begun to dream. Furthermore, it obscures the extent to which innovation is a relational process, and one that depends on the engagement of multiple voices and multiple perspectives. This is true of innovation in all realms, but in the area of policy, the inclusion of various social actors, especially those that are politically marginalized, in the process of interpretation is indispensable for creating policies that enable communities to work with the state as they author their own futures, define development and determine the significance that globalization will have for their lives. To paraphrase a Moroccan emigrant activist, taking the state “by the hand” and sharing in interpretive exchanges allows the state to be a vehicle through which communities can shape their own destinies.

Finally, this elision of time and the emphasis on the instantaneous undervalues the potential that an insight, a new relationship, or a nascent, still informal policy can represent. It privileges the actual over the possible, enforces the dominance of the factual over the intuited, and curtails the envisaging of what a policy might become and the effects it might have. For innovation to emerge, it requires the space for ambiguity that time allows. Innovation needs to be indeterminate for a while before it can be novel.

Conclusion

In an era of globalization, governments around the world have looked for “best practices” to capitalize on the opportunities that global changes can offer, and labor and community activists search for models to counter the economic marginalization the market-driven global integration seems to portend for them. Mexico’s and Morocco’s experiences with the elaboration of policies that link international migration and development offer an alternative to the practice of adopting already defined solutions. They illustrate how the process of interpretation and a commitment to interpretive engagement can enable governments and communities to generate their own approaches to the changes of globalization -- approaches that are innovation and enable government and communities to determine how globalization will manifest itself and how it will lead to development. Their experiences also show that tolerating the ambiguity that interpretation demands eventually yields new practices and new knowledges, resources that are emerging as more valuable to development than factors of production. In reference to the processes of interpretation, one Moroccan migrant activist who had participated in interpretive exchanges with the state stated simply: “They are our treasure” (qtd. in Daoud 2005:193).

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