The Mexican-American Diaspora and its Influence on American Trade Policy

By

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Abstract

This study focuses on the Mexican-American community in the US, the American and Mexican governments, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and trade in general between the US and Mexico. The empirical focus of this study is the influence of the Mexican-American diaspora on US policy, specifically with respect to trade. I attempt to trace the influence of the diaspora in the political debates over NAFTA, and in the post-NAFTA debates. I pose the following questions: 1-Does the Mexican-American diaspora have influence in US domestic politics and the US-Mexico relationship? 2-Does the diaspora use what influence it has to achieve its interests? 3-If so, is it generally successful? These questions will be explored in the context of American trade policy. The Mexican-American diaspora has the resources and characteristics needed to exert influence, but is it so inclined? In order to measure its influence, it must first be asked whether the diaspora attempts to use it in pursuing specific interests.

An important component of this analysis will be to determine whether Mexican-Americans are able- and perceived as able- to influence decision-making in the US government through the vote. Other important questions therefore include: Do Mexican-Americans vote? If so, whom do they vote for? And, are Mexican-Americans politically active? The answers to these questions will help us paint a more accurate picture of Mexican-Americans and their influence on US trade policy. This study will reveal that the Mexican-American community has played an increasingly important role in American politics. It will show that the Mexican-American diaspora has an impact on domestic issues such as immigration, but that it is also interested and influential in foreign policy, particularly trade. I intend to demonstrate this influence by exploring its role in the establishment of NAFTA and in the ensuing American debates on hemispheric trade policy.
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Glossary

AGIF- American GI Forum
AIPAC- The American Israel Public Affairs Committee
CAFTA-DR- The Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement
CANF- The Cuban American National Foundation
CHC- Congressional Hispanic Caucus
CHCI- Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute
CSO- Community Service Organization
CUSFTA- The Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement
EZLN- Zapatista Army of National Liberation
FDI- Foreign Direct Investment
FTAA- Free Trade Area of the Americas
GATT- The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP- Gross Domestic Product
HAFT- The Hispanic Alliance for Free Trade
HTAs- Hometown Associations
IBT- International Brotherhood of Teamsters
IME- Institute for Mexicans Abroad
IRCA- Immigration Reform and Control Act
LA- Los Angeles
LULAC- League of United Latin American Citizens
MAD- Mexican American Democrats
MALDEF- Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund
MAPA- Mexican American Political Association
MHTAs- Mexican Hometown Associations
Chapter 1 - Why the Mexican-American Diaspora?

This study focuses on the Mexican-American community in the United States (US), the American and Mexican governments, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and trade in general between both the US and Mexico. Its empirical focus is the influence of the Mexican-American diaspora on US trade policy.

According to the 2010 US Census, there are 308.75 million people living in the US. A total of 50.5 million of those people are of Latino origin. Latinos are the largest minority group in America. Furthermore, out of the total number of Latinos, 31.8 million are of Mexican origin. Therefore, Mexicans constitute the majority of Latinos (63 per cent) in the US. Puerto Ricans, at just over 4.1 million, are the second largest Latino group in the US. Cuban-Americans come in third with 1.6 million people.

Although Mexican-Americans comprise the majority of Latinos, not much is known about this large group, apart from the generally negative images. For example, Mexican-Americans have typically been stereotyped as low-skilled, job-seeking migrants with little education and diminutive English proficiency. Mexicans are simply referred to as “Latinos” in the US; no distinction is usually made between this group and other Latinos. Furthermore, although there is extensive literature on diasporas, the Mexican-American diaspora is somewhat neglected. Even the Cuban-Americans have more literature devoted to them, though their population is negligible in comparison to Mexican-Americans. The Mexican-Americans have been the least-studied of America’s diasporas.

Considering the numbers alone, I thought that Mexican-Americans in the US were worth investigating. Their numbers suggested to me that Mexican-Americans were more influential than scholars thought. Since it is relatively under-studied, I intend to provide insight into the Mexican-American diaspora. I chose this topic because it has the potential to produce an original

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1 While a significant participant in the agreement, for the purposes of this study, Canada will not be discussed.
contribution to the literature on diasporas and the domestic politics of US trade policy. While to a certain extent my findings may be applicable to diasporas in general, this is not the principal intent of my work.

I knew it was important to examine both the homeland and the host state in this study since the Mexican-American diaspora- more than some others- has a strong relationship with both countries. The former, Mexico, and the latter, the US, have a long history and a complicated relationship- one that has evolved significantly throughout the past century. The relationship has varied between resentment, distrust, and friendship. However, it has deepened, especially in the past few decades, as a result of shared concerns and interests. The US and Mexico will always be inextricably linked as a result of their contiguous border. Their border is the most integrated region in the world.\(^2\) What happens in one country often affects the other, whether it is drugs, violence, migration, or trade.

This study focuses on trade in general between the US and Mexico because trade is such an important component in the relationship between the two countries. I decided to focus on four main bilateral trade-related cases: NAFTA, the debates on fast-track authority and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the debates regarding the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), and the debates concerning the trucking dispute. I instinctively thought Mexican-Americans had to have played some role in the establishment of NAFTA, and in other trade-related issues involving both countries. I use NAFTA, and trade in general between both the US and Mexico, to illustrate the Mexican-American diaspora’s political influence in the US, and the implications for US trade policy in particular. It is necessary to examine NAFTA in depth since this trade agreement is ultimately the beginning of the economic relations between the US and Mexico. NAFTA is also the start of the increase in the Mexican-American diaspora’s influence.

In terms of gross product, North America is the largest free trade area in the world. The agreement was welcomed as a favorable first step towards the increased integration of North America. Upon its initiation in January 1994, NAFTA represented a six trillion dollar economy with a population of 360 million people. By 2004, the NAFTA area had grown to a 12.5 trillion dollar economy with a population of 430 million people. Roughly 2.5 billion dollars in trade occurs each day between the three countries. Trade and investment barriers were dismantled as a result of NAFTA. The governments of the US, Mexico, and Canada agreed to strengthen the bonds of their friendship and cooperation, contribute to the development and expansion of world trade, create an expanded secure market for the goods and services created in their countries, reduce trade distortions, and establish clear and fair rules governing their trade. The three countries decided to promote sustainable development and environmental protection, safeguard the public welfare, strengthen the development and enforcement of laws and regulations concerning the environment, and protect workers and their rights.

NAFTA was created with the intention of promoting economic growth by ‘spurring competition in domestic markets and promoting investment from both domestic and foreign sources.’ This has worked, and as a result, the efficiency and productivity of North American companies have improved significantly. Gary C. Hufbauer and Jeffrey J. Schott correctly state that “without question” NAFTA has been a commercial success. In ‘economic terms, NAFTA

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4 ‘North American integration. To each his own,’ *The Economist* (February 26th-March 4th, 2011): 44.
has more than delivered what it promised.”¹⁰ I agree with Hufbauer and Schott and hold the same opinion as the majority of economists with respect to NAFTA: it has more than accomplished what it was intended to, and it has been a great economic success for the US, Mexico, and Canada. It contributed to ‘unprecedented growth in regional trade and investment.’¹¹

Similarly, Professor Greg Anderson claims that critics think NAFTA is supposed to do everything, but it is limited in its focus. NAFTA’s mandate was purposely limited: ‘to reduce trade barriers- not to deal with all the issues on the North American agenda.’¹² NAFTA called for these tariffs to be gradually phased out, and as scheduled, on January 1, 2008 the remaining duties and restrictions were eliminated.¹³

NAFTA was established to stimulate economic growth by driving competition in domestic markets and fostering investment from domestic and foreign sources, and it has been effective. Firms in North America are more efficient as a result of the agreement. They have reorganized to benefit from economies of scale in both manufacturing and intra-industry specialization. Trade between the US and Mexico has increased twice as fast as American trade outside of NAFTA. In Mexico, foreign direct investment (FDI) increased substantially as a direct result of NAFTA. FDI increased from nearly 14 billion dollars in 1994 to roughly 23 billion dollars in 2007.¹⁴

The agreement succeeded in its fundamental goal: eliminating barriers to both trade and investment.¹⁵ Trade pacts simply produce opportunities; they do not ensure transactions or new investment. It was never possible for NAFTA to lure multitudes of American companies to Mexico, to create millions of jobs, or to drastically raise wages in the US. Those types of gains

¹⁰ Ibid, 5.
¹¹ Hufbauer and Schott, NAFTA Revisited, xv.
¹⁵ Pastor, 7.
fundamentally depend on sound macroeconomic policies, enhanced worker skills, efficient use of
information technologies, and an adaptable labour force.\textsuperscript{16} However, various economists insist
that NAFTA has had an overall positive impact on employment in the US, and that
unemployment rates have been declining as a result of the agreement.\textsuperscript{17} NAFTA has actually
contributed to high wages and better jobs in all three countries.\textsuperscript{18} The agreement has served as a
model for bilateral free trade agreements between the US and other countries, and indirectly, at
the multilateral level, it has contributed to the facilitation of the liberalization of world trade.\textsuperscript{19}

As a result of this agreement, the US and Mexico have strengthened their relationship, and their
economic relations continue to increase.

In 1997, US President Clinton wanted to obtain fast-track authority that would enable
him to extend NAFTA to the rest of Latin America. However, the debates on fast-track authority
and the FTAA did not go as planned. Although the Mexican government supported the American
administration in this regard, the Latino community did not. The Congressional Hispanic Caucus
(CHC) opposed the government’s desire to extend the agreement unless the administration would
enforce provisions that would lessen the damaging effects of NAFTA. The CHC blamed NAFTA
for job losses and environmental damage, among other things. The Latino community was united
in its opposition to extend NAFTA to Latin American countries, and therefore played a
significant role in its failure.

The debates regarding the CAFTA-DR were similar to those concerning the extension of
NAFTA. The CAFTA-DR is a trade agreement between the US and six Latin American
countries (the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and
Guatemala). The main goal of the trade agreement is to eventually eliminate trade barriers
between the US and these six countries. The CHC again opposed this agreement on the same

\textsuperscript{16} Hufbauer and Schott, \textit{NAFTA Revisited}, 62.
\textsuperscript{17} Teslik, ‘NAFTA’s Economic Impact.’
\textsuperscript{18} Gary Clyde Hufbauer and Jeffrey J. Schott, ‘NAFTA’s bad rap: it’s sound bites and bumper
stickers versus real facts and statistics,’ \textit{The International Economy} 22, 3 (Summer 2008): 19.
\textsuperscript{19} Hufbauer and Schott, \textit{NAFTA Revisited}, 57.
grounds as it opposed the FTAA. However, this time, the Latino community was not united in opposition to the agreement. The US signed the CAFTA-DR on August 5, 2004. Although it was clear that various Latino organization were opposed to the CAFTA-DR, many organizations and businesses in the Latino community supported it. The community clearly did not assume a united position on this issue. I argue that this fact played a role in the final outcome.

Finally, the debates concerning the trucking dispute will also be explored in this study. In the 1980s, as a result of lobbying by the Teamsters Union, the Reagan administration restricted Mexican trucks to the border zone, where their cargo had to be transferred onto US trucks with US drivers before continuing to their final destination in the US. It now takes more than three trucks to complete a transfer, whereas prior to 1982 (and these stringent restrictions), there was only one truck involved in the trip from start to finish. Not only was this process time consuming, but it was extremely costly.

In theory, NAFTA abolished this restraint, but in practice, it remained in place. Understandably, the Latino community condemned the US government’s treatment of Mexico as well as its violation of NAFTA. Mexico eventually became frustrated with the treaty violation and imposed punitive tariffs on American goods. It has been argued by many that President Obama was more intent on maintaining the support of the labour unions than he was on ameliorating America’s relationship with Mexico. There was undoubtedly a consensus within the Latino community that the US government’s position in this matter was wrong and unjust.

Finally, in July of 2011, the US and Mexico signed an agreement permitting Mexican trucks to deliver shipments to their final destinations in the US. Mexico, in turn, lifted the tariffs it had imposed in retaliation.

This study will explore the relationship between these trade-related events (among other related domestic events) in US-Mexican relations and the rise of the Mexican-American diaspora as a force in American domestic and trade policy.
The Three Foreign Policy Issues

There are three main foreign policy issues that the US and Mexico share: immigration, drugs, and trade. Although the US and Mexico share these issues, they view and deal with them differently. The first two have been issues for both countries for decades. In the past two decades, the US has become increasingly concerned with the illegal immigrants entering its territory from the south. Also, ever since the Mexican government, under President Calderón, initiated its war on drugs and the Mexican cartels, the violence has escalated, and has increasingly spilled over the border.\(^{20}\) The US and Mexico have been working together for years in an attempt to combat these issues. Although the terrorist attacks of September 11\(^{th}\), 2001 somewhat derailed the bilateral relationship, the countries remain close allies and continue to work together on their shared concerns.

Trade, the third shared issue area, is the focus of this study, and is arguably the most important of the three. Trade, the exchange of goods and services among countries, has long been in existence, and has long been recognized by leaders, politicians, economists, among others, as extremely beneficial for a country’s economy and welfare. Especially since World War II, trade barriers have increasingly been reduced and trade agreements have been created among countries, such as NAFTA. Free trade means that goods and services are bought and sold between countries without tariffs or other restrictions. Consequently, a country’s GDP normally increases, as does its standard of living. NAFTA was beneficial for all parties involved, but it was not an easy feat to pass the agreement, especially in the US. (The entire NAFTA process will be further discussed in Chapter 7.)

Chapter Outline

In the following chapters, this study will explain how the analysis of the Mexican-American diaspora, of its home country and kin country implications, and of its political rise

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through strength of numbers, resources, voting, and organization will lead to an assessment of its influence in the outcome of each of the trade-related cases mentioned.

The ensuing chapter, Chapter 2, reviews the literature on ethnic diasporas. The history of the term “diaspora” is examined, and the most significant social-scientific approaches to the study of diasporas will be discussed in order to arrive at a working definition and a conceptual framework for this study. The literature on the influence and success of ethnic identity groups will also be examined, partly as a prelude to the following chapter where influence will be further discussed and analyzed. This chapter will critically examine what has been written to date on the relationship between ethnic interest groups and US foreign policy, as well as the characteristics that contribute to a successful and influential ethnic diaspora. Considering the empirical focus of this study, it is important to begin from a clear understanding of what a diaspora is.

Chapter 3 discusses concepts central to this study, which will help in examining how the Mexican-American diaspora seeks to influence the American government and its trade policy. I attempt to trace the influence of the diaspora. Influence is a vague and somewhat elusive concept, particularly within the context of groups and diasporas. It is thus vital to examine and define the concept carefully. If I am to successfully qualify and measure the influence of the Mexican-American diaspora, it is important that the meaning of this term is clear. I trace events in the 20-year period of relations between Mexico and the US involving the diaspora and trade policy, and attempt to draw lines of causality. I am essentially going to use the events I examine to tell a story about the rise of a major ethnic force in US politics and trade policy.

Chapter 4 examines the host state, the US. It provides a brief history of the relationship between the US and Mexico, and provides a demographic description of both the Latino and Mexican-American communities. This chapter also examines the foremost Mexican-American and Latino organizations. Furthermore, the Mexican-American diaspora is examined in the context of its relationship with its host state. The US and Mexico are inextricably linked, and
over the years have become more so.\textsuperscript{21} There are thus many interests and concerns that affect both countries. The three foreign policy issues the two countries share will be more closely examined in this chapter.

Chapter 5 examines the kin state, Mexico. Mexico’s economy, government, and security are examined. Although Chapter 4 provides a brief history of the relationship between the US and Mexico, this chapter extends that analysis. This chapter also discusses the relationship between Mexico and the Mexican-American diaspora. Much like Mexico’s relationship with its northern neighbor, its relationship with its diaspora has also changed significantly throughout the years. Mexico’s political and economic advancements as well as setbacks shaped the Mexican government’s position and attitude toward its diaspora.

The Mexican government initially resented its diaspora for leaving Mexico and accused it of forgetting its culture and abandoning its country. The Mexican government was also reluctant to interact with the diaspora in the US because it feared that American politics and economics would overshadow, or possibly absorb, Mexico’s culture. However, the government came to realize that the diaspora was a valuable asset and was increasingly acquiring more influence in the US. Out of self-interest, the Mexican government started to court its diaspora, and began to foster a relationship with it. Over the past decade, Mexican leaders have made efforts to court the Mexican-American community, encouraging the latter to lobby on behalf of issues pertinent to its homeland.\textsuperscript{22}

Chapter 6 discusses the void in the literature concerning Mexican-Americans. Although vast when it comes to diasporas in general, the literature is scarce on the Mexican-American diaspora in particular. No recent statistics exist on voting patterns or political interests of Mexican-Americans. Not surprisingly, there is virtually no research on the diaspora’s influence in American politics or foreign policy. The study of ethnic politics continues to be progressively

\textsuperscript{21} ‘Mexico and America. Gently does it,’ \textit{The Economist} (December 5\textsuperscript{th}-11\textsuperscript{th}, 2009): 38.
\textsuperscript{22} David M. Paul and Rachel Anderson Paul, \textit{Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy} (USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2009), 33.
fundamental to political science.\textsuperscript{23} Taking this into consideration, as well as the fact that nearly a third of foreign-born immigrants in the US are Mexicans, and that Mexican-Americans are the largest immigrant group in the US, more information on this community is necessary.

After exploring this void further, I will discuss how I plan to fill it. This chapter will also discuss prominent Mexican-Americans in politics, the courting of the Latino vote by both major political parties in the US, the socioeconomic status, and the increasing potential of the diaspora. Mexican-Americans are usually discounted as politically uninterested and insignificant. While this may have been true of earlier generations, Mexican-Americans are increasingly becoming more educated, skilled, and politically interested and active. Voter registration continues to increase, and with every presidential election, voting rates increase. Mexican-Americans are mostly concerned with the economy and immigration, but are still actively involved in issues concerning their homeland. Chapter 6 essentially sets the stage for the following empirical chapter.

Chapter 7 examines Mexican Hometown Associations (MHTAs), the main political arm of the diaspora. It also discusses the Mexican-American diaspora in the context of the founding of NAFTA, and the role it played in significant trade-related events since 1994. The events that will be examined are the debates on fast-track authority and the FTAA, the debates regarding the CAFTA-DR, as well as the debates concerning the trucking issue. It is presumed that the Mexican-American diaspora has some degree of influence regarding bilateral trade and all trade-related cases examined in this study.

This study attempts to determine to what extent the Mexican-American diaspora is influential with respect to American trade policy. I will use process tracing loosely as a guide to trace the influence of the diaspora in the political debates over NAFTA, and in the post-NAFTA debates. I believe that the analysis of the political process in each case will reveal that the

diaspora had some influence on the outcomes of each of the trade-related events. I will examine the relations between the US and Mexican governments, and the Mexican-American diaspora since the early 1990s, focusing on trade-related issues in which policy changes occurred.

These episodes will present opportunities to determine the diaspora’s independent influence. This approach will enable me to answer the following questions: 1-Does the Mexican-American diaspora have influence in US domestic politics and over the US-Mexico relationship? If so, what is the relationship between the perception and the reality of that influence? 2-Does the diaspora use the influence it has to achieve its interests or goals? 3-If so, is it generally successful? These questions will be explored in the context of American trade policy. The Mexican-American diaspora has the necessary tools and characteristics needed to exert influence, but is it so inclined? Furthermore, in order to measure its influence, it must first be asked whether the diaspora uses its power to achieve specific goals or interests.

As an important premise of this analysis, it is necessary to determine whether Mexican-Americans are able- and perceived as able- to influence decision-making through the vote. Therefore, other important questions include: Do Mexican-Americans vote? If so, whom do they vote for? And, are Mexican-Americans politically active? The answers to these questions will help us paint a more accurate picture of Mexican-Americans and their influence in relation to US trade policy. Voting is perhaps one of the clearest exercises of political power, and if the diaspora votes, considering its numbers, it should be able to influence the election results or political issues in a particular way. Whether diaspora members vote, and whether they vote to accomplish specific goals, are important considerations.

I take a generous view of influence, where even marginal indications of “influence resources”—such as size, money, assimilation, mobilization, organization, and a committed core of educated and politically active supporters—grant influence to any group. I begin with the presumption that the first question, whether the Mexican-American diaspora is influential, is answered in the affirmative. The Mexican-American community has increasingly started to play
a role in American politics. It has an impact on domestic issues such as immigration, as well as hemispheric trade policy.

Over the past two decades, the Mexican-American diaspora’s potential for influence has gradually intensified given its increased numbers, enhanced organization, and more effective lobbying and electoral tactics. The evidence from trade-related cases, however, does not reveal the gradual increase in influence that was initially expected. Rather, the diaspora seems to have under-performed relative to its potential and in comparison to other diasporas attempting to influence American foreign policy. This study will describe this twenty-year period in detail, starting with the NAFTA negotiations, and will illustrate changes in influence regarding significant US trade and trade-related issues of importance to Mexico and Mexican-Americans, from NAFTA to the trucking dispute.
Chapter 2- Ethnic Diasporas and American Foreign Policy

Benedict Anderson claims all communities that are ‘larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact are imagined.’ For many scholars, diasporas fall into this category of “imagined communities”. Anderson defines a nation as an imagined political community. This definition is based on the assertion that while the people of a nation do not know each other, and will never meet all of their compatriots, they all have a similar image of their nation and the community. Furthermore, they all share a desire to maintain the community.

By contrast, Gabriel Sheffer states that diasporas are not imagined communities. Various elements are combined to create diasporas’ identities: primordial, psychological/symbolic, and instrumental. Milton Esman concurs with Sheffer on this point, as do I. Diasporas are real social structures, not imagined communities. Diasporas are created by the movement of people across international borders, and the congregation of these people in distinct shared ethnic communities. They specifically refer to the movement of persons from one nation to another. Diasporas are not new; “ethno-national diasporism” is an old and continuing occurrence. Necessary aspects of diasporas include the groups’ continuous economic, social, cultural, and political struggles to protect their distinct identities and maintain their connections and relationships with their homelands.

In a host country, the most important boundaries between a diaspora and other political and social entities are not geographical or physical, like the boundaries of towns where the diaspora members live. The most significant boundaries are psychological and cultural in nature. These boundaries concern the scope of influence of groups holding the same cultural attributes and identity. Shared identities are closely connected to both a real and imagined homeland; these

shared identities are beyond other features that are common to all diasporas, and these identities are at the very heart of the diaspora phenomenon. These shared identities affect the diasporas and are major determining factors with respect to the strategies employed in the relationship between host countries and homelands.

More research is needed on diasporas and issues associated with them. I argue, as does Sheffer, that this is because they are gaining significance and relevance, and will continue to do so in this century. Diasporas are becoming increasingly influential in both domestic and international politics. More research is needed not only with respect to diasporas in general, but also to specific instances of them. In that spirit, this study seeks both to deepen the general understanding of diasporas and their role, and to provide an illustrative account of the Mexican-American one in particular.

This chapter will begin with a brief history of the term “diaspora”. It will then explore various definitions of the term and discuss the most significant social-scientific approaches to the study of diasporas, in order to arrive at a working definition and a conceptual framework for this study. Next, some of the literature on the influence and success of ethnic identity groups will be examined, partly as a lead-in to the following chapter where influence will be further examined. Finally, this chapter will critically assess what has been written to date on the relationship between ethnic interest groups and US foreign policy. The empirical focus of this study is the influence of the Mexican-American diaspora on US trade policy. It is important, therefore, to begin from a clear understanding of what a diaspora is.

**Diaspora: The History of a Contested Term**

The word “diaspora” is Greek, and comes from the verb “diaspeiro”. It essentially means to disperse. It can be traced back as early as the fifth century B.C. It was rarely used in any other language before the nineteenth century. “Diaspora” meant the threat of dispersal confronting the
Jewish people if they did not obey God. For the most part, this term only applied to divine acts. It always had to do with God either scattering the sinners, or uniting them. The term was once used exclusively to describe Jewish history and the Jewish people being dispersed amongst the lands. Historians and social scientists have generally associated the term “diaspora” with the dispersal of the Jewish people from their homeland (Palestine) in 70 AD, subsequent to their defeat at the hands of the Romans.

It was only much later that the meaning of the term “diaspora” was transformed to represent both those dispersed persons and the domain of the dispersion. During the nineteenth century, “diaspora” was used in the US, Germany, and England; it referred to the Old Testament texts where the story of the Jews being scattered was discussed. The word began to appear in dictionaries at the start of the twentieth century. However, it remained limited to the Jewish example. “Diaspora” initially appeared in 1913 in Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, and it first appeared in Larousse du XXe siècle in 1929.

The term appeared again in the 1931 American edition of the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. Jewish historian Simon Dubnov wrote the entry in this edition and stated that the term’s meaning should not be restricted to religious or Jewish history. Dubnov reminded his readers that the term “diaspora” is Greek and refers to a nation, or part of one, that has been separated from its territory. Although it has been dispersed to other nations, it retains its culture and ties to its homeland.

Various scholars regarded Dubnov’s definition as an argument that the term should only be used in reference to the Jews. After all, Dubnov wrote extensively on the Jewish peoples and their history. He referred to Jews’ national spirit and identity, and how these were based on

28 Stéphane Dufoix, Diasporas (California: University of California Press, 2003), 5.
31 Dufoix, 16.
32 Ibid, 16.
feelings of solidarity and a belief in the possibility of the creation in Palestine of an autonomous Jewish state.  

33 Dubnov claimed that the Jews’ national spirit was primarily expressed in the dismissal by many Jewish intellectuals of the idea of assimilation, and in the Jewish peoples’ voluntary unity.  

34 Other authors, however, regarded Dubnov’s article as a starting point. Authors began to quote Dubnov and to use his definition of “diaspora” to refer to other groups of people. For instance, Robert Park applied the term to Asians.  

35 In the 1960s, the term, in its extended meaning, started to appear in dictionaries and various newspapers. In 1961, a new dimension was added to the definition of diaspora in Webster’s Third New International Dictionary: the dispersion of members of the same nation or the same beliefs, as well as the dispersion of people from one nation to others.  

I agree with Dubnov’s definition of diaspora- that it refers to a nation, or part of one, that has been separated from its territory, and that although it has been dispersed to other nations, it retains its culture and ties to its homeland- but only as a starting point. My study will proceed from a broader definition: firstly, the term “diaspora” cannot, and should not, be confined to the Jewish peoples; and secondly, the dispersion and separation of a diaspora are not necessarily forced. They can also be voluntary, as in the case of the Mexican-American diaspora, among others.  

Prior to the 1960s, “diaspora” as a concept was virtually absent from the social sciences. It was really not until 1986, in the publication Modern Diasporas in International Politics, edited by Israeli political scientist Gabriel Sheffer, that the social sciences began to shift to a general approach to diasporas that was both theoretical and comparative. This approach sought to compare different groups such as the Armenians, the Chinese, and the Turks. The basic issue at

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34 Ibid, 323.
the time was defining “diaspora” in the social sciences. My understanding of the concept is based on this more inclusive and comparative approach.

Defining “diaspora”: Approaches to the study of diasporas

There is certainly a lack of scholarly consensus on the matter of diasporas, especially when it comes to a working definition. As a result, there is chaos, to a certain extent, in the field with respect to this fundamental issue. My intention is to bring some clarity to the matter and contribute to the field, working from a more concise definition toward a better understanding of diasporas in general, and of the Mexican-American one in particular.

There has been an “explosion of interest” in diasporas since the 1980s. Yossi Shain correctly defines a “diaspora” as a ‘people with a common ethnic-national-religious origin who reside outside a claimed or an independent home territory.’ According to Milton Esman, there is a current working definition of the term “diaspora,” as a ‘minority ethnic group of migrant origin which maintains sentimental or material links with its land of origin.’ Esman accurately expands on this working definition and argues that a diaspora is a migrant community that preserves material or emotional links with its home state while adapting to the establishments and the environment of its host state. While the definitions of both Shain and Esman are useful, they do not go far enough. If combined, they would make a more appropriate working definition.

This combination would read as follows: a diaspora is a people with a common ethnic national origin that lives outside its home state; these people maintain material or sentimental linkages with their home state while adapting to the environment of their host state. However, this definition still does not take interests into account. A better working definition, therefore, is as follows: a diaspora is a people with a common ethnic national origin and shared identities,

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37 Yossi Shain, Marketing the American Creed Abroad. Diasporas in the U.S. And Their Homelands (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 8.
38 Esman, ‘Diasporas and International Relations,’ 333.
interests, culture, religion, and language; living outside their home state, they maintain material or sentimental linkages with it while adapting to the environment of their host state.

In academic publications, as well as in the media, “diaspora” is often used in a loose and general way. Scholars are habitually not clear when they use this term. For instance, some use “diaspora” as though it means a community of a certain ethnicity that is simply separated by state borders. As a result, various scholars, including Stéphane Dufoix, argue that the term is gradually losing its meaning.

Dufoix notes that Web pages consisting of the word “diaspora” numbered 136,000 in 2002 (the number now exceeds 45,900,000\(^ {39}\)). By 1998, the journal *Diaspora* had covered a total of 36 diasporas. Furthermore, since 2003, over 700 books with “diaspora” in the title have been published. According to many scholars, “diaspora” has become a somewhat generic term representing a range of things, such as immigrants and their offspring, ethnic minorities, and communities that attempt to maintain their shared identities.\(^ {40}\) Furthermore, the term now shares significance with a greater “semantic domain” which comprises words like expatriate, refugee, guest worker, and ethnic community.\(^ {41}\) That is why it is essential to have a clear and meaningful definition of “diaspora”. As with any social science term, it is important and necessary to define the term before employing it; it is up to academics to make terms they use clear and meaningful. I will be attempting to do this with respect to “diaspora”.

In 1991, William Safran, an American political scientist, initiated the first endeavor to create a “closed conceptual model” with several principles. He did not want the term “diaspora” to lose all meaning, and so he tried to create a conceptual model to limit the term to the members of minority expat populations, who shared some of the six characteristics he delineated. The first two characteristics are that the group’s dispersion needs to be to two or more foreign lands, and that the group shares a common memory regarding the homeland. The third and fourth

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\(^{39}\) As of September 2013.

\(^{40}\) Safran, ‘The Jewish Diaspora in a Comparative and Theoretical Perspective,’ 50.

\(^{41}\) Baumann, 322.
The characteristics are the belief that the group’s acceptance by the host country is not possible, and the persistent memory of an idealized homeland. Also part of the fourth characteristic is the desire to return to this idealized homeland one day. The final two characteristics are the group’s certainty that the members have a shared duty to protect and assist the homeland, and the continuation of either individual or common relations with the homeland.\(^\text{42}\)

Safran’s list of characteristics, while helpful, requires some qualifications. First, I do not consider it necessary for a diaspora to be dispersed to two or more lands. One is sufficient. Second, the group can share a common memory regarding the homeland, but that memory need not be positive. Moreover, with each passing generation, a common memory is not guaranteed, nor is it a requirement for the continued existence of a diaspora. With respect to the third feature, I have not observed this as being the case in the US. Many diasporas successfully integrate into American society, and the Mexican-Americans do not appear to think that integration is impossible for them. Concerning the fourth characteristic, it is not always the case that there is an idealized conception of the homeland and a desire to return. Oftentimes, the dispersion is voluntary. The fifth characteristic seems to be shared by most diasporas; the majority appear to have an interest in their homeland, and a desire to assist it. The final characteristic—the continuation of either individual or common relations with the homeland—is clearly very common among diasporas.

Although Safran’s six characteristics seem to be embodied in the Jewish diaspora, various authors have used this conceptual model to show how other diasporas, and not simply the Jewish one, meet the criteria detailed in his definition. Safran admits that although his criteria are centered on the Jewish diaspora as the classic model, there are various groups that share the majority of the listed features.\(^\text{43}\) Furthermore, no diaspora, not even the Jewish one, corresponds


\(^{43}\) Safran, ‘The Jewish Diaspora in a Comparative and Theoretical Perspective,’ 37.
entirely to the model. Many scholars have used this model and expanded on it. “Diaspora” has thus evolved into a term that is used to identify various populations.

The evolution of the term “diaspora” was important and necessary. As recounted by Robin Cohen, there are four phases of diaspora studies. In the initial phase, the definition of the term did not accurately represent groups of people that were, in fact, diasporas, since it only made reference to the Jewish experience. The classical use of the term “diaspora” comprises the first phase, which was limited to the Jewish experience. The classical use was extended in the 1960s and 1970s to include the dispersion of other groups, such as the Africans, the Irish, and the Armenians. Victimhood remained a central theme with respect to diasporas at this time; along the same lines as the Jewish experience, these other groups regarded their dispersal as being a result of some major catastrophic event that traumatized the entire group.

The second phase expanded the term, and included groups of people other than the Jewish group, which was a significant step forward. In the 1980s, the term “diaspora” was used to describe various categories of people, including political refugees, immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities, expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities. Therefore, the term came to designate various groups of people, who either called their group a diaspora, or were called a diaspora by others.

In the third phase, the constructivists, who were influenced by postmodernists, began to hinder the development of the term. The third phase occurred in the mid-1990s and consisted of critiques of the “second phase” theorists by social constructivists. Even though it was clear that there was a major increase in the number of groups recently classified as diasporas, and that new ways had been developed for studying these groups, the second phase theorists were criticized for constraining and limiting the concept. Some social constructivists were influenced by postmodern writings. They wanted to eliminate two of the main “building blocks” that restricted
and defined the idea of a diaspora: homeland and ethnic/religious community. Both social constructivists and postmodernists argue that in the postmodern world, identities are constructed and deconstructed in a pliable way.

The fourth and current phase is one of consolidation. In this phase, critics of constructivists rightly argued that the latter were rendering the term analytically void. The social constructivists, and their critiques, were regarded by other scholars in the field as having the potential to hinder the development of the concept of “diaspora” because the term would be stripped of its descriptive and analytical faculties. Although the constructivists did contribute to the expansion of the term “diaspora” by incorporating identities into the analysis, the current phase has refocused on the centrality of the common features that compose a diaspora. There is a reaffirmation of the idea of diaspora in this phase of consolidation, which includes the common features of a diaspora. The current phase appropriately represents the term “diaspora”, and it is from this point that my research and analysis begin. As I stated previously, it is essential to have an accurate and representative working definition of the term. It is also necessary to delineate the common features of a diaspora, in order to appropriately represent diasporas. This will be accomplished in the following pages.

The term “diaspora” has become extremely contested, partly because it has been so popular. Some scholars are indifferent to the term’s popularity and do not mind that the term is being applied to various ethnic groups. Other scholars are perturbed by it. Cohen suggests two possible ways of dealing with the contested nature of the term: let the self-declaration prevail, and accept that the term can be applied to any group, or establish a rigid set of standards that all new claimants need to conform to in order to be deemed a diaspora. Those are clearly the only two practical options in this particular case, but whether the latter is possible is difficult to say.

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One can certainly determine a set of standards, but whether claimants will follow them in order to call their group a diaspora is another matter. Furthermore, who would come up with this set of standards? How would everyone agree on a set of standards when seemingly each social scientist has a different definition of the term “diaspora”? However, in Cohen’s defense, he does suggest that instead of selecting either option, four social science tools should be deployed. These four tools permit the forging of a middle path with respect to outlining a diaspora. They are the following: the emic/etic claims, the time dimension, common features of a diaspora, and ideal types.45

“Emic” and “etic” are anthropological terms pertaining to human behaviour. These two terms can be used to study a society’s cultural system.46 With respect to this tool, Cohen claims that not every group is a diaspora simply because it claims to be. There are various factors that determine whether a group can be labeled a diaspora. Some of these factors include ‘social structures, historical experiences, prior conceptual understandings, and the opinions of other social actors.’47 I agree that not all groups can be labeled a diaspora, and that there are certain factors that must be present for this labeling to occur. I will list my criteria shortly, which differ, to some extent, from Cohen’s benchmarks.

The second scientific tool consists of the passing of time- the understanding of realities and situations after their occurrence. A significant tie to the past, or an obstacle to assimilation of some sort must be present to enable the emergence of a diasporic consciousness, at which point the active part of the diaspora must have the time to mobilize the members of the group. The Mexican-American diaspora, for instance, certainly has a significant and symbolic tie to its home state, while also experiencing difficulty when it comes to assimilating in its host state.

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The third tool involves a list of common features of a diaspora, which will be discussed in the following paragraph. Finally, the fourth feature to assist in the outlining of a diaspora is the use of ideal types. Cohen uses certain qualifying adjectives to classify numerous diasporas: victim, labour, imperial, trade, and deterritorialized. This simple means of classifying the main types of diasporas does not ignore what they share with one another, but highlights their most significant characteristics. While most recognized diasporas fit easily into one of these categories, it is important not to take each ideal type too literally. Deviation from the ideal is normal since the ideal is only a simplification and a yardstick.

With respect to the common features of diasporas, Cohen argues there are nine, although no one diaspora will exhibit all of them. He adds that this ‘slack methodological device nonetheless allows the inclusion of certain important cases that seem part, or claim they are part, of the diasporic phenomenon.” 48 I agree that not every diaspora will manifest all of these common features. However, his list needs a few changes so that it better represents all diasporas.

The first common feature is dispersal from a homeland, to two or more foreign lands. As mentioned, I do not think this is necessary - one would suffice. Other scholars, including Rogers Brubaker, also think that it is not necessary for the dispersion to occur to two or more foreign lands. I agree with Brubaker that the dispersion must, however, cross state borders. 49 An essential element of any definition is surely that all diasporas have been dispersed from their homeland to a foreign land, whether forcefully or willingly. Although this feature does characterize the Mexican-American diaspora, for instance, a significant portion of the diaspora was not dispersed from Mexico to the US. Mexicans that were “left behind” after the war of 1848 between the US and Mexico were never actually dispersed. However, metaphorically, they were in that they were displaced from their homeland and essentially became aliens in their native

49 Brubaker, ‘The “diaspora” diaspora,’ 5.
Mexican-Americans in the US are a distinguishable group living in a location different from their place of origin that experience physical displacement.

The second feature is the migration from a homeland in search of work or in pursuit of trade. This feature characterizes many diasporas, and certainly includes the Mexican-American one. The majority of Mexican migrants come to the US in search of work. The members of the Mexican-American diaspora in the US have been conceptualized in this sense, as “labour migrants”. However, I would add “political reasons” to this feature since I have found that diaspora members tend to leave their home state for primarily economic or political reasons. The third feature is a shared myth and memory about the home state, including its history and accomplishments.

I agree that there needs to be a connection to the homeland, or a collective memory about it, but not necessarily a myth. Furthermore, it should be noted that this collective memory does not need to be positive. Mexican-Americans in the US are still connected to their homeland but recognize the difficulties Mexico faces—especially with respect to drugs, violence, and poverty. Mexican migrants in the US do not generally regard Mexico in a positive light, as a country they were forced to leave and would one day want to return to. On the contrary, these migrants see Mexico as a country that is struggling to maintain democracy, peace, security, and a decent standard of living. Mexican migrants are often embarrassed by their homeland and want to assist in improving it.

Diasporas tend to remain connected to their homeland. The most common forms of exchange with the home state consist of communications with family and friends, and financial

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The Mexican-American diaspora certainly maintains emotional, social, and financial ties with Mexico. The fourth feature is an idealization of the home state, and a commitment to its maintenance (this includes its restoration, safety, and prosperity). This feature certainly concerns the Mexican-American diaspora, for the aforementioned reasons. Although Mexican migrants in the US do not idealize their homeland, they tend to continue to hold a desire, and to act on the desire, to maintain, restore, and assist it in its security and prosperity. Furthermore, the Mexican-American diaspora is also intent on assisting their families that remain in Mexico.

The fifth common feature is the establishment of a return movement to the home state that gains communal approval. I do not believe this feature characterizes all, or even most, diasporas. The sixth feature is a strong ethnic group consciousness maintained over a long period of time and grounded in the feeling of uniqueness and the belief in a common history and fate. Arguably, this feature characterizes all diasporas, and certainly the Mexican-American one. There is a fairly strong ethnic group consciousness among Mexican migrants, illustrated through the numerous Mexican-American organizations and grassroots associations created by them and for them in the US.

Not all diaspora communities are united in their position on international affairs or their domestic situation in their host country. Diasporas are often divided on various issues, such as class interests, the permanence of their residence in the host state, or because of sub-ethnic regional origins. Furthermore, some diasporas are divided because certain members have different goals or tactics than do other members. The Mexican-American diaspora, however, exhibits some cohesion and solidarity. This particular diaspora does not seem to suffer from deep divisions that divide others.

58 Esman, ‘Diasporas and International Relations,’ 343.
I believe that Brubaker’s concept of “boundary-maintenance” can be added as part of this feature. This criterion consists of the conservation of a distinct identity concerning a host state. The Mexican-American diaspora definitely qualifies in terms of “boundary-maintenance”; not only is Miami a perfect example of how Latino culture and the Spanish language have been preserved vis-à-vis its host society, but the Mexican-American diaspora is undeniably a distinctive community with its own identity. Furthermore, diasporas are maintained by deep social relations that cross state borders and connect diaspora members in various states into one specific transnational community. Diasporas create “transnational alliances”; they are essentially ethnic communities that expand beyond state borders. The boundaries must be maintained over an extended period of time. Again, the Mexican-American diaspora qualifies in this respect.

The seventh feature is a “troubled relationship” with the host state, signifying a lack of acceptance to a certain extent. This is often the case with many diasporas. While this feature characterizes the Mexican-American diaspora, the “troubled relationship” between Mexican migrants in the US and the rest of the population seems to be diminishing. This issue was more prevalent in the earlier days of Mexican migration to the US. However, illegal immigration is a continuing and polarizing issue, with Mexican-Americans and other Latino immigrants (illegal and otherwise) on one side of the debate, and, for the most part, non-Latino (and usually Republican) Americans on the other side. This debate certainly exacerbates the existing “troubled relationship.”

The eighth common feature is the sense of sympathy and solidarity with fellow ethnic members in other countries. The ninth feature is the opportunity for a distinct and enriching life in tolerant and pluralist host states. The eighth feature does not characterize all diasporas, and certainly not the Mexican-American diaspora. However, arguably, the ninth feature applies to all

59 Ibid, 6.
62 Ibid, 515.
diasporas in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism. The US is a tolerant and pluralist country, and although many Mexican-Americans are poor and uneducated, this is seemingly a generational phenomenon. Therefore, there is the opportunity for a distinct and enriching life in the US for Mexican migrants since it is likely that the plight of Mexican-Americans will improve with each generation.

Cohen’s work on diasporas is extremely significant, and has contributed a great deal to diaspora studies in general. As indicated above, of the nine common features he lists, seven apply to the Mexican-American diaspora. Based on the fact that the Mexican-American diaspora is an established diaspora and one that can be compared to other diasporas in various ways, I believe that the list needs a few changes so that it better represents diasporas in general. Instead of nine common features, I have selected seven. I have modified some of the features slightly. Furthermore, I have removed from Cohen’s list a return movement to the home state. Based on the literature, I do not think this criterion applies to many diasporas. Diasporas often leave their home states voluntarily because of either economic or political reasons and rarely have any interest in returning. I also removed from the list a sense of empathy and solidarity with fellow ethnic members in other countries of settlement. According to the literature, I have not found other countries of settlement; most diasporas tend to settle in one host state. While there are undoubtedly fellow ethnic members in countries throughout the world, I have not observed any sort of established relationship between diasporas and ethnic members in countries other than their home state. Diaspora members forge strong ties with their kinfolk in their home state, but it tends not to extend beyond that.

I will now summarize my revised list of Cohen’s common features of a diaspora. First, although dispersion must cross state borders, it need only be to one foreign land. The second feature is the expansion from a homeland for economic or political reasons. A collective memory of the homeland is the third feature. The fourth feature is a commitment to the homeland’s maintenance. The fifth feature is the existence of a strong ethnic group consciousness. As Yossi
Shain states, a diaspora is a people with a common ethnic-national-religious origin. The sixth feature is a troubled relationship with the host society, and the seventh and final feature is the possibility of a distinct and enriching life in tolerant and pluralist host states.

Scholars frequently differ on what features they consider to be indispensable criteria of a diaspora. Although Cohen’s common features are widely respected and viewed as appropriate criteria when it comes to identifying a diaspora, the changes I indicated above should be made in order to more appropriately represent diasporas.

The Success and Influence of Ethnic Identity Groups

As with the features and characteristics that make up a diaspora, there is a great deal of contention regarding what characteristics lead to an ethnic interest group’s political influence and effectiveness. There is no agreement or common understanding on this issue in the literature. David M. Paul and Rachel Anderson Paul argue that the following characteristics contribute to a “successful and influential” ethnic diaspora: size, resources, assimilation, issue salience, and organization.\(^63\) I agree that these are important variables.

Cohen’s work fits with that of Paul and Paul’s in three important ways: both focus on organization and collective unity, as well as integration and assimilation, and a connection with the homeland. Cohen states that a strong ethnic group consciousness must exist among the members of a diaspora, to keep the group united. Paul and Paul focus on organizational unity. They state that a group is more influential if it enjoys a large and unified group of members that are active politically. Furthermore, they argue these members also have to be integrated into American society. Cohen discusses the possibility of a distinctive yet creative and enriching life in host countries, which implies integration and assimilation to a certain extent. Paul and Paul state that the members of a diaspora must retain a strong connection with the homeland, and Cohen discusses the importance of a diaspora having a commitment to the maintenance of its homeland.

With respect to the first characteristic, one would expect the size of the ethnic group to affect its influence. The group has to be large enough in order to have a chance at affecting the political and electoral calculations of decision-makers. With respect to ethnic minority groups, electoral importance often entails geographic concentration. The Mexican-American diaspora is roughly 30 million strong. If only for electoral reasons, we might expect larger ethnic interest groups to hold more influence in the foreign policy-making process. If, however, an ethnic group is concentrated in certain states, in large numbers, it is more likely to be influential, especially when it comes to voting. Paul and Paul concur, and state that if ‘an ethnic group has a concentrated population … it may have the opportunity to persuade its congressional representatives to champion issues the ethnic group finds important.’

As an immigrant group integrates, it is more likely and able to influence policymakers since more ethnic group members become integrated into the political process. When ethnic groups are spread out sparsely throughout the country, they are more likely to be less organized and influential. At the very least, however, the Internet has provided the possibility for all diasporas to have the same access to policymakers and public opinion, regardless of their political and economic resources, as well as their geographic location. While the Mexican-American diaspora can be found throughout the US, it tends to be concentrated in certain states, such as California, Texas, and Arizona. Furthermore, it is fairly well connected via various networks and associations.

Paul and Paul argue that a second significant source of ethnic group influence is resources. The groups need to have the necessary financial resources in order to exercise influence. Groups lacking in resources are more likely to have more trouble accessing the

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68 Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*, 183.
decision-making process.\(^69\) It is not merely that money secures political influence; it is also the reverse- ‘political influence solicits money.’\(^70\) However, it is, of course, not possible to measure the degree to which money buys policy.\(^71\) In the US, the Mexican-American organizations and HTAs generate significant wealth. According to Paul and Paul, ethnic interest groups with greater financial resources have an increased ability to establish organizations that participate in and observe the policymaking process.\(^72\) This seems to be the case with the Mexican-American diaspora. Paul and Paul argue that these organizations can be advantageous in establishing and continuing grassroots political movements, like the grassroots MHTAs. These grassroots political movements and organizations can significantly influence the policymaking process. One way they do this in Washington is at the congressional level.

Third, according to the authors, assimilation plays a significant role in affecting the influence of ethnic groups. Assimilation is important, and members of diasporas do need to assimilate to a certain extent in order to fully participate socially, economically, and politically in American society. Fourth is issue salience. Tony Smith argues that agenda setting is an important factor when it comes to the influence of ethnic interest groups. A political agenda needs to be generated, allies need to be pursued, and political pressure needs to be executed; all of these matters encompass action outside of the ethnic community.\(^73\)

The group’s political agenda, its “message” or goal, is more likely to be successful if it is well received by both the public and the government. Paul and Paul indicate that their analyses, both quantitative and qualitative, show that the prominence and clarity of issues play a significant role in enhancing the influence of ethnic groups. The salience of the message the group is promoting is significant. That is why these groups often attempt to influence not only the

\(^{69}\) Rubenzer, ‘Ethnic Minority Interest Group Attributes,’ 169.  
\(^{71}\) Ibid, 108.  
\(^{72}\) Paul and Paul, Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy, 163.  
\(^{73}\) Smith, Foreign Attachments, 118.
government, but the public as well. It has been argued by scholars that if the ethnic interest group’s message is well received by the broader public, it will be more successful in influencing government.

To determine the influence of ethnic interest groups, Paul and Paul interviewed various policymakers. Most tended to argue that ethnic interest groups are often able to encourage congressmen to support the group’s stance because the issue is significant for voters and there is no reason for the representatives to counter the group’s stance. Furthermore, when there are no other groups of constituents that firmly object to the issue, members of Congress will frequently decide to support the articulate minority since the members of the group feel strongly about the matter. According to Paul and Paul, supporting and advancing established policies lead to increased influence; it is at least perceived as such by policymakers. Haney and Vanderbush concur with this line of reasoning. Therefore, ethnic groups that support the status quo have a “strategic advantage” which transforms into increased influence.

Another argument closely related to issue salience is that interest groups must initiate relationships that are reciprocally supportive between the group and political representatives for the former to be successful. Symbiotic relationships must be established. Ethnic interest groups need policymakers to accomplish something on their behalf; policymakers also need ethnic interest groups, which can furnish various resources, such as votes, information, and campaign donations. Moreover, policymakers often promote activity on behalf of ethnic interest groups in order to obtain resources and support. Policymakers frequently pursue ethnic interest groups, and endorse their activism. Ethnic interest groups are often able to prescribe policy since what is beneficial for them is often also beneficial for the organizations and committees in the political

74 Paul and Paul, Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy, 200.
75 Ibid, 165.
system. Lester W. Milbrath states that endeavors at influence and communication move equally between lobbyists and political officials. Lobbying involves influence from both sides and is essentially a matter of bargaining.

The final characteristic of a successful and influential ethnic diaspora is organization. Organizational resources will almost certainly be part of any explanation of ethnic group influence. Organizational strength usually refers to organizational unity, a practiced lobbying machine that delivers valuable information and economic resources. It has been argued by various scholars that voter participation, membership unity, and geography are important bases of organizational strength since all of these factors have electoral implications. A group is likely to be more influential if it enjoys a significantly large and unified group of members that are active politically. However, these members must not only be active politically, but also integrated into American society while retaining a strong connection with the homeland. Paul and Paul argue that strong organizations are essential for examining the political and policymaking process, instituting policy briefings, establishing relationships with the media and political representatives, as well as creating grassroots movements.

Coalition building is part of a group’s organization. According to Tony Smith, like other interest groups, ethnic lobbies will look for allies to help acquire the necessary leverage to get the legislation they wish passed. For instance, the Mexican lobby works with the Catholic church, the Ford Foundation, and various business organizations. Organizational unity is essential.

Divided ethnic communities will have a more difficult time influencing the policymaking

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79 Ibid, 232.
80 Haney and Vanderbush, ‘The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups in U.S. Foreign Policy,’ 344.
81 Ibid, 344.
83 Smith, *Foreign Attachments*, 119.
84 Ibid, 110.
process. Access to the government is essential, and if an interest group has that access, it is more likely to be successful. These groups need to be able to identify and grasp opportunities, even if they are not easily accessible or readily available.

Glenn P. Hastedt states that the most effective ethnic lobbies rely on certain elements to provide them with political clout, such as the threat of changing loyalties at election time and a successful lobbying machine. These groups lobby in both Congress and the executive branch; they attempt to exert influence by contributing to election campaigns, by encouraging mailings by the public to political representatives, and by offering information to policymakers on specific issues and questions. Interest groups attempt to assist in establishing the government’s agenda, in hopes that the government will act on particular issues that matter to the group. Interest groups attempt to influence government officials by trying to assist friendly representatives to get elected or chosen; they intervene in decision-making by lobbying the representatives that actually make the decisions; and they attempt to guide the implementation of policies, by scrutinizing the implementation procedure or by becoming actively involved in it.

Gabriel Sheffer claims that as a result of diasporas’ multiple interests, these groups function on five different levels in politics: the domestic level (in host states), the regional level, the trans-state level, the level of the whole diaspora, and the homeland politics level. On each level, the functions of a diaspora remain the same, and can be grouped into three categories: preservation, defense, and promotion of the interests of its communities. Interactions between members of the diaspora and their host societies are generally carried out by communal organizations. However, on all other levels, the most significant exchanges between both sides are performed by specific communal organizations. With respect to the first level, the domestic

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88 Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*, 173.
level in host countries, the diaspora’s communal organizations take care of issues regarding both the internal affairs of the diaspora, as well as the diaspora’s relations with the host state’s economic and political institutions.

With respect to the second level, the regional level, the diaspora’s organizations are involved with both economic and political matters. Regarding the third level, the global level, the functions of the diaspora’s communal organizations generally relate to dealings with organizations like the United Nations.\textsuperscript{89} Regarding the fourth level, the entire diaspora, all of the interactions are between the diaspora and similar groups or organizations. Lastly, with respect to the fifth level, diaspora-homeland relations, the diaspora’s interactions are generally with public or governmental organizations.

The diaspora’s organizations have various maintenance functions, which include fundraising, the administration of social, economic, and cultural functions (like community centres and schools), the supervision of religious institutions, as well as the oversight of colleges, universities, and various research institutions. This study will examine the diaspora’s role at the domestic level in the US and its relationship with its host state, the diaspora’s relationship with other Mexican-American and Latino organizations, as well as the relationship between the diaspora and its homeland.

\underline{US Foreign Policy and Ethnic Interest Groups}

Since US domestic and foreign policy is shaped by the unceasing interaction of numerous domestic interest groups in a political process that is exposed to countless external influences, it is often easier for groups in the US to influence American policy toward other countries than it is for the government to exclusively control it.\textsuperscript{90} Yossi Shain claims that diasporas have discovered that by focusing on political causes in their home states they are frequently better situated to

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid, 174.

\textsuperscript{90} Abraham F. Lowenthal, ‘Obama and the Americas. Promise, Disappointment, Opportunity,’ \textit{Foreign Affairs} 89, 4 (July/August 2010), 118.
organize their political communities within the US. The Jewish diaspora is a case in point. As explained by Mearsheimer and Walt, ‘were it not for the lobby’s ability to work effectively within the American political system, the relationship between Israel and the United States would be far less intimate than it is today.’ The Jewish diaspora is influential when it comes to American foreign policy.

The core of the diaspora’s lobby comprises Jewish-Americans who, on a daily basis, attempt to influence US foreign policy so that it is in line with Israel’s interests. The Jewish diaspora certainly focuses on political issues in its home state of Israel, and as such, it is better positioned to unite its political communities in the US. The diaspora is organized, unified, and politically active. It has also created a notable collection of organizations to influence US foreign policy; the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is the most powerful organization in the Israel lobby.

Although there is an extensive literature on ethnic interest groups and their role in American politics, there is a lack of consensus in many areas, including how such groups are created and how they develop. Many scholars argue that these groups suddenly emerge in response to change, either social or economic. This is the traditional view; the argument is essentially that changes in US politics have encouraged the growth of these groups because American society is progressively multicultural, and the American government is progressively porous. Another argument along these lines is that ethnicity operates as a “natural base” for group development and systematized political action. Other scholars argue that ethnic interest

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93 Ibid, 41.
94 Ibid, 41.
95 Haney and Vanderbush, ‘The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups in U.S. Foreign Policy,’ 343.
96 Ibid, 343.
groups are formed by political entrepreneurs, or by some combination of ethnicity and entrepreneurship.

Paul and Paul argue that ethnicity is powerful. It usually ‘taps deeper layers of socialization, experience, emotion, and pride than collective identities that are more instrumental to the individual,’ so the individual and group identities can become integrated.97 They argue that when the group is threatened, the individual is threatened as well, and that the success of the group increases its members’ impression of self-worth. They also argue that ethnicity can stay latent within someone until a threat emerges which essentially revives the effectiveness of ethnicity to diaspora members.98 Some authors have applied this observation to the Mexican-American diaspora. They have argued that parts of the diaspora are dormant until a polarizing and controversial issue, such as illegal immigration, surfaces; then the dormant members of the diaspora “awaken” and realize they are, in fact, part of the diaspora and choose to act on its behalf.

This description is particularly apt when discussing the Mexican-American diaspora, since they are certainly concerned about the domestic situation in their host state. For the Jewish-American diaspora, the protection and survival of Israel is a constant concern and something that unites the community. Israel is essentially surrounded by enemies.99 Various scholars have argued that a sense of fear of the destruction of its homeland is the main stimulus for a great deal of political activity on behalf of the Jewish diaspora.100 Conversely, Mexican-Americans are not concerned about outside threats to their homeland; they are more concerned about internal threats,

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98 Ibid, 32.
such as corruption and the increasingly violent drug problem, as well as issues within their host state.

In the international arena, the networks established by ethnic diasporas are becoming more significant. These networks have ‘peculiar and interesting characteristics due to their being part of complex triadic relations between ethnic diasporas, their host countries and homelands.’

In their host countries, the diasporas are minority groups. They preserve their ethnic and religious identities, as well as their group solidarity. The solidarity that exists among members of the diaspora serves as the principal means for preserving and encouraging continuous contacts among its activist components. These contacts hold cultural, social, political, and economic importance for the diasporas, as well as their host countries and homelands. They also create the foundation for the diasporas’ organized actions.

There has been a great deal of controversy regarding the role ethnic diasporas play, or should play, in shaping American foreign policy. Undoubtedly, US foreign policy is sometimes subject to the influence of ethnic diasporas. Much has been written about the influence of these groups on the development of national strategy. According to David Haglund and Joshua Kertzer, America is unique in that it has such an entrenched practice of connecting diasporas and ethnicity to policy outputs. They claim that the US is essentially composed of diasporas, and that in such a pluralistic state, it is to be anticipated that ethnic interest groups will attempt to impact policy in directions advantageous to their ethnic communities.

Through the creation of ethnic lobbies, ethnic identity groups try to further the interests of their kin, and often attempt to influence American foreign policy. Thomas Ambrosio defines ethnic lobbies as political organizations founded along ethnic, religious, or cultural lines that

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101 Gabriel Sheffer, ‘A New Field of Study: Modern Diasporas in International Politics,’ in Modern Diasporas in International Politics, ed. Gabriel Sheffer (Australia: Croom Helm, Ltd., 1986), 1.


103 Ibid, 521.
attempt to influence American foreign policy in a way that benefits their homeland.\textsuperscript{104} Again, in the case of the Jewish diaspora, it is a powerful interest group whose recognized purpose is to influence American foreign policy in a direction that is favourable for Israel.\textsuperscript{105}

The Cuban-American diaspora is another extremely influential diaspora, and its main lobbying arm, the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), is frequently compared to the AIPAC, the main lobbying arm for the Jewish diaspora. The CANF is structured like AIPAC: it has separate research, lobbying, and funding organizations.\textsuperscript{106} Also like the Jewish-American diaspora, the Cuban-American diaspora is sometimes perceived as excessively powerful, and there has been controversy over the extent to which this lobby affects US policy.\textsuperscript{107} Its success in persuading Congress to support a variety of “Castro-bashing” activities is due to the lobby’s persistent propaganda, to its funding of the political campaigns of candidates that oppose Castro, and to its willingness to label its opponents “Communist sympathizers”.\textsuperscript{108} Since the early 1980s, the CANF has been able to direct the foreign policy debate over Cuba.\textsuperscript{109}

Some scholars have argued that the Cuban-American diaspora is the most influential diaspora, although the majority of scholars argue this title belongs to the Jewish-American diaspora. In any event, this diaspora is a powerful force in the US and influences the US government and foreign policy with respect to Cuba. Like the Jewish-American diaspora, this diaspora has a single cause that unites it: the homeland. However, it is arguable that the Cuban-Americans have an even more focused cause than solely their homeland: Fidel Castro, the

\textsuperscript{105} Mearsheimer and Walt, ‘The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy,’ 40.
\textsuperscript{106} Haney and Vanderbush, ‘The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups in U.S. Foreign Policy,’ 349.
\textsuperscript{109} Schwab, 139.
dictator that has ruled Cuba since he ousted the previous dictator, Fulgencio Batista, in 1959. Although Castro, in 2006, passed power on a provisional basis to his younger brother, Raúl, Cuba remains a one-party state, controlled by the Castro family.

The Mexican-American diaspora is clearly different from the Jewish-American and Cuban-American diasporas with respect to having one focused goal. The Mexican-American diaspora, however, is similar to these two diasporas in various ways, such as the fact that it tries to press Mexican-Americans’ and Mexico’s case within the US, and attempts to influence US policy in a direction favourable to the Mexican-American people and their homeland.

The study of US foreign policy has not paid much attention to the role and influence of ethnic interest groups. Patrick Haney and Walt Vanderbush argue that initial studies depicted these groups as not having much influence. As a result of the Cold War, the American president fundamentally controlled US foreign policy. The Cold War enabled American foreign policy to exist with a strong national purpose. The US became actively involved in the international system; as a result of the fight against communism, US foreign policy shifted to internationalism from its previous position of isolationism.

Haney and Vanderbush argue that after the Cold War, security threats were less pressing, Congress was more engaged, and the distinction between “domestic” and “foreign” was less clear. This situation led many scholars to point to the increasing involvement and influence of ethnic groups in American foreign policy. In the 1990s, foreign policy was made more accessible to the dynamics that characterize domestic politics, which includes interest-group activism. At least until September 2001, existential security threats were less pressing, and the effects of globalization often blurred the distinction between domestic and foreign politics.

111 This will be further explained and discussed in following chapters.
112 Haney and Vanderbush, ‘The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups in U.S. Foreign Policy,’ 341.
113 Ibid, 341.
Consequently, scholars began to take more of an interest in the roles, actions, and activities of ethnic interest groups.

The absence of a post-Cold War consensus created different and unique opportunities for ethnic groups to influence the foreign policy-making process. Samuel Huntington, among others, argued that there was no longer a single, discernible national interest guiding foreign policy. Essentially, as diverse ethnic groups attain importance in the US, the variety of foreign policy affairs will surge, as will the overlay between domestic and foreign policy issues. It appears as though foreign policy is gradually becoming more domestic, therefore providing interest groups with greater accessibility to the policy process. Issues involving Mexico, such as immigration, trade, security, the environment or human rights, might organize as many individuals and groups inside and outside of Congress as policy concerning Cuba.

Many scholars have ignored interest groups because of the general perception that these groups have only a moderate impact on American foreign policy. Paul and Paul claim that domestic politics tend to be branded as a struggle between competing interests, whereas foreign policy has remained comparatively protected from group demands and influence for most of American history. While this may have been the case initially, this is no longer the reality. Ethnic interest groups influence both domestic and foreign policy. Globalization has increased the impact of external forces on conventionally domestic realms, including the environment, trade, and labour. These changes have resulted in an environment where ethnic groups are increasingly likely to consider lobbying indispensable when it comes to both domestic and foreign policy concerns.

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117 Ibid, 164.
Haney and Vanderbush would certainly agree with this statement; they claim that no examination of the politics of Cuba can ignore the importance of the CANF. The CANF certainly wields immense local and national political clout. I would argue the same with respect to the Mexican-American diaspora in the sense that no examination of the politics between Mexico and the US can ignore the importance of this diaspora.

With respect to the Jewish diaspora, its lobbying arm pursues two comprehensive tactics to stimulate US support for Israel. The lobby exerts substantial influence in the American government, pressuring Congress and the Executive to back Israel. The lobby also attempts to guarantee that public discussion about the home state is portrayed in a favourable way. Mearsheimer and Walt claim that it is essential to control the debate surrounding Israel in order to guarantee the continued support of the US administration and peoples. Pro-Israel organizations in the lobby target the administration. They also work diligently to influence associations that are vital when it comes to molding public opinion, such as the media, academia, and think tanks.

Samuel Huntington claims that the increasing influence of ethnic groups in US foreign policy is confirmed and reinforced by the ‘waves of recent immigration and by the arguments for diversity and multiculturalism.’ Huntington argues that the wealth of ethnic groups as well as developments in technology and transportation make it easier for ethnic communities to keep in touch with their home countries. These groups are consequently being transformed from cultural communities inside the boundaries of the state into diasporas that have the ability to transcend these boundaries.

To a certain extent, ethnic interests have displaced America’s national interests. Ethnic interests certainly influence American foreign policy. Sometimes, the very existence of these

121 Mearsheimer and Walt, ‘The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy,’ 42.
122 Ibid, 45.
groups is an element that influences host countries’ domestic and international politics. More often, however, it is clearly their actions that influence, or attempt to influence, their host countries’ international politics. As a result, foreign policy has increasingly become shaped by domestic considerations. Some authors regard this development as a threat. They argue that diasporas can threaten the state, as well as the liberal democratic order. Huntington’s views on this issue have been especially influential.

In *Who are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity*, Huntington denounces those who have rejected the description of the US as a “melting pot” and who instead regard it as a “mosaic” of distinct peoples. Huntington argues that America’s national identity has been eroded by four factors. The first is the doctrine of multiculturalism, and “special interests” that raised “subnational identities” such as ethnicity, race, and gender over national identity. Second is the disappearance of factors that formerly promoted the integration of immigrants joined with the augmented inclination of immigrants to keep dual loyalties, identities, and citizenships. Third is the growing domination of immigrants who speak a single non-English tongue, specifically Spanish. Huntington argues that this results in the “Hispanization” and the conversion of the US into a bilingual and “bicultural” country. The last factor is the “denationalization” of significant sections of the elites in the US, with an increasing gap between their transnational commitments and the endless patriotic and nationalist values of the American people.

Huntington clearly insisted on “the primacy of the English-speaking, Protestant eastern seaboard.” He deplored the “deconstructionists” that wanted to augment the eminence and influence of “subnational” groups. The deconstructionists gravely affected democratic values. Although Huntington’s work on US foreign policy is invaluable, I do not agree that diasporas threaten the state and the liberal democratic order. I do not see them as a threat at all, especially

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124 Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*, 85.
125 Huntington, *Who Are We?*, 138.
127 Huntington, *Who Are We?*, 142.
when one considers what appears to be their increasing integration in the US. It can be observed that with each passing generation, diasporas become more integrated into US society, as is the case with the Mexican-Americans.

Other authors have also taken note of the impact that ethnicity and ethnic interest groups can have on US politics. Michel Laguerre claims that interest groups have always penetrated US politics. Since the very beginning, diasporic individuals and groups have always contributed and influenced US politics. Ethnic groups actually play a much more significant role in the creation of US foreign policy than is currently recognized. Tony Smith maintains that ethnic interest groups have the ability to influence US foreign policy, and furthermore, they have a recognized right to exert this influence.

Michael Jones-Correa agrees that ethnic interest groups in the US play a significant and legitimate role in the foreign policy process. Furthermore, at this phase in the discussion on democratic citizenship in the US, ‘the right of ethnic communities to organize themselves politically and to make demands on the government is widely accepted.’ Foreign policy issues that influence domestic politics as well, like trade, certainly encourage and motivate activity on behalf of interest groups. Trevor Rubenzer adds that ethnic identity groups must be active politically with respect to foreign policy issues in America. The group must have the inclination, or the perceived inclination, to vote based on foreign policy concerns. This is the case for all three diasporas discussed in this section.

Jewish-Americans, for instance, are concentrated in specific geographic locations and vote in large numbers. Both of these factors increase their influence when it comes to shaping

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128 Michel S. Laguerre, Diaspora, Politics, and Globalization (USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 73.
129 Smith, Foreign Attachments, 130.
131 Smith, Foreign Attachments, 130.
132 Rourke, Making American Foreign Policy, 317.
133 Rubenzer, 169.
Likewise, Cuban-Americans are geographically concentrated predominantly in southern Florida, which gives them a certain degree of political influence. Cuban-Americans are also politically active. The CANF and its directors are enthusiastic political supporters and often financially support candidates sympathetic to the Cuban-American cause. The CANF has donated millions to political candidates of both the Democratic and Republican parties. Similarly, Mexican-Americans are also concentrated in specific geographic locations, and they are becoming increasingly active in politics; the number of Mexican-Americans that vote increases with every American election.

As mentioned, in most democracies, diasporas generally establish lobbies that organize and act to protect and assert the rights of their members. The advocacy functions of diasporas can be placed into three subcategories: cultural, political, and economic. These subcategories frequently overlap. Advocacy functions are performed by communal organizations, which tend to focus on issues like enlisting members and encouraging them to become actively involved in the group and to contribute financially, intellectually, and politically to enable group activities. The communal organizations also conduct promotional activities, which are important because they are meant to augment the feelings of identity and unity among members of the diaspora, and to heighten ethnic awareness. The majority of the promotional activities are cultural; ethnic festivals, lectures, and exhibitions are coordinated by the communal organizations, which work closely with the media. The purpose of these activities is to broaden membership, develop the stature and visibility of diaspora communities, and strengthen the links with their homelands.

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135 Foxman, 30.
137 Sheffer, Diaspora Politics, 175.
138 Ibid, 175.
For the Mexican-American diaspora in the US, various national organizations and MHTAs\textsuperscript{139} perform these functions.

In order to better understand US foreign policy, therefore, one must study the role of ethnic interests in US domestic politics. Thomas Grjebine claims that in the US, ‘global politics is local politics- and local politics, often, is ethnic politics.’\textsuperscript{140} Ethnic interest groups attempt to influence US policy in the three following ways: framing, analyzing policy and information, and policy supervision.\textsuperscript{141} Framing is the attempt to make a certain issue a priority for the government, and to influence perceptions regarding that issue, and the terms of the debate about it. Framing is closely linked to the role of ethnic interest groups as providers of information. For instance, it is impossible for congressional staff to sufficiently research all of the issues confronting them, so they are obliged to depend on other sources of information, such as ethnic interest groups. These groups provide congressional staff with information about prevalent issues; this information is clearly presented from the ethnic interest group’s perspective, and is likely to be somewhat biased. Ethnic interest groups observe government policies that pertain to their own agenda, and respond to them by circulating information, engaging in various campaign tactics, and supporting or opposing certain candidates. With respect to the ability of ethnic interest groups to influence US foreign policy, these three functions permit these groups to impact the initial phases of the decision-making process.\textsuperscript{142}

Tony Smith sees three ways in which ethnic interest groups pressure the US government: by voting, by contributing financially to campaigns, and by organizing a body that devises the strategies for passing certain key legislation. This organizational body also preserves the solidarity of the ethnic community, initiates partnerships with various groups in order to achieve mutual political goals, and oversees decision-makers to guarantee that the organization can

\textsuperscript{139} Mexican Hometown Associations will be discussed and examined at a later point in this study.  
\textsuperscript{140} Grjebine, 8.  
\textsuperscript{141} Ambrosio, 2.  
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid, 2.
Ethnic groups have exercised influence on US foreign policy for quite some time. Smith claims that the history of this influence can be separated into three periods in the twentieth century.

In the first stage, from the 1910s to the 1930s, the main ethnic groups in the US were uninterested in the US pursuing an active international role. The Germans, Scandinavians, Irish, and Italians supported American neutrality prior to World War I, the refusal to join the League of Nations afterwards, and the posture of isolationism in the years between the two World Wars. In the second stage, during the Cold War, almost all of the ethnic groups in the US were “internationalists”, and supported a decisive effort on the part of America to confront communism and the Soviet Union, mostly by encouraging the self-government of states abroad. In the current third stage, which began after the Cold War, ethnic groups remain internationalists, recognizing the scope of US power and influence in international affairs. However, since the end of the Cold War, there has been a lack of clarity and consensus concerning US foreign policy, which has, in turn, provided ethnic lobbies the opportunity to more easily access and influence policymaking in the US. Smith claims that now more than ever ethnic groups play a significant role in the making of US foreign policy.

Organized diasporas engage in a range of activities and interests, which include providing financial assistance to their home states, investing in their home states, and encouraging cooperation between their home states and their host states. Depending on its political orientation, a diaspora may attempt to convince its host state’s policymakers to freeze loans to its homeland, or conversely, to support the homeland politically or monetarily. Diasporas have also succeeded in lobbying policymakers to cease economic boycotts, or to lift certain restraints on exports and imports. Diasporas are also involved with issues concerning remittances, donations, and the transfer of economic and financial resources.

143 Smith, Foreign Attachments, 94.
144 Ibid, 48.
145 Sheffer, Diaspora Politics, 176.
Organization is the key to accomplishing any of these tasks. All three diasporas discussed in this section are organized, but to different degrees. It is arguable that the most organized diaspora is the Jewish-American one; however, it is simply not possible to have all the members of an organization hold the same opinion and goals all of the time. Regarding the Cuban-American diaspora, Haney and Vanderbush claim that the CANF’s success may not be surprising considering its resources and organizational characteristics.\textsuperscript{146} Nonetheless, while the CANF is well organized, there have always been divisions within the organization, especially between the “hard-liners” and those that would prefer to engage in open dialogue with the Castro regime.\textsuperscript{147} The Mexican-American diaspora is also organized; however, as mentioned, it is a challenge to organize an entire community, especially when that community numbers more than 30 million people.

Core members of a diaspora generally maintain a strong relationship to their homeland, and they are often ready and willing to act on behalf of its interests. Gabriel Sheffer states that because of their size, the various levels they operate on, and their forcefulness, motivation, and organization, diasporas have become significant economic, social, cultural, and particularly political actors both in their home states and in their host states. Having established political interests in both countries, diasporas frequently serve as efficient mediators between the two. They have often been able to negotiate cultural and political exchanges, as well as trade between their home state and their host state.

The lobbying that diasporas engage in has three components: the diaspora’s readiness to participate in the host state’s politics on behalf of the home state (either to assist or hinder its political regime), its engagement with institutions and leaders in the host state, and its interaction-direct and indirect- with the home state’s institutions and leaders. These three processes establish

\textsuperscript{146} Haney and Vanderbush, ‘The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups in U.S. Foreign Policy,’ 355.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid, 355.
the substance of a diaspora’s political engagement and create the framework that preserves and directs this activity.

Considering the ethnic diversity of the political community in the US, as well as the pluralist and open nature of the American policymaking process, it is not surprising that ethnicity affects US policymaking. The US encourages members of diasporas to become integrated, and to participate, in society. Furthermore, the American political system permits and vigorously promotes activism on behalf of ethnic groups. Ethnic interest groups trying to affect policymaking are essentially aided by the very nature of this system.

Similarly, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt claim that the US has a divided system of government, a strong tradition of free speech, and a system where elections are expensive to organize, and where campaign contributions are not closely regulated. This type of environment allows different groups various ways to influence policy. Ethnic groups take advantage of the open and porous nature of the American political system, and use those various points of entry to influence the foreign policy process. The main feature to keep in mind about US politics, states Tony Smith, is that in comparison to other democracies, America lacks independence because it is highly infiltrated by interest groups that are able to make their agenda that of the US government.

Many policymakers, scholars, and journalists have concluded that ethnic interest groups are one of the most significant forces in US politics. Interest groups are fundamental to US democracy. They are a “bulwark” of democracy and they embody ‘the Madisonian notion of a competitive pluralist system.'

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148 Esman, *Diasporas in the Contemporary World*, 8.
150 Smith, *Foreign Attachments*, 87.
151 Baumgartner and Leech, *Basic Interests*, 120.
Summary

It is clear that the term “diaspora”, as well as the role of diasporas in the US, and their role with respect to US foreign policy in particular, are contentious. This chapter has attempted to contribute to the advancement of the literature on diasporas by providing greater clarity to the term. I have offered a clear definition, as well as seven common features of a diaspora. I have also discussed the main methods by which diasporas can successfully influence US domestic politics and foreign policy. These methods will be pursued in greater detail in the following chapters.

I compared the Mexican-American diaspora to two of the most influential diasporas in the US, the Jewish-American diaspora and the Cuban-American diaspora, in order to illustrate the similarities and differences between them and the Mexican-American one. Although a great deal has been written on diasporas, there is a void in the literature when it comes to ethnic diasporas and their influence on US policy. I suspect this is because it is difficult to establish lines of causation in this regard. Nevertheless, despite such a challenge, I intend to provide clarity to the study of diasporas in general, and to attempt to contribute to the literature regarding the Mexican-American diaspora in particular, and the role it plays in American policy, specifically with respect to trade.
Chapter 3- Concepts and Methods

This chapter will discuss the concepts central to this study, and the method used in the examination of the Mexican-American diaspora. The focus of this work is on an area where domestic and foreign policy meet and overlap. I examine how the Mexican-American diaspora seeks to influence the American government and its foreign policy, specifically regarding trade. First, it is necessary to examine and define the concept of influence. If I am to successfully qualify and measure the influence of the Mexican-American diaspora, it is important that the meaning of influence be clear. As evidenced by the literature, influence is a vague and somewhat elusive concept, particularly within the context of groups and diasporas.

I must acknowledge at the outset that it is difficult to demonstrate causality in this particular case. I may not be able to draw a direct and clear line between the assets and preferences of the Mexican-American diaspora and the outcomes of each case. With respect to the NAFTA case, I am able to demonstrate that the Mexican government and the diaspora used one another. But this pattern becomes less clear in later cases. I trace events in the 20-year period of relations between Mexico and the US involving the diaspora and trade policy, and attempt to draw lines of causality. However, even where evidence is abundant, it is often difficult to do this reliably. I have explored and found notable variations in the way the Mexican-Americans deployed their growing political assets in matters of trade over the 20-year period. I am essentially going to use the events I trace to tell a story about the rise of a major ethnic force in US politics and trade policy.

In a sense, influence is power writ large. For the purposes of my research, these concepts are synonymous, and generally mean the ability to get what you want, or to get someone to do what you want. In the context of diasporas, it is prudent to begin by defining influence in the broadest of terms. Influence can be broken down into two categories: “perceived” influence and “actual” influence. “Perceived” influence is by definition subjective. A group has perceived influence if a second party believes that to be the case. In other words, the fact that a second
party’s perception of a group’s influence leads it to take a certain course of action that it would otherwise not take can be proof of that group’s influence.

“Actual” influence, by contrast, is objective, concrete and more easily measurable. In the context of groups, “actual” influence is attained through what will be referred to as “influence resources.” Influence resources are measurable elements of a group’s power such as numbers, human capital, organization, wealth, education, and alliances. For example, in the context of a liberal democracy, numbers can measurably translate into power through votes, and wealth through purchasing power. Evidently, “perceived” influence is much more tenuous as it depends on the subjective status of external parties (unlike real influence which is independent). Thus, perceived influence cannot easily be proven to be influence per se without examining the actions and reactions of other actors to the group. This is not to say that perceived influence is less important- simply that it is more difficult to measure.

Methodology

In the previous chapter, a diaspora was defined as a people with a common ethnic national origin and shared identities, interests, culture, religion, or language; living outside their home state, they maintain material or sentimental linkages with it while adapting to the environment of their host state. This dissertation treats diasporas as Milton Esman does; diasporas are actual social categories, comparable to other human collectivities like a nation, that are predisposed to change throughout time. It is simply not productive to argue with social constructionists and postmodernists who view all institutions as cerebral concepts, therefore temporary, conditional, and “deterritorialized”. Such a whimsical stance is not only impractical, but it does not stand up to serious scrutiny. Similarly, Sheffer states that from a political theory point of view, Marxist and liberal conjectures that diasporas are a transient phase of political and social development that will disappear because of social, political, or cultural

153 Esman, Diasporas in the Contemporary World, 20.
tolerance have been proven incorrect. He claims ethnic groups have revived their transnational activities in order to maintain their ethnic identity and predisposition for organized action. The examination of various diasporas, including the Mexican-American one, confirms his statement.

In this study, I apply the terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” the way they are employed in the US: synonymously. Scholars use both terms interchangeably; they describe all people, foreign born as well as US born, that can trace their lineage to Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America. Both terms refer to the common culture shared by Latin American countries. Therefore, Mexican-Americans are both Latinos and Hispanics. “Chicano” describes people of Mexican origin in America. This term emerged in the 1960s from the political organizing occurring within the Mexican-American community in the US; consequently, in addition to positing a political consciousness, this term is also identifies a national origin.

Some authors refer to a “Hispanic lobby” or a “Latino lobby”. These authors tend to amalgamate all Latinos and Hispanics under one homogeneous category; authors tend to assume this homogeneity already exists, or they advocate the amalgamation of the different Latino groups. For example, John A. García states that since Mexican-Americans are the largest Latino subgroup in the US, they have the obligation to assist the coalescence of all the Latino subgroups. García defines this amalgamation as the “broadening of community” and claims that this ‘can affect the scope of the public policy agenda as well as meet the need to integrate more recent immigrants into the body politic.’

While this amalgamation and desired homogeneity is understandable (it makes research and writing much simpler if all Latinos are categorized under one label, the “Hispanic lobby”, or “Latinos”, for instance), I avoid placing the Mexican-American diaspora under this “umbrella”

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155 Sheffer, ‘A New Field of Study: Modern Diasporas in International Politics,’ 4.
156 Ibid, 4.
158 Ibid, 3.
160 Ibid, 49.
term. The use of homogeneous terms obfuscates understanding by ignoring significant subgroup differences, such as the Mexican-American diaspora in the US. Although Mexican-Americans have important distinctions which merit particular examination, they share many values and opinions with other Latinos. As will be discussed at a later point in this study, it is problematic that scholars do not differentiate between Mexican-Americans and Latinos. Furthermore, scholars refer to Mexican-Americans while using Latino data (this is because there is a lack of data on Mexican-Americans, especially when it comes to voting patterns). What I observe in the data and scholarship is certainly a problem in general, but for the purposes of this study, I believe it is acceptable to operate on the basis of a rough similarity between Mexican-Americans and Latinos.

“Lobby” and “interest group” are essentially a group of people that share common social or political aims. These groups seek to advance particular interests or causes, and actively attempt to influence legislation. Both lobbies and interest groups represent the prime political arm of the diaspora. For example, as described in the previous chapter, the CANF is the lobby or interest group of the Cuban-American diaspora. It is the political arm of this diaspora, and therefore is inseparably linked with it, although not synonymous. The same goes for AIPAC and the Jewish diaspora. It is clear, however, that if the political arm is influential, then logically, the diaspora is as well. In this study, I will use the terms “lobby” and “interest group” interchangeably. As we will see throughout this study, MHTAs constitute the political arm of the Mexican-American diaspora.

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What is Influence?

James G. March claims that the ‘empirical study of influence has been hampered by a tendency toward ad hoc formulations.’ Furthermore, he states that although it may be tempting to examine various kinds of influence under various conditions, one should be able to delineate the way in which any given kind of influence is associated with a hypothetically formulated variable. Although I agree, before we can relate the type of influence we want to discuss to a theoretically formulated variable, we must first define influence. This is certainly not an easy task. It is also challenging to attempt to draw fine distinctions between power and influence, but the debate surrounding these concepts is important to consider.

Influence is power. Robert A. Dahl claims that what is fundamental to the terms influence and power is the notion that A has power over B, and that A can essentially get B to do something that B would not have otherwise done. The point of his essay, “The Concept of Power”, is to try to explain the basic idea of power and the assumption that lies behind it. Dahl uses the word “power” in his essay but states that he recognizes that many people reading his essay would prefer him to use the term “influence”. Therefore, he uses the terms interchangeably. David A. Baldwin also makes this argument, that “power” is interchangeable with the terms “influence” or “control”. He underlines the importance of first having a concept of power, before actually measuring power (or influence). This widely recognized interchangeability supports my decision simply to define influence as power.

Dahl defines power in terms of a relationship between individuals. By attempting to determine the comparative degree of power held by two or more people, Dahl claims it is possible to rank US Senators according to their “power” over lawmaking on both foreign and economic

163 Ibid, 433.
165 Ibid, 181.
policy.\textsuperscript{166} According to Dahl, “actors” are the objects in the relationship of power, and these actors can be persons, groups, governments, states, or other human combinations.\textsuperscript{167} I also confine the concept of influence to actors, specifically the Mexican and American governments, the Mexican-American diaspora, MHTAs, as well as Mexican-American organizations, leaders, and politicians.

Various people and groups are able ‘to influence social trends, change minds, shape history, and create or destroy great things, including social movements and nations.’\textsuperscript{168} Influence is the ability to get what you want, the ability to achieve your goals, and the ability to get others to do what you want. If someone, some organization, or a government perceives an actor as being influential or powerful, that actor will have the ability to achieve its goals, and to get what it wants. Therefore, influence is a vital part of leadership. With influence comes the ability to mobilize people to support desired outcomes. Influence essentially achieves “desirable outcomes.”\textsuperscript{169}

David Baldwin and Curt Grayson state that three different outcomes may be produced as a result of influence tactics\textsuperscript{170}: resistance, compliance, and commitment. Resistance to one’s request is clearly not a desirable outcome. Compliance is more desirable than resistance, but it is still not ideal. Essentially, in the case of compliance, the person you are attempting to influence will accede to your request, but will do so with little effort, and will not support any of the reasons given for the request. Commitment is the most desirable outcome. When your efforts at

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid, 203.
\textsuperscript{170} Baldwin and Grayson define “influence tactics” as skills or tools one uses that are effective for creating commitment. The following are examples of influence tactics: inspirational appeals, coalition, rational persuasion, consultation, collaboration, apprising, exchange, personal appeals, pressure, and legitimating.
influencing someone end in commitment, you have successfully offered adequate reasons to fasten voluntary support for completing a task.\textsuperscript{171}

Dahl emphasizes that the measurement of influence is a challenging research problem. To illustrate this point, Dahl concludes his essay with an interesting hypothetical discussion between two opposing sides on the merit of attempting to define influence. The hypothetical discussion is between a strict “Operationalist” and a “Conceptual” theoretician. The “Operationalist” correctly states that ‘the concept of power is not a single concept,’ and that ‘operationally, power would appear to be many different concepts, depending on the kinds of data available.’\textsuperscript{172} However, the “Operationalist” also believes that “simple” and “misleading” concepts like “influence” and “power” should be abandoned. Further, according to him, we should admit that all we can possibly have are various operational concepts that are not explicitly comparable with one another. Therefore, according to the “Operationalist”, since there is no single clear definition of power, there is no point in attempting to measure it since it is a misleading concept; we are unlikely to find one single answer or definition anyway. However, the Operationalist’s notion that there is no point in comparing the concept of influence with other similar and interchangeable concepts is misguided.

Although I agree with the “Operationalist” that the concept of power needs to be outlined by operational criteria that will transform its meaning, and that it is not always possible to make the observations and causal links we need in order to successfully measure power,\textsuperscript{173} the “Conceptualist” argument is more functional.

The “Conceptualist” argues that the concept of power gives us a standard by which to examine the operational alternatives we use. Although we may need to employ defective measures, at least we will know that the measures are defective and in what respect. Moreover, to clarify the concept of power and to determine the defects of the operational concepts used may

\textsuperscript{171} Baldwin and Grayson, Influence. Gaining Commitment, Getting Results, 8.
\textsuperscript{172} Dahl, 214.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid, 214.
eventually help us to develop alternate methods and concepts that generate a closer estimate in practice to the theoretical concept of power itself. These “Conceptualist” arguments are much more convincing. Although it is difficult to measure a concept such as influence, there is no need for a measurement to be perfect in order to be useful. Attempts at measurement are a starting point. Each attempt to measure influence brings us closer to a clearer approximation of the concept. Hence the importance of continuing attempts to measure influence.

Influence: “Actual” and “Perceived”

It will be beneficial to this study to consider Paul and Paul’s treatment of the concept of influence. They contribute to the understanding of influence by considering the idea of perceived power, and the perceived influence of lobbies in particular. Through their research, they demonstrate that a policymaker’s perception of a lobby can ascribe real influence to that group. As stated, a group can be said to hold actual influence independently of perception because of that group’s objective capacity to exert power. To varying degrees of precision, “actual” influence is objectively measurable. For example, for one thousand dollars, you may purchase an advertisement in a magazine. Furthermore, one thousand voters may elect a councilman or a mayor. “Perceived” influence is different from “actual” influence because people may perceive a group to be influential based on an inflated view of their actual resources.

While “perceived” influence can have the same results as “actual” influence, this is not always the case. The perception of influence in some cases allows a group to achieve or further its goals. While both “perceived” and “actual” influence can enable a group to attain its goals, “perceived” influence is much more tenuous. Take the hypothetical example of a high school bully. A bully is perceived as being influential because he is aggressive and intimidates others. However, he secretly knows this is an act, and his power lies in the perception of the observer. Although he gets what he wants some or even most of the time, once someone stands up to the

174 Ibid, 214.
175 How to measure influence will be discussed later, but essentially it involves certain resources or characteristics, like financial assets.
bully, he is defeated, and it is clear that his power was tenuous from the start. Someone who holds “actual” influence stands on surer footing and has a better chance of achieving their goals since they hold tangible assets.

This appears to be the case for the Mexican-American diaspora at the present time; the diaspora is perceived by many to be influential or to be on its way to eventually becoming influential. Authors who consider the Mexican-American diaspora to have the potential to be influential do not, however, tend to recite much evidence and instead rely mostly on perception. It is assumed by many political pundits that Mexican-Americans are a “force” and that they have their “act together”. (This perception is an effective and powerful asset, but it must be differentiated from “actual” influence.) The diaspora is perceived to be acquiring influence or as being influential, especially as a result of its size. Therefore, even if the diaspora does not effectively articulate its objectives, or attain them, the fact that it is large and has the potential to organize and accumulate resources, primarily through the main Mexican-American organizations and MHTAs, leads to it being perceived as influential. As some authors argue, “perceived” influence can be just as important as “actual” influence, since the generated effects are often the same.

In their study, Paul and Paul attempt to gauge the perceived power of lobbies. They argue that “perceived” power is significant. I argue the same with respect to the Mexican-American diaspora. Paul and Paul interviewed 54 Washington insiders in order to determine the most influential ethnic interest groups. This group consisted of congressmen, congressional and committee employees, and career professionals representing, according to Paul and Paul, an acceptable sample of policymakers engaged in both domestic and foreign policies. Each person interviewed had on average 14.2 years of experience with respect to foreign policy. Each respondent was asked to determine the influence of 38 ethnic lobbies actively involved in foreign policy-making. For each lobby, respondents were required to rate the influence of the lobby with respect to foreign policy-making process on a scale of 0 to 100, from no influence to a great deal
of influence. The respondents were permitted to answer “don’t know” if they did not have an opinion on the lobby in question.

Paul and Paul state that they ‘recognize that this survey does not measure actual influence. Instead, it gauges the perceived power of lobbies. Nonetheless, perceived power is important.’ According to the authors, it may be easier for a lobby to persuade policymakers if it is perceived as powerful. Moreover, such lobbies can prevent other lobbies from challenging or obstructing them. I agree, and as mentioned, “perceived” influence can often achieve the same results as “actual” influence. If someone is complying with a lobby because they perceive that lobby as influential, that perception is sometimes all that is necessary for the lobby to command compliance in furtherance of its goals.

In the study by Paul and Paul, the respondents argued that while some ethnicities are becoming less influential, others are becoming more so. Not surprisingly, respondents qualified AIPAC as the most influential ethnic lobby in the US. The CANF was ranked second. Many authors have arrived at the same ranking. The Mexican-American ethnic lobby was ranked the eleventh most influential lobby in foreign policy-making in the US. However, Paul and Paul provided no further information apart from that ranking. It was based on the perception and personal belief of the respondents they interviewed; beyond this, no empirical evidence or argument was solicited. This is understandable considering that relatively little has been written on the Mexican-American diaspora, and it goes without saying that the literature on the relationship between the Mexican-American diaspora and American foreign policy is sparse as well.

It is interesting to note that Paul and Paul refer explicitly to the “Mexican lobby”, but then switch to the “Hispanic American lobby” and use these two terms synonymously. They indicate the ranking of the “Mexican ethnic lobby” but then proceed to speak of it as the

176 Paul and Paul, 135.
177 Ibid, 137.
“Hispanic American lobby”. For example, Paul and Paul state that some of the congressional staffers interviewed claimed that Hispanic Americans are becoming a progressively important voting bloc in various congressional districts, and that Latino groups are becoming more significant in presidential elections. The authors also refer to one respondent who says that the lobby is extremely powerful and significant, and that it will continue to demonstrate its increasing power. Again, as mentioned, scholars tend to lump all Latinos under the same umbrella terms. This is problematic in that it hinders comprehension by not considering significant subgroup variations.

Influence Resources

Lester W. Milbrath argues that ‘influence varies with the decisional setting, the roles of the actors, the diligence with which goals are pursued, and the tactics employed, as well as with the assets available’ to every person. Influence needs to be exerted, and exertion involves certain costs, such as money, time, and attention. Political actors, such as lobbies representing diasporas hold varying degrees of “influence resources” which give them the means to assert their influence. As Helmut Breitmeier and colleagues rightly note, it is important to ‘pay attention to asymmetries in capabilities and resources that actors can bring to bear in pursuing their interests.’ People must have resources in order to be successful in politics. Resources are possessions that are esteemed by others and that accordingly can be exchanged for desired goods; one can also use resources to bargain for what one wants. Measuring these resources is crucial to getting a true picture of any group’s power.

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178 Ibid, 146.
179 Milbrath, 329.
182 Ibid, 86.
For the purposes of this study, I define “influence resources” as all of the elements or characteristics that can give a diaspora influence; for example, size, finances, assimilation, organization, as well as political activity and mobilization. I believe that by defining influence resources, one may clearly distinguish between assets and outcomes. Influence resources are separate from outcomes; they are used to successfully achieve outcomes. You have influence or power when your assets bring about outcomes you have sought. Although the link is difficult to demonstrate to the same degree in each trade-related case, I believe that the Mexican-American diaspora’s assets enable them to accomplish their desired outcomes and goals with respect to American policy.

Trevor Rubenzer rightly claims there is not a distinct passage to influence. It is not possible to simplify the results by way of a solitary set of causal factors that are indispensable and adequate to drive influence.\(^{183}\) It is, however, possible to simplify the results if one is searching for an element that must be present for influence to transpire.\(^{184}\) Rubenzer notes two main factors that determine the presence of influence: political activity and organization. This is certainly true. Although other important assets exist, these two “influence resources” must, at a minimum, be present for a diaspora to be influential. Similarly, in “The Israel Lobby”, Mearsheimer and Walt claim that the main organizations that compose the Israel lobby hold the essential characteristics that ensure the power of an interest group in the US, such as financial resources, and a dedicated core of educated and politically active supporters.\(^{185}\) These characteristics are similar to those noted by Paul and Paul, who identify characteristics of a successful and influential ethnic diaspora as size, financial resources, assimilation, and organization.\(^{186}\) The Mexican-American diaspora has all of these “influence resources”.

\(^{183}\) Rubenzer, 169.
\(^{184}\) Ibid, 169.
\(^{186}\) Paul and Paul, 163.
Thomas Brewer and Lorne Teitelbaum observe that while it is challenging to establish with accuracy the extent of actual influence exercised by interest groups, it is still possible to come up with some general conclusions.\textsuperscript{187} For instance, organizations and groups limit each other’s influence.\textsuperscript{188} Furthermore, organizations and groups are not all equal; some have a variety and abundance of resources and are able to exercise considerable influence, whereas others do not. So again, the amount of influence seems to be proportional to the amount of “influence resources” acquired by the group.

The group has to be large enough to have a chance at affecting the political and electoral calculations of decision-makers.\textsuperscript{189} Garcia and Sanchez argue that this resource (the size of a group) is as important as money, and is arguably the most important resource that Latinos have.\textsuperscript{190} The Mexican-American diaspora certainly has the numbers; it is more than 30 million strong. If only for electoral reasons, we might expect larger ethnic interest groups to hold more influence in the foreign policy-making process. It is logical that a large group will be paid more attention by decision-makers than a smaller group. Garcia and Sanchez emphasize the importance of numbers in American democratic politics and state that based on that specific resource, Latinos will tend to affect political action in areas where they comprise a significant proportion of the population.\textsuperscript{191} Consequently, it is important to take into account geographic concentration, which often plays a role in the electoral significance of groups. If an ethnic group is concentrated in certain states and electoral districts, in large numbers, it is more likely to be influential, especially when it comes to voting.\textsuperscript{192} While the Mexican-American diaspora can be found throughout the US, Mexican-Americans tend to be concentrated in certain states. Furthermore, the diaspora is fairly well connected via various networks and associations.

\textsuperscript{187} Brewer and Teitelbaum, 150.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid, 150.
\textsuperscript{189} Rubenzer, 169.
\textsuperscript{190} Garcia and Sanchez, 88.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid, 88.
\textsuperscript{192} Grjebine, 12.
Financial resources are essential for groups to wield influence.\textsuperscript{193} Many scholars argue that money is the most important resource in US politics. However, as correctly argued by Rubenzer, it is not possible to actually measure the degree to which money buys policy. In the US, Mexican-American organizations and MHTAs generate significant wealth. Ethnic groups with significant resources can establish sustainable associations that participate in and observe the policymaking process,\textsuperscript{194} which seems to be the case with the Mexican-American diaspora. These organizations can be advantageous in establishing and continuing grassroots political movements, like the grassroots MHTAs. These grassroots political movements and organizations can significantly influence the policymaking process. Time is also a resource that is closely tied to money. People with more money usually have more (free) time. People who are attempting to find a job, working long hours at their job, or working at more than one job generally do not have time to participate in politics. It is more likely that Latinos will have jobs that are more time consuming and less flexible, which leaves little time to engage in politics.\textsuperscript{195}

It is evident that members of diasporas must assimilate to a certain extent in order to fully participate socially, economically, and politically in American society. Assimilation plays a significant role in the influence of ethnic groups. Segments of the Mexican-American diaspora have integrated into American society. However, assimilation is a matter of degree. Greater degrees of assimilation lend themselves to greater degrees of influence. For example, without official citizenship status, diasporas in America are deprived of the power that is accompanied by the right to vote. Although many people in the US fear that Mexican-Americans will not assimilate into society, this fear is unfounded. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, many people have failed to recognize that the homeland connection experienced by diasporas in the US has produced an inclination opposite to the one anticipated- one that actually works in favor of

\textsuperscript{193} Rubenzer, 169.  
\textsuperscript{194} Paul and Paul, 163. 
\textsuperscript{195} Garcia and Sanchez, 87.
American homogeneity and identity.\textsuperscript{196} The majority of the Mexican-American diaspora has, in fact, assimilated into American society.

Organizational strength usually refers to collective organizational unity, ‘a professional lobbying apparatus that provides useful information, and financial resources.’\textsuperscript{197} Generally, a group is more influential if it enjoys a significantly large and unified group of members that are active politically. As mentioned, the Mexican-American diaspora is large and relatively unified, primarily under the various Mexican-American organizations and MHTAs. Furthermore, the majority of Mexican-American leaders, politicians and heads of MHTAs are well educated and politically active. Glenn P. Hastedt claims that successful ethnic lobbies have depended on certain elements to help them achieve political clout; for instance, the threat of changing loyalties during elections.\textsuperscript{198} These groups try to influence the government’s agenda by contributing to election campaigns.\textsuperscript{199} These groups also attempt to elect certain officials, and lobby the representatives that make the decisions.\textsuperscript{200}

As noted, the Jewish diaspora is generally regarded as the model for other diasporas to follow; it has the most powerful lobby and is regarded as the most influential diaspora in the US. However, Tony Smith claims that the ‘character of American democracy is such that ethnic groups with far less influence than the Israel lobby can have a significant impact on US foreign policy.’\textsuperscript{201} Therefore, although the Mexican-American diaspora is not as influential as the Jewish diaspora, it can still have a significant impact on US foreign policy. Furthermore, the Mexican-American diaspora has similar qualities and characteristics to the Jewish diaspora, as discussed in the previous chapter. Like Mearsheimer and Walt’s work, this study’s account of the Mexican-

\textsuperscript{196} Shain, Foreign Attachments, 194.
\textsuperscript{197} Haney and Vanderbush, ‘The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups in U.S. Foreign Policy,’ 344.
\textsuperscript{198} Hastedt, 81.
\textsuperscript{199} Brewer and Teitelbaum, 158.
\textsuperscript{200} Rourke, 354.
\textsuperscript{201} Smith, Foreign Attachments, 128.
American diaspora is consistent with the widespread literature on interest groups in the US, and the literature on ethnic groups and their relationship with US foreign policy.202

How to Measure Influence

Milbrath notes that the majority of human beings are not able to accurately report the proportional weight they allocate to different influences when they make a decision.203 Furthermore, it is difficult to measure influence because it only occurs in the decision-making process of persons.204 As stated, many scholars agree that measuring influence is difficult.205 Mearsheimer and Walt observe that policymakers do not often admit that a lobbying group influenced their decisions, which can clearly make it even more difficult to determine an interest group’s influence on policy. An appreciation of political context is necessary when measuring influence. It is true that one cannot determine an interest group’s influence only by examining whether it won or lost a specific policy debate. Therefore, it is important to ask what the outcome would have been if the interest group had not been present. An interest group may lose a particular policy dispute but still manage to force policymakers to alter their goals or dispense a great deal of political capital to vanquish the opposition. There is no clear linear relationship between lobbying activities and policy outcomes. Hence, determining a lobby’s influence involves paying deliberate attention to the process involved in realizing decisions and outcomes.206

Baldwin and Grayson argue that people are likely to respond positively to a request if it bears few costs for them, is obviously legitimate, or is relevant to their work. If, however, the request is perceived as unpleasant or inconvenient, compliance or commitment will be less likely. If, for instance, an interest group’s demands are in line with the government’s intentions, that

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203 Milbrath, 330.
204 Ibid, 329.
206 Ibid, 260.
interest group is more likely to get what it wants from the government. However, if the group’s interests are not in line with those of the government, it will be much more difficult for that group to achieve its goals.

Aristotle discusses influence in *The “Art” of Rhetoric*. He defines rhetoric as ‘the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject.’ Aristotle claims that rhetoric is an art, which is related to politics, and assumes its character. He sets out three forms of rhetoric, or three ways of achieving persuasion: ethical, emotional, and logical. Ethical rhetoric is an appeal based on the personal character of the individual; an understanding of human character and virtues is necessary. Emotional rhetoric is an appeal based on the non-rational side of humans; Aristotle claims it is necessary to understand the nature and functioning of individuals’ emotions. Lastly, logical rhetoric is an appeal based on reason; it is important that the persuader and his target be able to reason logically.

Similarly, Baldwin and Grayson state that there are three categories of influence tactics: head (logical appeals), heart (emotional appeals), and hands (cooperative appeals). These three categories are similar to Aristotle’s. “Head” or logical appeals are tactics that address the rational positions of other individuals. “Heart” or emotional appeals are ‘ideas that carry your message by relating it to an important emotional motivator. An idea that promotes a person’s feelings of well-being, service, or sense of belonging.’ Finally, “hands” or cooperative appeals create a relationship between you, the person you are attempting to influence, and other people to build support for your idea. Furthermore, this category of influence clearly indicates that influence is not often a linear development, going from one person to another; often it is reciprocal-going back and forth between two individuals. Diasporas certainly use all three categories of influence tactics: logical appeals, emotional appeals, and cooperative appeals.

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208 Baldwin and Grayson, 17.
209 Ibid, 19.
Grayson and Baldwin’s three categories include two of Aristotle’s: emotional and logical appeals. Aristotle’s third category is “ethical”, while Grayson and Baldwin’s third category is “cooperative”. It can be argued, however, that these two categories are related, since Aristotle emphasizes personal character when speaking of ethical rhetoric, and Grayson and Baldwin emphasize the building of connections with respect to the cooperative appeal. These two categories work well together since personal character is important when establishing connections and relationships with other people or groups.

The Mexican-American diaspora fits into all three categories. Many of the diaspora’s strategies are “logical” and involve assisting, and creating a better life for, its members within the US, as well as helping their family members back in Mexico. Furthermore, if it can be established that the diaspora is interested in the relations (specifically with respect to trade) between both the US and Mexico, this would also fit into the logical appeals category. This is the case since the diaspora’s appeal would be based on reasoning about the connection between trade and economic prosperity.

Emotional appeals are a common tactic with respect to the illegal immigration issues involving the Mexican-American community. Appeals are often made based on emotion when it comes to security concerns (drug traffickers and gangs cause insecurity in Mexico and target certain people, like journalists and politicians), although this example would also fit within the previous category, since an appeal to rational self-interest would take place in this case. Appeals based on emotion certainly exist with respect to family issues; when people are caught illegally in the US, it is sometimes the case where certain family members are deported while others remain in the US, like children that were born to illegal immigrants while in the US. Finally, the Mexican-American diaspora uses cooperation (and relies on the personal character of their members) as an influence tactic. It works with other organizations, as well as the government, in both the US and Mexico, to accomplish certain goals.
Paul and Paul correctly note that there are no quantitative data to determine the influence of ethnic lobbies, and that the absence of data impedes the methodical study of why some diasporas are more influential than others.²¹⁰ This is why the authors relied on interviews to determine the “perceived influence” of these lobbies. Interviews are not always reliable, however, since one cannot be certain that the person being interviewed is answering honestly. Consequently, this study does not rely on interviews. It is my contention that it is possible to measure “actual” influence by using the notion of “influence resources”.

Some authors regard interest groups as rather ineffectual, whereas others acknowledge that they help legislators to formulate legislation and determine what issues are paramount. Frank R. Baumgartner and Beth L. Leech question whether the “glass of influence” is half empty or half full, and whether influence means successfully electing a specific candidate or whether agenda setting is sufficient.²¹¹ Much depends on how one measures political influence, in particular. Some scholars define it as “effect on votes”, while others define it as “access”, or the effect on policy results.²¹² An actual measurement of influence is not limited to agenda setting, impact on policy, or effect on votes. As mentioned, there are other “influence resources” that affect influence. In my view, a holistic approach is the most workable one.

There is, of course, no agreed way to measure the influence of diasporas. Nevertheless, I attempt to do so. I am aware of the difficulties, and will therefore set out the limits and disadvantages of my method before proceeding. It is my hope that this study enriches the literature on interest groups by demonstrating a better way of measuring influence. By taking “influence resources” into account and giving due attention to “perceived influence”, I will attempt to measure the Mexican-American diaspora’s influence on US policy, specifically with respect to trade. I will trace trade-related events between the US and Mexico involving the Mexican-American diaspora and will illustrate how the diaspora deployed their increasing

²¹⁰ Paul and Paul, 3.
²¹¹ Baumgartner and Leech, 128.
²¹² Ibid, 128.
political assets in matters of trade over the observed 20-year period. I will attempt to recount the story of the rise of a major ethnic force in US trade policy.

Conclusion

To a certain extent, this study borrows from the model Haney and Vanderbush used when measuring the influence of the CANF. They rely on specific examples to illustrate this lobby’s influence. They trace the political activities of the CANF from the 1980s to the 1990s, and argue that it was active in setting the policy agenda regarding Cuba. They track the development and actions of various domestic political factors, concentrating principally on the progressively forceful nature of interest groups and Congress, and the increasingly more permeable nature of the American policy process.\textsuperscript{213} Haney and Vanderbush conclude by amassing the trends they tracked throughout the 1980s and 1990s to demonstrate how domestic political forces dominate America’s policy-making concerning Cuba.\textsuperscript{214}

This study will examine the events surrounding the initiation of NAFTA, as well as trade-related events post-NAFTA involving the Mexican-American diaspora. In this context, the political activities of the Mexican-American diaspora concerning major developments in US-Mexico trade policy will be examined from the early 1990s until the present time to determine and measure its influence. My conclusions will be based upon observations made within this two-decade timeline. I will attempt to isolate the source of influence for each trade-relevant event using mainly secondary sources in the academic literature. I refer to these sources in the context of the trade-related events to gauge the emergence of the political influence of the Mexican-American diaspora.

Tracing the exercise of influence in the political debates over NAFTA will enable me to highlight the vital role played by the Mexican-American diaspora. I will attempt to link causes to observed effects in the case of NAFTA. Analyzing the players and the events involved in the

\textsuperscript{213} Haney and Vanderbush. \textit{The Cuban Embargo,} 6.\
\textsuperscript{214} Ibid. 10.
initiation, negotiation, and completion of the agreement will allow me to link influence to outcomes in the US political process. I will also attempt to trace the processes involved in post-NAFTA debates, including those on fast-track authority and the FTAA, the CAFTA-DR, and the trucking issue.

It is my intention to have this study answer the following questions: 1-Does the Mexican-American diaspora have influence in US domestic politics and over the US-Mexico relationship? If so, what is the relationship between the perception and the reality of that influence? 2-Does the diaspora use what influence it has to achieve its interests or goals? 3-If so, is it generally successful? These questions will be explored in the context of American trade policy. In order to measure its influence, however, it must first be asked whether the diaspora uses its power to achieve specific goals or interests.

This study will look at key examples that illustrate the influence of the Mexican-American diaspora, especially when it comes to trade. I begin with the presumption that the first question, whether the Mexican-American diaspora is influential, is answered in the affirmative. The diaspora holds both types of influence - actual and perceived. I take a generous view of influence, where even marginal indications of “influence resources” grant influence to any group. However, throughout this dissertation, my presumption will be continuously supported with the use of evidence adduced to answer the second and third questions.

Voting patterns are a clear indicator of influence, how influence is used, and whether its use is successful (in other words, studying voting patterns can help us address each question simultaneously). Whether the members of a diaspora vote in considerable numbers and whether their vote is a result of diaspora concerns are significant considerations.²¹⁵ It is necessary to determine whether Mexican-Americans are able to influence decision-making, through the vote. Therefore, we are left with the following questions: Do Mexican-Americans vote? If so, whom

do they vote for? And are Mexican-Americans politically active? The answers to these questions will help us paint a more accurate picture of Mexican-Americans and their influence in relation to US foreign policy.

Voting is perhaps one of the clearest exercises of political power, and if the diaspora votes (and votes in a specific way, in support of a certain political party, for instance), considering its numbers, it should be able to influence the election results or political issues in a particular way. Whether diaspora members vote, and whether they vote to accomplish specific goals, are important considerations. Similarly, if Mexican-Americans generally do not vote, this then diminishes the measure of the diaspora’s influence. Latino and Mexican-American voting statistics will be analyzed later in this study.

As stated, it is difficult to prove causality. I have to admit the possibility that I may not be able to draw a direct and clear line between the assets and preferences of the Mexican-American diaspora and the outcomes of each case. Although the lines of causality are clearer in the NAFTA case, and it is evident that in this case the Mexican government and the diaspora used one another, this pattern is less clear in the other trade-related cases. I am confident, however, that this study will illustrate the interesting variations in the way the Mexican-American diaspora employed its increasing political assets in matters of trade over the observed 20-year period.
Chapter 4- Host state: The United States

The US is the ‘classic immigrant society, tolerating diversity, as long as immigrants and their American-born offspring are prepared to accommodate to American institutions and the American way of life.’ The “inclusive opportunity structure” that exists in America is available to Mexicans, and all immigrants, in the US provided they are willing to participate in society and compete for jobs. Immigrants are expected to adapt to American society and culture, and to be shaped, to a certain extent, by this society and culture. The US, however, is also shaped by its immigrants. As Yossi Shain notes, national character is not absolute, and changes are caused by both external and internal factors. He adds that the latter sometimes effectuates change to a greater extent than the former.

Writing in 2000, Tony Smith states that immigration has resurfaced as a contentious political issue. The US is currently undergoing its greatest immigration wave yet, which is expected to make roughly 20 per cent of the US population of Mexican ancestry by 2050. Recent Mexican immigration is unprecedented in American history. As a result, the experience and lessons of previous waves of immigration are not useful when it comes to understanding its nuances and effects. Samuel P. Huntington has claimed that Mexican immigration is distinct from other immigration as a result of six factors: contiguity, scale, illegality, regional concentration, persistence, and historical presence. All of these are common themes in this chapter.

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216 Esman, Diasporas in the Contemporary World, 98.
217 Ibid, 98.
218 Shain, Marketing the American Creed Abroad, 195.
219 Smith, Foreign Attachments, 35.
221 Ibid
The rapidly growing Mexican-American diaspora in the US is of increasing social, political, and economic importance to both countries.222 This chapter will discuss the diaspora’s relationship with its host state. Starting with a brief history of the relationship between Mexico and the US, it proceeds to a summary discussion on the three main foreign policy issues that both the US and Mexico share: immigration, drugs, and trade. The two countries regard these three issues, and treat them, differently. Since this chapter focuses on the host state, the perspective of the US concerning these three foreign policy issues will be examined. However, my focus will be on trade more than the other two issues. This is simply because I regard trade as the most important issue that both countries share, and one that interests me as a student of international relations.

This chapter provides a demographic description of the Latino and Mexican-American communities, including the leading Mexican-American and Latino organizations. One type of Mexican-American organization is especially significant—the MHTA. Initially, MHTAs were created to maintain linkages with Mexican-Americans’ hometowns in Mexico, and assisted in the coordination of remittances. But as generations passed, these organizations and their members broadened their focus and started to engage more visibly in their host communities. Although MHTAs still act as linkages, they currently promote the political participation of their members. They also actively encourage the naturalization of their members. MHTAs promote citizenship and urge Mexican-Americans to exercise their civic duty. The leaders of these associations have a great deal of influence with the Mexican government because it recognizes their influence in the US. MHTAs are a critical element and provide us with another window through which we can see how Mexican-Americans conduct themselves politically. I will examine these associations further in this chapter.

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222 Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We?*, 277.
A Brief History of the Relationship between the US and Mexico

As mentioned, there are three major policy areas that the US and Mexico share: immigration, drugs, and trade. This is essentially the spectrum of Mexico-US foreign policy. All three issue-areas are significant, but in my opinion, trade is arguably the most important.

Apart from Mexican-Americans, no other migrant group could claim a historical right to US land. The majority of Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, California, Utah, and Nevada belonged to Mexico until it lost them following the 1835-1836 Texan War of Independence and the 1846-1848 Mexican-American War. During this war, the US invaded Mexico, occupied its capital, and subsequently annexed a significant amount of its territory. This has not happened between the US and any other country. The Mexican-American War was the only significant military conflict between the two countries. The war primarily took place because of a border dispute between Mexico and the US, and because of the annexation of Texas by the latter.

In the nineteenth century, subsequent to the war of independence with Spain, Mexico struggled to populate isolated regions within its borders, primarily its northern provinces of Texas, California, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico. In an attempt to populate these regions, Mexico permitted Americans to settle there. However, Mexico’s policy did not work as planned, and in 1836 Texas declared its independence. The US annexed Texas in 1845, following the election of American President James K. Polk. The Mexican government regarded this act as hostile and severed its relations with the US. The Mexican government believed the American settlers in Texas had taken advantage of Mexico’s generosity in permitting them to farm in the region, and Mexicans also feared America would continue to make claims on Mexico’s territory. The Mexican government’s fears were exacerbated by the fact that the western frontier of Texas was not clearly defined. Troops from both countries were sent to the border,

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223 Huntington, ‘The Hispanic Challenge.’
and Mexican troops attacked a US cavalry patrol on April 25, 1846. On May 13, 1846, the US Congress issued a declaration of war.  

Most of the fighting transpired between April 1846 and September 1847. The war ended by the Mexican army surrendering and the American army occupying the capital, Mexico City. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, officially ending the war, was signed on February 2, 1848. As a result of this treaty, the US acquired roughly 500,000 square miles of territory, territory that now includes California, Utah, Nevada, and parts of Arizona, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Colorado. Furthermore, Mexico gave up all claims to Texas. A total of 1,773 Americans died in the war, and 4,152 were wounded. As for Mexican casualties, approximately 25,000 were wounded or killed in the war, although records are incomplete. Approximately 100,000 Mexicans lived in the ceded territories at this time. These people were given a choice: they could return to Mexico, become US citizens, or remain Mexican citizens and continue to live on the land that now belonged to the US. Lisa García Bedolla states that from this point onward, America has had to incorporate Mexican-Americans into American society.

Rosemary King claims that Mexico had still not developed into a nation by the beginning of the Mexican-American War. It was nevertheless attempting to acquire a stable government and establish a national identity. As a result of political instability, it was difficult for a national identity to be established; from 1822 to 1847, 50 military regimes governed the country. The Mexican government was essentially characterized by continuous military coups, increasing national debt, a lack of foreign capital, and the growing gap between the rich and poor.

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226 King, 66.
228 Bedolla, Latino Politics, 36.
229 Ibid, 36.
230 King, 64.
Although Mexicans living in US territory after 1848 had never moved geographically, they found themselves with a new identity in a new country.\textsuperscript{231} Milton Esman notes that the offspring of Mexican families that live in southwestern US have lived unceasingly as US citizens\textsuperscript{232} since the annexation of this territory to the US. For more than a century, Mexicans have been crossing the border with their northern neighbour, looking for work.\textsuperscript{233} In the twentieth century, however, American immigration policy became “restrictionist.”\textsuperscript{234} From 1910 until the 1920s, Americans increasingly became worried about their capacity to integrate new immigrants. Many began to blame America’s economic problems on the Mexicans in the country.\textsuperscript{235} The events surrounding World War I and the universal anxiety in the US concerning the purported threat to the country’s national identity of ethnic groups with dual loyalties generated hostility to the incursion of Mexican immigrants.\textsuperscript{236} However, it was common for the US government to sanction the recruitment of workers from Mexico at this time, and to tolerate the practice of unauthorized migration.

During both world wars, the American government encouraged the recruitment of \textit{bracero}\textsuperscript{237} workers from Mexico in order to acquire the necessary railroad and farm workers. The \textit{Bracero Program} was initiated as a temporary emergency measure to offer field labour to farmers in the southwest whose workers had been conscripted in World War II.\textsuperscript{238} The government made exceptions to the immigration rules (that would have otherwise prohibited Mexicans’ entry) to allow these additional migrants to come to the US as workers. These

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{231} Rinderle, 297.
  \item \textsuperscript{232} Esman, \textit{Diasporas in the Contemporary World}, 88.
  \item \textsuperscript{233} Ibid, 89.
  \item \textsuperscript{235} Bedolla, 52.
  \item \textsuperscript{236} Shain, \textit{Marketing the American Creed Abroad}, 177.
  \item \textsuperscript{237} \textit{Bracero} workers are Mexican labourers that are legally admitted into America to perform seasonal labour.
\end{itemize}
workers were supposed to be temporary. However, many of them remained in the US permanently. Essentially, this program was central to creating a practice of illegal migration to the US.\textsuperscript{239}

The US government terminated both bracero programs, partially because of pressure from labor and civil rights groups which argued that Mexican immigrants decreased wages and augmented unemployment rates for US workers.\textsuperscript{240} Increasing illegal immigration from Mexico followed the termination of these bracero programs. It was initially quite simple to cross the border into the US. The US Border Patrol was only established in 1924.

There was a great deal of discrimination against Mexican-Americans in the US in the first half of the twentieth century. Residential segregation existed, as did segregation in schools and sports facilities.\textsuperscript{241} Throughout the southern US, Mexican-Americans were often harassed and even murdered. In 1929, Mexican-Americans born in the US established the \textit{League of United Latin American Citizens} (LULAC) in Texas. It was created to protect and defend Mexican-Americans. The purpose of the founders was to distinguish ‘themselves from migrants, in order to assert their rights as citizens.’\textsuperscript{242} Membership was limited to Mexicans, and allegiance to the US was a fundamental feature of the organization’s dogma.\textsuperscript{243}

Over time, LULAC evolved to become a pro-immigrant association.\textsuperscript{244} Currently, LULAC is the leading civil rights and advocacy organization for Latinos in the US.\textsuperscript{245} Rodolfo O. de la Garza and Claudio Vargas state that since its establishment, LULAC has been concerned

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{239} Ibid, 19.
\item\textsuperscript{240} Hufbauer and Schott, \textit{NAFTA Revisited}, 441.
\item\textsuperscript{241} Bedolla, 56.
\item\textsuperscript{243} García, \textit{Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests}, 126.
\item\textsuperscript{244} Bada, Fox, and Selee, \textit{Invisible No More}.
\end{itemize}
with instituting the US identity of citizens of Mexican origin and offering them a political role. This group comprised Mexican-American citizens who pursued the rights and opportunities of US citizenship, with the desire to honour the responsibilities associated with being American.

The organization’s Constitution emphasizes loyalty to the US, above all else. The Constitution states that as US citizens, all LULAC members must undertake responsibilities and affirm their rights and opportunities in search of a richer civilization for the US, and that all of the members of the organization recognize that it is a privilege and an obligation to support and protect the rights and responsibilities bestowed on every US citizen. LULAC encouraged hyphenated Americanism, and emphasized the importance of a combination of love for one’s ancestral culture and a strong commitment to American citizenship. While LULAC initially focused on promoting the English language, educational and economic opportunities, and political participation, it has modified its scope, extended its membership, and increased its involvement at the national level. The organization expanded its base to include all Latinos and noncitizens. It also adjusted its scope to accommodate issues of immigration, affirmative action, civil rights, as well as bilingualism.

In 1930, President Hoover claimed that Mexicans took jobs away from Americans, and were a predominant cause of the economic crisis. In the 1930s, throughout the Great Depression, roughly 500,000 Mexicans, as well as American citizens that looked Mexican, were deported to Mexico. Discrimination against Mexican-Americans continued during this period, and well into the 1960s, even after the federal civil rights legislation was enacted. Throughout this period,

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249 Ibid
250 García, Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests, 126.
251 Ibid, 126.
Mexicans were often permitted to come to the US for provisional employment as agrarian workers, but they were expected to be invisible.\textsuperscript{252}

According to Bedolla, World War II not only greatly affected Mexican-American political organizing, but it also changed the attitudes of the American people. Considering the enemy of the US was fascism, which included Hitler’s philosophy of white racial supremacy, it became increasingly challenging to rationalize and defend racial segregation\textsuperscript{253} in the US, since the justifications employed by Americans were often quite similar to Hitler’s arguments concerning the hierarchy of races. Interestingly, Mexican-Americans are actually more patriotic than Anglos (English-speaking non-Latino Americans) because immigrants who become American citizens have endured a significant and emotional transition.\textsuperscript{254} Approximately 750,000 Mexican-Americans fought in World War II. Furthermore, in ‘proportion to their numbers, they earned the highest number of medals of honor among all minority groups.'\textsuperscript{255}

However, when the Mexican-American soldiers returned to the US, they had a difficult time accessing the veterans’ benefits they were entitled to, such as medical services and educational benefits. As a result, Dr. Hector García,\textsuperscript{256} who fought in World War II, established the American GI Forum (AGIF) in Texas in 1948. Although the AGIF was primarily concerned with veterans’ issues, its work quickly expanded to non-veterans’ issues like voting rights and school desegregation. The AGIF also advocated for the civil rights of Mexican-Americans.

Armando Rendon states that Mexican-American civic incorporation is not impeded by ethnic characteristics, but may actually be enhanced by it.\textsuperscript{257} Mexican-Americans support core American values as much as Anglos do, if not more, regardless of whether they speak English or

\textsuperscript{252} Esman, \textit{Diasporas in the Contemporary World}, 89.
\textsuperscript{253} Bedolla, 70.
\textsuperscript{255} Bedolla, 67.
\textsuperscript{256} Dr. García was also active in LULAC.
Spanish, or both, regardless of whether they were born in the US or Mexico, and regardless of whether they have a strong ethnic consciousness.\textsuperscript{258} Nevertheless, even though there is a great deal of evidence pointing toward Mexicans’ loyalty to America, and their desire to integrate into American society, because they tended to retain their language and culture, many Americans remained suspicious of these migrants.

Following World War II, racial politics changed considerably in the US. In 1948, President Truman abolished segregation within the US armed forces, the Supreme Court prohibited the usage of racially based residential restrictions,\textsuperscript{259} and the California Supreme Court abolished the ban on racial intermarriage and racial segregation in public schools. These changes occurred as a result of years of legal and political work by organizations like LULAC and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

In 1959, the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA), a Mexican-American political organization, was established. MAPA was created in California by 150 political activists that believed the Democratic Party in California was not supporting Mexican-American candidates. MAPA wanted to increase the political power and protect the civil rights of Mexican-Americans in this state. This organization focused on voter mobilization and registration. Edward Roybal\textsuperscript{260} was its first president. In 1960, MAPA extended its electoral activity to the national level during John F. Kennedy’s candidacy for president. MAPA encouraged Mexican-Americans to support Kennedy because he endorsed voting rights, civil rights, equal opportunity, as well as school desegregation.

\textsuperscript{258} Ibid, 348.
\textsuperscript{259} Bedolla, 70.
\textsuperscript{260} Roybal was born in Albuquerque and traced his roots back to the founding of Santa Fe, over 400 years ago. He took office in 1963 and was one of the first Latinos to serve in the US House of Representatives.
Kennedy had also indicated he would appoint a Mexican-American to an ambassadorship. In 1959, Kennedy started to court the Latino vote. A senatorial staff member came up with the “Viva Kennedy” movement; this movement consisted of various “Viva Kennedy” clubs that promoted the Kennedy campaign. These clubs focused on voter registration and “get-out-the-vote” drives. They achieved their goals. Kennedy won 91 per cent of the Mexican-American vote in Texas and 70 per cent of the Mexican-American vote in New Mexico. Furthermore, he won 75 per cent of the Mexican-American vote in California, Arizona, and Colorado. Nationally, Kennedy garnered approximately 85 per cent of the Mexican-American vote.

In 1962, the “Viva Kennedy” clubs played a significant role in electing Texas Congressman Henry B. González and California Congressman Roybal. It was clear to the various Mexican-American organizations in the US at this time that national coordination was essential and achieved results. Leaders from Mexican-American organizations such as LULAC, MAPA, AGIF, and the Community Service Organization (CSO) met to attempt to develop greater unity among the various Mexican-American political organizations. The result was the establishment of the Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations (PASSO).

Although PASSO was created as a national organization, it was especially powerful in Texas; this is where the organization initiated the first explicitly political statewide Mexican-American organization. PASSO visibly supported candidates and partook in electoral campaigning. It encouraged Mexican-Americans to vote and to support Mexican-American candidates. Within a few years, the organization slowly disintegrated, as a result of conflict

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261 Kennedy appointed Raymond Telles as the ambassador to Costa Rica; Telles was the first Mexican-American US ambassador.
263 The CSO organized citizenship drives, voter turnout drives, and voter registration in Mexican-American communities throughout California.
264 Bedolla, 72.
between the moderate and more radical members of PASSO regarding the organization’s political direction. The successes and achievements of this organization motivated other Mexican-American organizations, such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), to continue to fight for Mexican-Americans’ civil rights in the US.

In 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Act was established and, for the first time in American history, placed limits on the number of Mexicans that could migrate to the US. On August 6, 1965, the US Voting Rights Act (VRA) was signed into law. The Act forbade discriminatory voting practices, such as the literary test requirement in order to vote. At this time, Mexican-American political activists were frustrated with the lack of responsiveness of the Democratic Party to the needs of Mexican-Americans. In 1967, this dissatisfaction led to the creation of La Raza Unida Party. According to F. Chris Garcia and Gabriel R. Sanchez, throughout history, Mexican-Americans have often established their own political parties, and the Raza Unida was the most successful one.

Various scholars have deemed this time period, and the creation of La Raza Unida, as “the Chicano movement.” Although established in 1967, it was only in the early 1970s that the party began to expand; committees were established for Colorado, Texas, California, and finally Arizona and New Mexico in 1972. La Raza Unida endorsed a progressive affirmation of political and civil rights. This organization was most successful in South Texas since Mexican-Americans constituted a majority there. At the local level, the party was successful in that it was able to win elections. It was also able to politically mobilize significant numbers of the Mexican-American

265 La Raza Unida Party, which was created in 1967, gained the majority of PASSO’s membership.
268 Garcia and Sanchez, 183.
population. The party was able to convince the Democratic Party to take Mexican-American issues more seriously.

Unfortunately, this organization was also divided ideologically; one side was more radical, and demanded a major systemic change, while the other side was rather traditional, and asked for practical changes in the available opportunity structure for Mexican-Americans. As a result of the fundamental division in the party, it was not possible for it to move forward coherently as a united political organization. By the late 1970s, it functioned increasingly as an interest group rather than a political party. According to Louis DeSipio, as the Chicano movement and Raza Unida declined, new Mexican-American organizations emerged that focused mainly on regional and domestic issues. One of La Raza Unida’s greatest successes, however, was its ability to ensure that non-Mexican-American political associations in the southwestern states included Mexican-Americans, which in turn created the push for organization at the local level. For example, the Mexican American Democrats (MAD).

MALDEF was created in 1968 and is frequently described as the Latino community’s law firm. MALDEF encourages social change by way of activism, education at the community level, mass communications, and litigation in the following areas: education, immigrant rights, employment, and political access. The organization maintains that education is fundamental to social, economic, and political opportunities in the US for Latinos. MALDEF comprises various attorneys and other professionals, and acts on behalf of all Latinos. For example, in Tyler

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270 Bedolla, 84.
271 DeSipio, Counting on the Latino Vote, 35.
272 Ibid, 35.
273 This organization was founded in 1975 to promote the interests of Mexican-Americans at all levels of the Democratic Party. MAD helped to elect Joe Bernal to the Democratic National Committee (he was the first Mexican-American to serve on that committee). The organization was at its height in the late 1970s but is still active today. It works with the Mexican American Legislative Caucus, the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project, and MALDEF, specifically in areas concerning legislation and voter registration.
275 Ibid
276 Navarro, 528.
v. Phloe, MALDEF challenged ‘the area of free educational access by undocumented school-age children.’ In order for school-age students to receive a free public education, they had to prove they had legal status in the US. As a result of MALDEF’s efforts in this matter, the court determined that access to education was a fundamental right conferred on all people inhabiting the jurisdiction of a school district. According to Paul and Paul, MALDEF is the only Mexican ethnic organization with foreign policy interests.

Another organization founded in 1968 was the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), initially called the Southwest Council of La Raza. NCLR is a civil rights and advocacy organization that focuses on reducing discrimination and poverty among Mexican-Americans or Chicanos, as well as improving their economic opportunities. It established and supported community organizations, with the objectives of creating and solidifying local associations, and endorsing forms of advocacy, such as empowerment, leadership development, and voter registration. Like other Mexican-American organizations, it has since expanded its activities to include all Latinos. NCLR is now an association of 200 Latino organizations throughout the US that endeavors to directly voice its opinions to decision-makers and to amass information that can be used to sway decisions in a way that is favourable to Latinos.

The VRA expanded in 1975 in order to protect “language minorities,” which included Latinos. This expansion therefore provided Mexicans and other Latinos with the same benefits and protections provided to black Americans. As a result of fast population growth and few employment opportunities at home, Mexican immigration accelerated in the 1970s. It was

278 Paul and Paul, 124.
280 Garcia and Sanchez, 164.
281 Bedolla, 23.
exacerbated by the increasing demand in the US for unskilled (and therefore, cheap) workers in construction, manufacturing, agriculture, and household service. As opportunities within the US increased, many Mexicans decided to settle in the country, and start families. These Mexicans continued to take an interest in their homeland and to send remittances back home to their family members. The VRA had a significant impact on the political activity and representation of Latinos. It not only eliminated the structural obstacles to voting, but it also increased the amount of Latinos elected throughout the US.

In 1976, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) was established as a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization whose electorate includes the country’s roughly 6,000 appointed and elected Latino representatives. NALEO is predominantly interested in augmenting the number of Latinos in public office. Roybal co-founded this organization as well as the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC). NALEO offers support and training to officials at all levels of government. NALEO promotes naturalization among Latino immigrants in order to promote their political empowerment. A connection clearly exists between increasing the Latino political base and expanding the number of Latino political representatives. NALEO has involved itself in the US Census planning process in order to help expand the voting base of the Latino community. One campaign organized by NALEO for the 2008 election, *Ya es hora ¡Ve y Vota!* (It’s Time, Go and Vote!), had as its goal to educate and mobilize the Latino community to vote. This campaign was extremely successful, with more

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283 Esman, *Diasporas in the Contemporary World*, 89.
284 In 1973 there were 1,280 Latino elected officials serving in the six states that were most populated by Latinos (Arizona, California, Florida, New Mexico, New York, and Texas). By 2007, there was a total of 4,539 Latinos elected to serve in those states (Bedolla, 24).
286 Garcia and Sanchez, 166.
288 Ibid, 133.
289 Garcia and Sanchez, 166.
290 ‘NALEO At-A-Glance.’
than 11.1 million Latinos voting. More than 25,000 Latinos registered to vote on the campaign’s website.

The Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project (SVREP) was founded in 1974 by William C. Velasquez and other Mexican-American activists to guarantee voting rights for Mexican-Americans in southwestern US. This organization engages in massive voter registration drives throughout the southwest. It conducts mass phone drives, and lobbies all levels of government in the US to increase awareness and support for the issues of Latinos and other minorities throughout the country. The organization’s motto is Su Voto es Su Voz, which means “your vote is your voice.” SVREP’s mission is to empower Mexican-Americans and Latinos by increasing their involvement in the US democratic process, and they accomplish this by solidifying the ability, knowledge, and proficiencies of Latino leaders and organizations through programs that educate and develop both Latino voters and leaders. According to Armando Navarro, the ‘national increase in voter registration and elected Latino officials was attributable to SVREP organizing efforts.’

A counterpart to SVREP, the Midwest Voter Registration Education Project (MVREP) was established in 1982 to create a support base in the midwest. MVREP provided financial and technical support for voter registration drives, as well as political education initiatives throughout this part of the country. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, MVREP encountered intense growth due to the increasing Latino population throughout the midwest. As a result of this change, it subsequently changed its name in 1987 to the Midwest-Northeast Voter Registration Education Project (MNVREP).

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291 Velasquez was actively involved with various leading Latino rights groups, and from the 1960s until his death in the late 1980s, he helped Mexican-Americans, and Latinos in general, become electoral participants in US politics.
293 Ibid.
294 Navarro, 540.
The CHC was founded in 1976 as a mutual support group for Latinos, and is a legislative organization within the US Congress. Presently, the CHC is structured as a Congressional Member organization, and is governed by the Rules of the US House of Representatives. The main goals of the CHC are to promote a shared policy agenda for Latinos, and to study executive and judicial procedures that are significant for the Latino community. Furthermore, the organization has worked with various groups, inside and outside of Congress, to strengthen the federal government’s obligation to Latinos, and to develop their knowledge of the American political system. According to Garcia and Sanchez, the CHC has become a significant organization for Latino politics. It assumes certain positions on specific issues and publicizes them; it commands the attention of the president, legislative representatives, and various governmental and nongovernmental entities, including the media. In 1978, Congressmen Roybal, E. “Kika” de la Garza, and Baltasar Corrada of the CHC established a non-profit organization to act as an educational institution that would provide programs for, and that would focus on, the Latino community. This educational institute was called the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI).

John A. García claims that the development of Mexican-American organizations represents a considerable history of organizational actions and clear agendas; the center of that agenda ‘focused on civil rights, access to and participation in the economic and political arenas, educational quality, and greater political empowerment.’ The Mexican-American community has expanded from a regional minority to become a “national presence” with increasing political

296 Garcia and Sanchez, 166.
297 Ibid, 232.
299 García, Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests, 49.
participation. Over the years, Mexican-American organizations have diversified their goals, objectives, and their constituency base.

Mexican-Americans founded the majority of these organizations, and they therefore began with a Mexican-American focus. Since the majority of Latinos in the US are of Mexican origin, they continue to be a vital part of each organization’s constituency. Although they presently tend to serve the broader Latino community, these organizations are construed in this paper as Mexican-American. They might refer to themselves as Latino, and though they claim to represent all Latinos, and not just Mexican-Americans, the majority of their leaders and members are of Mexican origin. The initial purpose of these Mexican-American organizations was to encourage greater political participation by Mexican-Americans in their community. They are achieving this goal, among many others.

Mexican Hometown Associations

The existence of a multitude of Mexican-American organizations suggests that Mexican-Americans are pushing to become more involved politically. One type of Mexican-American organization, the MHTA, is especially significant. MHTAs are essential for organization, mobilization (as well as political participation), and naturalization among members of the diaspora. They are the key organizational structure for the Mexican-American diaspora, whose members use MHTAs essentially as a means by which to play an important role in the political process. In order to reach the diaspora and, at times, Washington, the Mexican government must work through and with the MHTAs. The reverse is also the case: when Washington seeks to influence or communicate with the diaspora, it goes through the MHTAs. MHTAs thus play a central filtering role for the diaspora.

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300 Ibid, 49.
301 Bedolla, 86.
An HTA is an association established by immigrants residing in the same community in the host state, sharing a mutual nationality.\(^\text{302}\) Armando Navarro calls MHTAs “Mexicano-Based Organizations.”\(^\text{303}\) These organizations are a significant element of transnational connections and operate as the link between the individual’s host state and their hometown.\(^\text{304}\) Mexicans in the US are closely connected to their hometowns in Mexico through their participation in MHTAs. These associations signify a transnational identity imbedded in both the immigrant’s home state and host state.\(^\text{305}\)

As early as the 1980s, John A. García and Rodolfo O. de la Garza argued that the presence of Mexican-American organizations, including HTAs, showed the existence of the organizational foundations required for recruiting Mexican-Americans into the Mexican-American political community.\(^\text{306}\) Initially, HTAs were focused almost exclusively on assisting their hometowns, such as fundraising events to finance projects in, and support the economic well-being of, their communities in both Mexico and the US. But many have since established programs for their new communities. HTAs have therefore become vital grounds for immigrants to refine the skills that permit them to engage in civic life and regional politics in the US.\(^\text{307}\) Migrants who partake in these organizations claim a type of *civic binationality*, a membership in both the societies of their home state and host state.\(^\text{308}\) MHTAs also play key roles with respect to the organization, mobilization and naturalization of Mexican-Americans. Across the US,

\(^{308}\) Ibid
Mexican migrants are playing an increasingly important economic, political, and cultural role in their local communities. MHTAs have been indispensable when it comes to social support for Mexican-Americans, and have encouraged Mexican-Americans to participate in American civil life and politics.\(^{309}\)

MHTAs have a long history in the US, with the first club starting in California in 1962. The number and size of MHTAs continue to expand, and their membership base has grown exponentially in the past 15 years.\(^{310}\) Over 600 MHTAs have been registered with the Mexican consulates; some estimates exceed 2,000. The core membership of the HTAs is usually 24 families, although some associations have hundreds of members. HTAs are mostly located in metropolitan areas, principally in Los Angeles (LA) and Chicago; the leaders of the associations are habitually economically successful and often have citizenship or legal status.\(^{311}\) It is argued that the formation of these associations illustrates how Mexican migrants have responded to the challenges and discriminatory conditions they face in the US. They created grassroots organizations that ensure the possibility of collective action in their communities in Mexico, as well as in their communities in the US.\(^{312}\)

Historically, MHTAs have not worked closely or systematically with one another or with other Mexican-American organizations. But Mexican-American organizations have been gradually initiating a stronger relationship with immigrant-led associations.\(^{313}\) For example, national organizations like LULAC and the NCLR are taking steps to create ties and establish


\(^{310}\) Fox, ‘Binational Citizens.’

\(^{311}\) Ibid


\(^{313}\) Ibid
calculated relationships with MHTAs.\textsuperscript{314} Chicago’s MHTAs have made alliances with MALDEF to create leadership agendas for their members.\textsuperscript{315} Mainstream Latino politicians and interest groups in the US are visibly making efforts to forge partnerships with MHTAs.\textsuperscript{316} Increasingly, MHTAs are participating more in the civic and political arena in the US. They are gradually becoming more involved in American politics.\textsuperscript{317} MHTAs are increasingly participating in events geared toward US civic life, as opposed to community issues in their home state.\textsuperscript{318} MHTAs are being recognized for their participation in US politics and for their attempt to influence public policy. The headline for one 2005 article in The Sacramento Bee read ‘A drive for clout: Community groups representing Mexican immigrants form a confederation to influence public policy in California.’\textsuperscript{319} This article discussed the meeting between the Council of Presidents of Mexican Federations and Ann Marie Tallman, the national president and general counsel for MALDEF.

Tallman proposed a partnership, offering the Council presidents use of office space at the organization’s LA headquarters, media training, and business leadership workshops. This partnership was called the “MALDEF-Hometown Association Leadership Program”. Tallman claimed that the MHTAs are the “eyes and ears” of the Mexican-American community, and that “this is a bona fide movement.”\textsuperscript{320} She expressed regret that this had not been recognized and valued earlier by MALDEF and other organizations. Tallman promised to work with the MHTAs on legal and policy issues that affected Mexican-American communities. The article described

\textsuperscript{314} ‘Mexican Hometown Associations,’ Citizen Action in the Americas, www.americas.irc-online.org/pdf/series/05.hta.pdf (accessed June 1, 2010).
\textsuperscript{315} Rivera-Salgado, et al., ‘Mexican Migrant Civic and Political Participation in the U.S.’
\textsuperscript{317} ‘Mexican Hometown Associations.’
\textsuperscript{318} Bada, Fox, and Selee, ‘Invisible No More. Mexican Migrant Civic Participation in the United States.’
\textsuperscript{320} Fox, ‘Mapping Mexican Migrant Civil Society.’
the presidents of the MHTAs as a ‘powerful political and economic force in Mexico and a potentially potent social movement in California.’ Rivera-Salgado and colleagues agree that the Council of Presidents of Mexican Federations in LA is powerful and that it is serious about actively participating in both regional and state politics.

Mexican immigrants in the US have relied on MHTAs to acquire access to both economic and political power. Apart from organization, MHTAs promote the participation and the naturalization of their members. The most important role performed by MHTAs is their constant encouragement of naturalization. These associations not only promote citizenship and support the naturalization process, but they offer assistance and information to their members regarding the process, sponsor citizenship fairs, and hold information sessions or talks by immigration experts. They emphasize the significance of augmenting the number of US citizens among Mexican migrants in order to gain political power. Arguably, citizenship is the first step towards more political involvement in the host state.

MHTAs clearly reinforce many of the diaspora’s influence resources, including finances, assimilation, and organization. In addition to encouraging the naturalization of their members, and the promotion of citizenship, MHTAs assist in the mobilization of the Mexican-American diaspora. Furthermore, MHTAs are the key organizational structure of the diaspora. As intermediaries between the diaspora and both the Mexican and American governments, MHTAs act as a vehicle or transmission belt from the Mexican government to the Mexican-American community and onto the US political process. According to Zabin and Rabadan, the “direct contact” between the Mexican government and the MHTAs is clearly political because it signifies an evolving relationship between civic organizations and the state. The Mexican government

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321 Rivera-Salgado, et al., ‘Mexican Migrant Civic and Political Participation in the U.S.’
323 Ibid
324 Ibid
recognizes the influence MHTAs have in the US and among their members. In 2006, Mexican politicians made special visits to MHTAs in LA to attempt to gain the support of these associations in encouraging its citizens to vote in the 2006 presidential elections in Mexico.\textsuperscript{325} Anderson claims that Mexican and American officials have tried to “curry their favor” with the diaspora and have treated the MHTAs as the diaspora’s interest groups.

Zabin and Rabadan observe that, as an intermediary, a MHTA has, on various occasions, influenced the American government to consult with it specifically instead of making unilateral decisions that would affect the Mexican-American community.\textsuperscript{326} For instance, in 1996, the Mexican government wanted to make changes to the “two for one” program; this generated a considerable amount of dissent among the MHTAs. In this case, the Zacatecan federation spoke with one voice and threatened to withhold development projects; the Mexican government was subsequently forced to compromise with it. The Mexican government clearly regards the diaspora as an “economic asset”.\textsuperscript{327} In 2001, the Institute of Mexicans Abroad acknowledged MHTAs as being ‘among the principal leaders of the diaspora.’\textsuperscript{328}

In the limited literature concerning the political influence of MHTAs, most scholars focus on the relationship between the MHTAs and the Mexican government. Their consensus is that these associations have some degree of influence when it comes to the Mexican government. However, the “political posture” of MHTAs in the US is challenging to ‘trace because they do not occur in the context of a structured interaction between the government and civic organizations.’\textsuperscript{329} What we can discern is that MHTAs reinforce the influence resources of the Mexican-American diaspora. They act as the centre of the diaspora with respect to organization and mobilization. MHTAs unite Mexicans in the US, particularly in the increasing exercise of

\textsuperscript{325} Fox, ‘Mapping Mexican Migrant Civil Society.’
\textsuperscript{326} Zabin and Rabadan, ‘Mexican Hometown Associations and Mexican Immigrant Political Empowerment in Los Angeles.’
\textsuperscript{327} García-Acevedo, ‘The [re]construction of diasporic policies in Mexico.’
\textsuperscript{328} Ibid
\textsuperscript{329} Zabin and Rabadan, ‘Mexican Hometown Associations and Mexican Immigrant Political Empowerment in Los Angeles.’
their political influence.

In the 1980s, the amended VRA began to further affect the social mobility of Mexicans, as well as their political opportunities. The number of Mexican-American voters expanded significantly, which resulted in an increase in the number of Mexican-American representatives elected.\textsuperscript{330} This trend increased following the enactment of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which proposed to ‘legalize the status of undocumented immigrants who had worked in the US for at least five years.’\textsuperscript{331} The naturalization of 2.5 million Mexicans was eased as a result of IRCA. The undocumented immigrants first needed to learn English and American civics in order to eventually acquire naturalization and US citizenship. As a result of IRCA, Mexican-Americans were able to move freely throughout the US in search of employment. IRCA was portrayed as the answer to illegal immigration.\textsuperscript{332} After the Act was passed, undocumented migration decreased for a few years, but in the longer run, it did not profoundly change undocumented immigration movements to the US.\textsuperscript{333} Illegal migration continued unabated. Subsequently, the US Congress significantly increased funding for the Border Patrol.

The IRCA represented a significant change in political participation by the diaspora, which helped to reduce the distance that previously existed between foreign-born and native Mexican-Americans.\textsuperscript{334} It also led to an increase in the attention paid by the Mexican government to the agenda of Mexican-Americans. Leaders within the Mexican-American diaspora started to capitalize on their new power and use their positions to protect community interests. As a result, discrimination against Mexican-Americans has been reduced, and educational, employment, and political opportunities for these people have been expanded.\textsuperscript{335}

\textsuperscript{330} Shain, *Marketing the American Creed Abroad*, 184.
\textsuperscript{331} Esman, *Diasporas in the Contemporary World*, 91.
\textsuperscript{332} Leiken, ‘Enchilada Lite,’ 17.
\textsuperscript{333} Bedolla, 182.
\textsuperscript{334} Shain, *Marketing the American Creed Abroad*, 184.
\textsuperscript{335} Ibid, 184.
Mexican-American and Latino organizations have played a significant role in this respect. Mexican-Americans are finally being included in established American institutions.

In 1986, the Border Patrol apprehended a record number of Mexicans trying to cross the American border: 1.7 million. This essentially meant that the Border Patrol detained roughly three Mexicans a minute every day of the week.\(^{336}\) In response to this situation, IRCA strengthened border controls and established penalties for people that employed illegal aliens. However, this did not serve as a deterrent, and the number of illegal immigrants entering the country each year did not diminish. Moreover, the majority of Mexican-Americans that accepted amnesty brought their families to live with them in the US, which in turn increased the size of the “legalized” Mexican-American diaspora.\(^{337}\) IRCA essentially increased migration from Mexico to the US.\(^{338}\) In the 1990s, Mexicans in the US started to move throughout the country in search of job opportunities, instead of just remaining in the southwest. There were approximately 10 million legally documented Mexicans, as well as roughly 10 million illegal Mexicans in the US at this time. It is estimated that in the 1990s, close to 500,000 Mexicans came to the US annually.

In 1990, Congress passed the Immigration Act, which augmented the quantity of available legal immigrant visas, in hopes that this would reduce illegal immigration. In 1996, Congress passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. Among other things, this Act reduced immigrants’ prospects to appeal deportation orders and ensured the mandatory detention of illegal aliens.\(^{339}\) The Border Patrol’s manpower was doubled as a result of this Act. However, these laws have not had much of an impact on the numbers of undocumented migrants to America.

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\(^{336}\) Hufbauer and Schott, *NAFTA Revisited*, 446.

\(^{337}\) Esman, *Diasporas in the Contemporary World*, 91.

\(^{338}\) Hufbauer and Schott, *NAFTA Revisited*, 446.

\(^{339}\) Bedolla, 182.
Although estimates vary, according to Jeffrey Passel from the Pew Hispanic Center, a total of 11.2 million illegal immigrants were living in America in 2010. This figure was roughly the same the previous year. The stability observed in 2010 follows a two-year decline from a 12 million peak in 2007. In 2009, the number declined to 11.1 million; this was the first momentous reversal in two decades of growth. The number of illegal immigrants in the workforce stayed the same for both 2009 and 2010. As with the overall population, the number of illegal immigrants in the workforce had gone down in 2009 from 8.4 million in 2007. As of March 2010, illegal immigrants made up 3.7 per cent of America’s population and 5.2 per cent of its labour force.

From March 2009 to March 2010, illegal immigrants gave birth to eight per cent of babies. The decline in the number of illegal immigrants in 2009 from its peak in 2007 seems to be due to a drop in the number of people coming from Mexico, which decreased to 6.5 million in 2010 from its peak in 2007 of seven million. Furthermore, according to a recent Pew Hispanic Center publication, the migration flow from Mexico to the US has essentially stopped. Fewer Mexicans migrate north because the rewards have decreased while the risks have augmented. Among other things, the authors of the report claim that the standstill seems to be the result of the enfeebled job and housing markets in the US, increased border enforcement, and the intensification in deportations. It is likely that Mexican immigration will continue when the economy recovers, but even if it does not, Mexican immigrants are still the largest group of illegal immigrants, numbering approximately 60 per cent of all unauthorized immigrants.

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340 Some estimates are as low as 10 million, while others are above 12 million.
342 Ibid
345 Passel, Cohn, and Gonzalez-Barrera, ‘Net Migration from Mexico Falls to Zero- and Perhaps Less.’
As a result of Mexican-Americans’ strong culture and ties to their homeland, many people in the US fear that Mexican-Americans will not assimilate into American society, and will create disunity in the country. According to Shain, however, although people tend to assume the opposite, the connection between immigrants and their homeland generates an inclination toward assimilation, which clearly works in favour of American unity. While numerous Mexican immigrants are worried about their communities in Mexico, this does not diminish their participation in American society—it actually appears to reinforce it. Mexican migrants tend to start their civic participation by assisting their communities in Mexico, but this progressively translates to participation in their new communities in the US. The majority of the Mexican-American diaspora has integrated into US society. Mexican-Americans ‘have a strong sense of themselves as Americans, and their ethnicity is part of the American ethos.’ Similarly, DeSipio states that there is one element that links all Mexican-American organizations, and arguably, all Mexican-Americans: ‘the desire, if not the demand, for full and complete inclusion for U.S. citizens of Mexican origin.’ Over time, he claims, many have argued for the extension of this inclusion to non-US (Mexican-American) citizens as well.

Immigration as an Issue in US Politics

The topic of immigration, and especially illegal immigration, is a contentious one in both the US and Mexico. The US holds illegal immigration as a top foreign policy priority in its relationship with Mexico. Christian Joppke states that political elites in the US have always struggled to effectively deal with illegal immigration. As a result of this inability on the part of political elites, the largest “anti-immigrant backlash” in over half a century occurred in the US in

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346 Shain, *Marketing the American Creed Abroad*, 194.
348 Shain, *Marketing the American Creed Abroad*, 195.
In November of that year, Californians passed Proposition 187 or “Save Our State”, which prevented undocumented immigrants from receiving public health care, education, welfare, and other social services provided by the state. Various actors came out in direct opposition to Proposition 187, including Mexican-American organizations and the Mexican government. This proposition led to an increase in political involvement by both Latinos and Latino associations. Voter registration drives took place, as did mass demonstrations against the initiative.

MHTAs actively performed a visible role throughout the intense political conflict that ensued as a result of Proposition 187. The support of these associations took many different forms, such as contributing funds to “Taxpayers against Prop. 187,” the chief political campaign against the proposition; partaking in the October 1994 street protests; and encouraging the vote among their members and colleagues. The MHTAs in LA, as well as many other Mexican-American organizations, provided financial backing for the movement against Proposition 187. Mexicans were predominantly targeted by the issue surrounding Proposition 187 as the main cause of a variety of economic and social difficulties in California. Many people stereotyped Mexicans as uneducated and lazy; it was easy to blame them for the state’s economic and social problems. MHTA leaders met with Mexican-American and Latino politicians, and the latter convinced the former that it was not just undocumented immigrants that were at risk. These politicians managed to unite the MHTAs in LA and encourage them to support the campaign against the initiative. Zabin and Rabadan maintain that this was the only time Latino political representatives contacted MHTAs to request their support.

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351 ‘California, here we still come,’ *The Economist* (November 12, 1994): 60.
352 Garcia and Sanchez, 141.
353 Zabin and Rabadan, ‘Mexican Hometown Associations and Mexican Immigrant Political Empowerment in Los Angeles.’
354 Ibid
for a particular cause. The Mexican Consulate assisted in this partnership by convening meetings between MHTA leaders and Latino politicians.

Various factors unite voters, such as issues, events, community assemblies, civic associations, and political parties. There are certain issues that clearly encourage the Mexican-American diaspora, and all Latinos, to unite and mobilize together. As a result of Proposition 187, Mexican-American and Latino voter turnout in California increased, as did their share of the vote. It also aided in the expansion of the Latino constituency as a result of the upsurge in recently naturalized Latino citizens. Furthermore, since the initiative was characterized as a move against Mexican immigrants, a significant number of non-citizens decided to commence the naturalization process. Because of Proposition 187, both native-born and newly naturalized Mexican-Americans and Latinos voted in high numbers between 1994 and 1998. The Mexican government had condemned the proposition, and supported the diaspora in its fight against it. The condemnation was to be expected, claims Yossi Shain, considering the Mexican government’s newfound goal of courting and encouraging its diaspora to lobby US politicians on its behalf.

Although it was later ruled unconstitutional, Proposition 187 initially passed with the support of approximately 60 per cent of voters in California. A total of 81 per cent of Anglos supported the proposition, while only 23 per cent of Latinos supported it. The initiative not only mobilized Latinos and initiated an intensified political consciousness among the Latino community, but it also had an enduring effect on the levels of participation among Latinos. For instance, the ethnically charged propositions backed by the Republican Party in California during

357 Zabin and Rabandan, ‘Mexican Hometown Associations and Mexican Immigrant Political Empowerment in Los Angeles.’
360 Shain, Marketing the American Creed Abroad, 190.
the 1990s reversed the political trend among Latinos; while it had been more common for them to support the Republican Party, Latinos shifted their allegiances to the Democratic Party as a result of these initiatives.361

According to The Economist, after Proposition 187 Latinos were determined to fight at the ballot box. Adrian D. Pantoja, Ricardo Ramirez and Gary M. Segura state that individuals who naturalize because of such political events are more inclined to vote than other immigrants from their ethnicity. These scholars regard naturalization in an antagonistic political environment as a ‘political act that tells us something about the behavioral propensities of those who undertake such a process.’362 Immigrants who naturalize in such a politically charged environment tend to participate in politics more than those who naturalized in different environments and those who were born in the US. Mexican-Americans are becoming more politically active citizens, and naturalization rates have increased as a result of Proposition 187. The Economist also states that a comparable, and nationwide surge has been enduring as a result of the anti-immigrant media turmoil of 2006.363

On April 10, 2006, the “national day of action” or “A Day Without Immigrants”, hundreds of thousands of people protested against HR 4437, or the Sensenbrenner Bill. This bill was passed by the House in 2005 and made illegal presence in the US a crime. Up until this point, illegal entry into the US was a crime, but to stay there without documents was not.364 Furthermore, the law would have forbidden providing assistance to illegal immigrants. It also

364 Bedolla, 180.
called for building 700 miles of security fence along the US-Mexico border.\textsuperscript{365}

More than three million immigrants participated in these protests and marches, the majority of whom were originally from Mexico. They protested peaceably for widespread immigration reform that would decriminalize the status of illegal immigrants in the US.\textsuperscript{366} According to Jonathan Fox, ‘never before had Mexican migrants demanded such a visible role in a national policy discussion.’\textsuperscript{367} Protests were organized and marches occurred in various American cities, and many of the protesters waved Mexican and American flags. On May 1, 2006, between 1.2 and two million people partook in organized rallies in 63 American cities.\textsuperscript{368} Many scholars perceived the protests and marches in the spring of 2006 as the mass arrival of Mexican migrants into the American public sphere.\textsuperscript{369} The significant surge of Mexican civic participation illustrated the beginning of Mexican immigrants as political actors.\textsuperscript{370} The sheer size of the demonstrations took both the media and politicians by surprise. These protests constitute the largest mobilization to have transpired in the US since the civil rights movement, as well as the biggest united political effort of the immigrant population in US history.\textsuperscript{371}

As in 1994, MHTAs and Latino organizations played a role in the opposition to HR 4437. As Bedolla and others argue, the marches would not have occurred without the financial and organizational support of MHTAs and other Mexican-American organizations.\textsuperscript{372} Without the organizational foundation established by the MHTAs, the Mexican-American and Latino

\textsuperscript{366} Bada, Fox, and Selee, \textit{Invisible No More. Mexican Migrant Civic Participation in the United States}.
\textsuperscript{367} Fox, ‘Mapping Mexican Migrant Civil Society.’
\textsuperscript{368} García, \textit{Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests}, 137.
\textsuperscript{369} Bada, Fox, and Selee, \textit{Invisible No More. Mexican Migrant Civic Participation in the United States}.
\textsuperscript{370} Fox, ‘Mapping Mexican Migrant Civil Society.’
\textsuperscript{371} Garcia and Sanchez, 146.
\textsuperscript{372} Bedolla, 185.
communities could not have reacted to HR 4437 in such a swift and methodical way.\textsuperscript{373} The opposition to this initiative required a great deal of effort and coordination, as well as a significant amount of money. Established Mexican-American organizations worked with other organizations and groups, such as the Catholic Church, labor unions, and immigration advocacy groups, to create a synergy ‘that resulted in an underlying organizational dynamic.’\textsuperscript{374} Many scholars thought these protests were spontaneous, but they were organized and coordinated by MHTAs, Mexican-American organizations, and community activists.\textsuperscript{375} These organizations exemplify a crucial social network, one that can clearly be mobilized when there are matters of importance to the Mexican-American community.\textsuperscript{376}

Subsequent to the marches, a campaign was established, sharing the name of one of the most popular slogans used throughout the two-month period in which the protests and marches took place: \textit{Hoy Marchamos, Mañana Votamos} (today we march, tomorrow we vote). The goal of this campaign was to register Mexican-Americans, and all other Latinos, to vote, and to encourage them to do so in the 2008 presidential elections. Since 2006, naturalization applications have increased dramatically: as a result, one-fourth of the Latino electorate became naturalized citizens, and these citizens vote at a frequency of 8 to 10 per cent higher than native-born Americans.\textsuperscript{377} There is indication of increased support for foreign-born Mexicans, and enhanced unity has directly led to increased rates of naturalization.\textsuperscript{378}

California’s politicized environment in the 1990s motivated increased voting rates.\textsuperscript{379} As a result of Proposition 187, Mexican-Americans, and Latinos in general, were mobilized and

\textsuperscript{373} Ibid, 185.
\textsuperscript{374} García, \textit{Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests}, 137.
\textsuperscript{376} Bedolla, 185.
\textsuperscript{377} Garcia, \textit{Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests}, 100.
\textsuperscript{378} Ibid, 100.
\textsuperscript{379} Fox, ‘Mapping Mexican Migrant Civil Society.’
united in opposition to the initiative. They were encouraged to naturalize and vote. Furthermore, studies indicate that Latinos who became naturalized after 1994 and subsequently registered to vote are still more likely to vote than Latinos who registered to vote throughout less politically intense times.\textsuperscript{380} Mexican migrant civic participation is gradually increasing. Throughout the 1990s and in the mid-2000s, Participation went beyond MHTAs and other organizations, and attracted large numbers of typically unaffiliated immigrants, which ‘suggests an even greater breadth of civic commitment beyond formal participation in existing organizations.’\textsuperscript{381}

In 2010, Arizona introduced SB 1070, a law against illegal immigration that requires law enforcement to ascertain the immigration status of people in the state. More specifically, it compels the police ‘to determine a person’s immigration status if there is reasonable suspicion that the person is not in the US legally.’\textsuperscript{382} The law also makes it a state misdemeanor for noncitizens to fail to produce immigration documentation.\textsuperscript{383} As a result, Latinos became further politicized and demonstrated more interest in the midterm elections held in the fall of 2010.\textsuperscript{384}

When political officials have acted contrary to Latino interests, as occurred with Proposition 187, HR 4437, and SB 1070, this tends to result in the significant mobilization of Latino voters that then vote against the specific candidate or ballot referendum they consider to be anti-Latino.\textsuperscript{385} According to Garcia and Sanchez, an example of voting against potentially damaging legislation was apparent in the rhetoric of Latinos subsequent to the proposed immigration legislation in 2006.\textsuperscript{386} As noted, one theme of the mass marches in 2006 was \textit{Hoy Marchamos, Mañana Votamos!} If these massive protests that united millions of Mexican migrants are any indication, it is probable that the following decade will experience a massive

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Bedolla, 186.
\item Fox, ‘Mapping Mexican Migrant Civil Society.’
\item Garcia, \textit{Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests}, 149.
\item Garcia, \textit{Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests}, 158.
\item Garcia and Sanchez, 134.
\item Ibid, 134.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
growth of civic participation on behalf of Mexican migrants that will continue to transform American civic life.\textsuperscript{387}

The issue of immigration continues to incite emotions and intense debate on both sides of the border. Immigration is also one of the issues that unite Mexican-Americans and mobilize them to vote and become politically engaged. After each of the three events I discussed, Latino mobilization increased; this was reflected in the fact that Latinos were encouraged to naturalize and to vote. MHTAs play a significant role when it comes to both mobilization and naturalization. The mobilization campaigns they organize are increasingly successful. According to Melissa R. Michelson, whose research focuses on Latino voter mobilization, Latinos are extremely amenable to mobilization campaigns.\textsuperscript{388} Mexican-Americans respond to mobilization, and this mobilization occurs spontaneously as a result of certain events or specific efforts, exemplified by the work of MHTAs.

### Drugs

Another major foreign policy issue-area the US and Mexico share is drugs. The illegal trade in narcotics and illegal immigration are two priorities for the US in its relationship with Mexico, and the issues are interconnected. They involve border security, and often it is the drug gangs that engage in human trafficking. Between 2006 and 2011, more than 40,000 people were killed as a result of the conflict surrounding the drug-trafficking organizations.\textsuperscript{389} Many Americans, however, regard border security as the struggle to keep the US free of unauthorized migrants, with a lesser concern for the illegal movement of drugs from Mexico and guns from the US.\textsuperscript{390} The majority of the illegal drugs used in the US come from its southern neighbour, and the majority of the Mexican drug cartels’ income is generated as a result of sales to the US. Mark

\textsuperscript{387} Bada, Fox, and Selee, \textit{Invisible No More. Mexican Migrant Civic Participation in the United States}.
\textsuperscript{388} Melissa R. Michelson, ‘Meeting the Challenge of Latino Voter Mobilization,’ \textit{The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science} 601 (2005): 85.
\textsuperscript{389} ‘Border security. Crossing the line,’ \textit{The Economist} (September 24\textsuperscript{th} -30\textsuperscript{th}, 2011): 38.
\textsuperscript{390} Ibid, 38.
Kleiman argues that the US and Mexico do not maintain balanced positions on the binational drug issue; US demand fuels Mexico’s drug wars, whereas that violence has minimal impact on the US.\footnote{Mark Kleiman, ‘Surgical Strikes in the Drug Wars. Smarter Policies for Both Sides of the Border,’ \textit{Foreign Affairs} (September/October 2011): 90.} Essentially, if the US stopped buying drugs from Mexico, Mexico’s drug-related violence would diminish significantly.

The US has been assisting Mexico with its “war on drugs” for years. In 2007, George W. Bush concluded a bilateral agreement with the Mexican government, the \textit{Iniciativa Merida} (the Merida Initiative), a security pact that provided Mexico with $830 million in 2009 alone. This is by far the largest American foreign aid program. Through the \textit{Iniciativa Merida}, the US principally provides financial and technical support to Mexico in an attempt to decrease the movement of drugs across the American border.\footnote{Hal Klepak, ‘Mexico: Current and Future Political, Economic and Security Trends,’ Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, http://www.cdfai.org/PDF/Mexico%20Current%20and%20Future%20Political,%20Economic%20and%20Security%20Trends.pdf (accessed August 19, 2011).} The Obama administration has since renewed the agreement with the Mexican government, and has provided additional funding. Fears are mounting that the drug-related violence will cross over the American border, and that American companies and citizens will be directly affected and possibly targeted.\footnote{‘Felipe Calderón and Barack Obama meet,’ \textit{The Economist}, http://www.economist.com/node/12923445 (accessed November 1, 2011).}

Both countries work together to combat this increasing problem, although many Americans think they should do less to help with “Mexico’s problem”, while many in Mexico think the US should assume more responsibility. American intelligence experts see drug gangs in Mexico as the principal organized crime threat to the US.\footnote{Ibid} The US-Mexico Binational Council argues that the absence of a national discussion over the country’s security issues has made
pervasive the longstanding notion that security threats are essentially being exported by America and defensive measures forced on Mexico.\footnote{U.S.-Mexico Border Security and the Evolving Security Relationship. Recommendations for Policymakers.}

It is clear that the topic of drugs is also extremely contentious in both the US and Mexico. The third major foreign policy issue-area that both countries share is trade, which is the focus of this dissertation. This issue-area will be further discussed in the following chapter on Mexico, the kin state. NAFTA, and trade in general, will be examined in more detail in Chapter 7.

**The Data: Latinos in the US**

As rightly stated by Sheffer, a numerical approximation of the range of diasporas is necessary for any additional examination of the “phenomenon”.\footnote{Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*, 99.} However, it is often difficult to obtain a reliable estimate of the numbers of any diaspora. Sheffer claims that the absence of precise data on diasporas and the uncertainty in the statistics that are available are related to what he calls *data politics*. This term, and the fact that it is difficult to obtain numerical estimates, indicates how sensitive this issue is, politically and socially, for the host states, the homelands, and the diasporas themselves. Sheffer claims that the fact that these data are often unavailable and inaccurate generally has nothing to do with issues involving collecting and processing. The problem is usually the result of methodical policies of home states and host states meant to suppress or misrepresent information about diasporas; ‘that is, to conceal its actual impressive magnitude, rapid growth, and emerging significance.’\footnote{Ibid, 99.} Although a significant amount of the Mexican-American population is illegal (some estimates put the number at half of the total population of Mexicans in the US), data are available on it. The 2000 and 2010 US Census have been extremely helpful in identifying the composition and scale of this diaspora.

As noted by Huntington, contiguity is a factor that differentiates Mexican immigration from others. The US is currently facing a considerable flood of people from a poor, neighbouring...
state with more than one-third the population of the US. This is a unique situation, for both America and the world. No other developed country has as long a land frontier with a less-developed country. Furthermore, the income gap between both countries is the most significant between any two adjacent countries. As a result of this contiguity, Mexican-Americans are able to remain in close contact with friends and family back in Mexico; other immigrants do not have such a relationship with their kin and home state.

The National Survey on Latinos on America (1999) conducted by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, The Washington Post, and Harvard University found that 40 per cent of all Latinos in the US are born in the US, while 60 per cent are born in another country. Almost 60 per cent of the Latinos claiming to have been born outside the US indicated Mexico to be their homeland. The Latino population has been growing rapidly in the US. By 2050, Latinos may comprise 25 per cent of the US population. According to the 2010 US Census, a total of 308.75 million people lived in the US, as of April 1, 2010. A total of 50.5 million of those people, or 16 per cent, are of Latino origin. Latinos are by far the largest minority group in the US, and Mexicans are the greatest single component of Latino immigration.

The 2010 Census confirmed that the following six states have populations of one million or more Latinos: California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, and Arizona. The figures can be seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Latinos in California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, and Arizona (2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>14 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>9.5 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>4.2 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>3.4 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>2 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>1.8 million</td>
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398 Huntington, ‘The Hispanic Challenge.’
Furthermore, between 2000 and 2010, the population of Latinos grew in all 50 states. Latinos comprised the majority of the population in 82 out of 3,143 counties, which accounted for 16 per cent of the total Latino population. Among those 3,143 counties, the population of Latinos at least doubled in size in a total of 912. There were 469 counties with at least 10,000 Latinos.

In the southern US, the majority of the population is Latino in one county in Florida (Miami-Dade), and in a total of 51 counties in Texas. Altogether, 36 per cent of Latinos live in this part of the country. Significant growth occurred in this part of the US; the Latino population grew by 57 per cent, and made up 16 per cent of the total population. In the west, the majority of the population is Latino in two counties in Arizona (Santa Cruz and Yuma), two in Colorado (Conejos and Costilla), and two in Washington (Adams and Franklin). In this part of the country, the Latino population is also the majority in nine counties in California and 12 in New Mexico. Furthermore, 41 per cent of Latinos live in the western US, and account for 29 per cent of the total population in this region. It is the only region in the US where Latinos exceed 16 per cent, which is the national level. Moreover, in the west, the Latino population grew by a total of 34 per cent; this was more than double the increase of the total population in this part of the country.

In the mid-west, the majority of the population is Latino in two counties in Kansas (Ford and Seward); a total of nine per cent of Latinos live in this part of the country. The mid-west experienced a growth of 49 per cent in its Latino population, and Latinos accounted for seven per cent of the total population in this region. Finally, in the northeast of the US, the majority of the population is Latino in one county in New York (Bronx), and 14 per cent of Latinos live in this part of the country. Furthermore, the population of Latinos grew by 33 per cent in the northeast, while the overall population grew by only three per cent. In the northwest, Latinos accounted for 13 per cent of the population.

402 Ibid, 11.
The 2010 Census recorded the ‘most massive participation movement’ ever observed in the US.\(^{403}\) The 1970 US Census initially introduced the question regarding Latino origin. Such a question has been part of every census since this time. The definition of “Hispanic or Latino origin” that was used in the 2010 Census is the following: “Hispanic or Latino” refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.\(^{404}\)

As stated, the population of Latinos has grown significantly since 2000, when they numbered 35.3 million, and accounted for 13 per cent of the total American population. Between 2000 and 2010, Latinos increased by 15.2 million- 43 per cent, or four times the growth rate of the total US population- which accounted for more than half of the 27.3 million increase in the total American population.\(^{405}\) The Economist claims that the “Latinisation change” is the most significant demographic change in the US. By 2021, Anglos will become a minority in preschools, and by 2042, they will become a minority in the general population. Furthermore, by 2025, only Mexico and Brazil will have more people living within their borders that are of Latin American descent. In the near future, therefore, the US will be the third-largest Latin American country.\(^{406}\) The Latino population will have tripled by 2050.

According to The Economist, the Latino share of the electorate is still not as significant as it should be, considering their numbers. However, as more Latinos register to vote, they will increasingly influence policy more each year.\(^{407}\) Furthermore, considering the large numbers of

\(^{405}\) Ibid, 2.
\(^{406}\) Ambrosio, 115.
\(^{407}\) ‘The Hispanicisation of America. The law of large numbers.’ The Economist (September 11\(^{\text{th}}\)-17\(^{\text{th}}\), 2010): 36.
Latinos throughout the US, it is just a matter of time before the numbers ‘translate into political power of the sort that Latinos enjoy in California and Texas.’

The Mexican-American Diaspora

In 2010, people of Mexican origin in the US encompassed the largest Latino group, representing 63 per cent of the total Latino population in the US (up from 58 per cent in 2000). The second and third largest Latino groups in the US are the Puerto Ricans and the Cubans, and neither of these groups compares to the Mexican group in numbers. There are 4,150,862 Puerto Ricans in the US, and 1,631,001 Cubans. From 2000 to 2010, Mexicans comprised roughly three-quarters of the 15.2 million increase in the Latino population. From the last census in 2000 until the most recent one, the population of Mexicans in the US grew by 54 per cent, from 20.6 million (2000) to 31.8 million (2010). Mexicans in this statistical profile are individuals who identified themselves as Latinos of Mexican origin- so they are either Mexican immigrants or they trace their family ancestry to Mexico.

The Mexican-American diaspora has grown significantly since the 1990s. The majority of Mexicans (64 per cent) arrived to the US from Mexico in 1990 or afterwards. During the 1990s, the population expanded rapidly, from 4.3 million to 9.2 million. In addition to its significant growth, the Mexican migrant population in the US reveals other important socio-economic and socio-demographic elements. According to the Pew Hispanic Center and the United States Census Bureau analysis, 36 per cent of Mexicans in the US are foreign born; this is the case with only 13 per cent of the total US population and 37 per cent of all Latinos.

408 Ibid, 36.
410 Ennis, et al., 2.
413 Escala-Rabadán, Luis, et al., 127.
Approximately 23 per cent of Mexicans that have immigrated to the US are actually American citizens. A total of 50 per cent of Mexican-Americans have lived in the US for less than 12 years (this figure is 45 per cent for Latinos in general). A total of 33 per cent of Mexicans have been in the US between 13 and 24 years (this number is 34 per cent for all Latinos). Twelve per cent of Mexicans have been in the US between 25 and 36 years, and three per cent have been in the country for more than 37 years (for Latinos, those numbers are 14 per cent and five per cent, respectively).  

Mexicans in the US are younger than all Latinos in this country, as well as the US population overall. Mexicans in the US have a median age of 25; this is young in comparison to the median age of the US population, which stands at 36. However, it is close to the median age for all Latinos, which is 27. Women number 44 per cent of all Mexican immigrants in the US. Altogether, 47 per cent of Mexicans are married, whereas 45 per cent of Latinos are married. A total of 39 per cent of Mexican mothers, aged 15 to 44, are unmarried. The figure is 35 per cent for women in the US overall. Alarmingly, the frequency of childbirth for Mexican teenaged women surpasses every other group: 93 births for every 1,000 Mexican girls in comparison to 65 births for every 1,000 African-American girls, 27 births for every 1,000 Caucasian girls, and 17 births for every 1,000 Asian girls.  

Mexican-Americans are currently America’s biggest ethnic community; their numbers continue to increase by both immigration and natural increase.  

Mexican-Americans, for the most part, are poor, young, uneducated, and unskilled. Approximately 63 per cent of Mexicans are competent in the English language. However, 37 per cent of Mexicans in the US that are five years old or older claim to not speak English very well. It is not surprising that Mexican-

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**Footnotes:**

414 ‘National Survey on Latinos in America (1999).’
416 Esman, Diasporas in the Contemporary World, 95.
417 Ibid, 93.
Americans with a strong English proficiency are 13.5 per cent more probable to participate politically.\textsuperscript{418}

Tony Smith claims that most Mexican-Americans are uneducated and do not possess any employable skills.\textsuperscript{419} Roughly 89 per cent of Latino high school students state that it is important to go to college and attain a degree, but only 48 per cent actually plan to attend college themselves.\textsuperscript{420} It is more likely that Latino students will drop out of high school than others. In 2007, Latino students were awarded only 7.5 per cent of bachelor degrees, although this group composed 15 per cent of the population in the US that year.\textsuperscript{421} For decades, education has been a basic barrier to Latino empowerment.\textsuperscript{422}

When compared to other Latinos, Mexican immigrants have the lowest education levels. Out of those who are 25 years or older, only 33.8 per cent finish high school, and only nine per cent have at least obtained a bachelor degree.\textsuperscript{423} In Mexico, a child is legally required to attend school only until the eighth grade. This is partly why a significant number of both legal (15 per cent) and illegal immigrants (32 per cent) have not completed the ninth grade.\textsuperscript{424} In comparison, only two per cent of native-born Americans have not completed the ninth grade. Among those students who graduate high school, less than half acquire jobs that allow them to move to middle-class status. Within the Mexican-American community exists a youth culture that scorns education as “uncool,” promoting a negative mentality based on apparent discrimination and

\textsuperscript{418} Matt A. Barreto and José Muñoz, ‘Reexamining the “Politics of In-Between”: Political Participation Among Mexican Immigrants in the United States,’ \textit{Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences} 25, 4 (November 2003): 442.
\textsuperscript{419} Smith, \textit{Foreign Attachments}, 148.
\textsuperscript{420} ‘Hispanic higher education. Closing the gap,’ \textit{The Economist} (November 7th-13th 2009): 33.
\textsuperscript{421} Ibid, 33.
\textsuperscript{423} Dockterman, ‘Statistical Profile. Hispanics of Mexican Origin in the United States, 2009.’
injuries to their individual and communal dignity. Furthermore, in some barrios, Mexican-American youth that dropped out of school govern the streets of poor neighborhoods, where petty crime and drug trafficking are prolific.

Huntington argues that illegality is a factor that makes Mexican immigration distinct from other immigration. The legal status of the Mexican-American population adds to their disadvantaged profile. According to Harold Brackman and Steven P. Erie, it is also another barrier to their empowerment. The rate of naturalization of Mexicans is the lowest among migrants, at 20.3 per cent. Some studies have shown that in the US, there are 10.3 million undocumented migrants, and out of those, more than half (57 per cent) or 5.9 million are of Mexican origin. Illegal immigration to the US is overwhelmingly a Mexican phenomenon.

Another factor mentioned by Huntington is persistence. Currently, more than 90 per cent of the people detained by the Border Patrol in the US are Mexican. Many immigrants come to the US from Mexico to settle permanently, but considerable numbers move both ways across the US-Mexico border. Mexican-US migration is also seasonal, with greater flows from Mexico to the US in the spring and summer, and greater flows back to Mexico in the fall and winter. Of all sending countries, Mexico provides the most immigrants to the US. Altogether, the country accounts for 31 per cent of all immigrants in the US in 2007, in comparison to 28 per cent in 2000, and 22 per cent in 1990.

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425 Esman, Diasporas in the Contemporary World, 93.
426 Ibid, 94.
428 Escala-Rabadán, et al., ‘Mexican Migrant Civic and Political Participation in the U.S.’
429 Huntington, ‘The Hispanic Challenge.’
430 Paul and Paul, Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy, 4.
As of 2002, in purchasing power parity terms, America’s gross domestic product per capita was roughly four times that of Mexico. Huntington argues that if that discrepancy were halved, the economic motivations for migration to the US might decline considerably. However, in order to narrow the difference between the two countries to that degree in the relatively near future, accelerated economic growth would need to occur in Mexico, and to exceed that of the US. It could be argued, therefore, that the US has an interest in helping Mexico improve economically, via trade, since this would reduce the flow of migrants, both legal and illegal, coming from Mexico.

Poverty continues to plague Mexican-American migrants. Mexican-Americans have the highest level of poverty (24 per cent) in comparison to other Latinos (23 per cent), and in comparison to the general American population (14 per cent). Approximately 18.9 per cent of Mexican men and 26.3 per cent of Mexican women are living in poverty. While the average earnings for the American population were $28,900 in 2009, the average annual personal earnings for Mexicans were only $20,000. Latapí and Janssen state that more than a third of Mexicans, or 34.4 per cent, make between $10,000 and $20,000 a year. Furthermore, 34 per cent of Mexican migrants do not have health insurance, in comparison to 31 per cent of Latinos, and 15 per cent of the overall American population. When asked in the National Survey on Latinos in America (1999), an overwhelming majority of Mexicans—83 per cent (the figure was identical for Latinos in general) indicated that they thought the government should provide health insurance.

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433 Huntington, ‘The Hispanic Challenge.’
434 Ibid
437 Agustín Escobar Latapí and Eric Janssen, ‘Migration, the diaspora and development: The case of Mexico,’ International Institute for Labour Studies, http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inst/publications/discussion/dp16706.pdf (accessed June 1, 2010), 17. The numbers were actually higher in the National Survey on Latinos in America (1999); a total of 39 per cent of Mexicans claimed to make less than $20,000 a year, before taxes. The figure for Latinos in general is 34 per cent.
for people presently uninsured. Similar questions indicated that Mexicans (and Latinos in general) believe that the government should play a large role in the social welfare of its citizens.

The Mexican-American diaspora is often characterized as a labour diaspora. Only four per cent of Mexican immigrants are employed in agriculture. Roughly 50 per cent of Mexican migrants work in the service sector, and 40 per cent are employed in manufacturing. Labour diasporas generally consist of individuals who are not educated or skilled. They migrate from their homeland to search for increased opportunities for themselves and their families. In their host countries, as a result of their limited education and skills, they tend to gravitate to the most menial jobs in the labour force. Mexican-Americans usually perform the most difficult, tedious, and dangerous jobs, and are paid minimal wages in return. Angelo M. Codevilla claims that Mexicans are contributing to the American economy in ways that the rest of the population cannot or will not do. Essentially, that population is aging, and ever-smaller numbers of young people are persuaded to work in jobs requiring manual labour.

A total of 68.6 per cent of Mexican immigrants are between the ages of 15 and 44. Mexicans between the ages of 45 to 64 make up 20.8 per cent of the immigrant population. These migrants accept less pay than do the local workers, and this creates animosity between the two groups. The former are generally accused of stealing the latter’s jobs and weakening labour standards. Mexican migrants sometimes experience discrimination when they attempt to compete with the local workers for better housing and jobs. Migrants and their children generally remain in this position for several generations, until integration and education allow them to eventually move into the middle class and to positions of prestige and power.

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438 According to the National Survey on Latinos in America (1999), the majority of Mexicans (64 per cent) come to the US for economic reasons. Another 28 per cent come to join family members; it is arguable that the majority of those family members are also in the US primarily for economic reasons.
439 Esman, Diasporas in the Contemporary World, 17.
Summary

In their classic study, *Beyond the Melting Pot: the Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*, Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan state that immigrants to the US lose their distinct language, culture, and customs primarily in the second generation, and more thoroughly in the third generation.\(^{441}\) With each passing generation, immigrants also become more educated and more skilled. Although the authors were referring specifically to the Puerto Ricans, one can perceive these changes presently with respect to the Mexican-American diaspora.

The second and third generations of Mexican-Americans tend to ‘acculturate to the mainstream popular culture and participate in the American way of life.’\(^{442}\) They become competent in the English language; however, they also diverge from the standard pattern by conserving their proficiency in Spanish.\(^{443}\) Second and third-generation Mexican-Americans who were raised speaking English but have learned Spanish as adults tend to encourage their children to become fluent in the latter.\(^{444}\) Therefore, Mexican-Americans differ from other immigrants with respect to their language and culture, and their desire to maintain them throughout the generations. Many of these Mexican-Americans join the military, and develop useful skills, the opportunity for funded higher education, and pride in their country and citizenship.\(^{445}\) Furthermore, approximately a third of them intermarry and assimilate into the US mainstream. Tony Smith states that the majority of Mexican-Americans identify with various fundamental American values, and that even if they regard themselves as part of a distinct ethnicity, Mexican-Americans are similarly proud of their American identity.\(^{446}\)

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\(^{442}\) Esman, *Diasporas in the Contemporary World*, 95.

\(^{443}\) Huntington, ‘The Hispanic Challenge.’

\(^{444}\) Ibid

\(^{445}\) Esman, *Diasporas in the Contemporary World*, 95.

\(^{446}\) Smith, *Foreign Attachments*, 151.
This chapter discussed the history of relations between Mexico and the US, as well as two out of the three main policy areas these two countries share—immigration and drugs. As mentioned, the third issue-area, trade, will be discussed in later chapters. The foremost Mexican-American organizations were introduced, including MHTAs, and a detailed history on these important bodies was provided. MHTAs are a focus that enables this study to say something original about the Mexican-American diaspora. As Lisa García Bedolla notes, MHTAs provide a ‘privileged standpoint through which it is possible to examine in detail the inner organizational dynamics of Mexican migrant communities’ in the US.\(^{447}\) For the most part, those studying the making of US trade policy have largely overlooked the Mexican-American diaspora, as well as its central political arm, the MHTAs. MHTAs were an innovative structure, and although they were not initially created for this purpose, they played a significant role in the founding of NAFTA. They continue to play an essential role in the political interests and activities of the Mexican-American diaspora, and are vital to the mobilization and naturalization of its members. They essentially serve as an instrument of influence for the diaspora. The other instrument of influence of the diaspora is demographics, and the voting power associated with that.

MHTAs were also able to mobilize the Mexican-American diaspora during the political battle over Proposition 187, and contributed financially to the campaign against it. Moreover, MHTAs participated in the opposition to HR 4437; they assisted in the coordination and organization of the marches. As was seen with these two examples, specific issues mobilize and unify the diaspora. Naturalization rates increased significantly and Mexican-Americans registered to vote in large numbers following both of these initiatives. Voting rates among Latinos, and therefore Mexican-Americans, continue to increase notably with every presidential election. This trend will continue, and the political influence of the diaspora will also continue to increase. The diaspora was able to influence the decision-making process by its lobbying efforts, mainly through MHTAs, and by the vote.

\(^{447}\) Bedolla, 90.
This chapter also examined the data concerning the Latino community in the US, as well as the Mexican-American diaspora in particular. The diaspora was examined in the context of its relationship with its host state, the US. The diaspora will be further discussed in the following chapter, but this time in the context of its relationship with its home state, Mexico.
Chapter 5- Kin State: Mexico

In January 2009, shortly before his inauguration, President Obama met with President Calderón to discuss various security and economic issues. It is routine for a new American president to meet with his counterparts in both Canada and Mexico before meeting with other heads of state, but these meetings were quite opportune, since both Mexico City and Washington were facing plummeting economies and anxieties over the increase in drug-related violence close to their shared border. Apart from the economy, the two presidents discussed the three main foreign policy issues that this study has listed as being the most significant- immigration, drugs, and trade.

This chapter will discuss the “kin state”, Mexico- its economy, government, and security. While the previous chapter provided a brief history of the relationship between Mexico and the US, this chapter will extend that historical analysis to the present day. From Mexico’s perspective especially, this relationship has generally been one of animosity, resentment, and distrust. The relationship has, however, evolved, particularly since NAFTA, and again as a result of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The relationship between Mexico and the US has deepened throughout the years as a result of shared interests and concerns.

This chapter will also examine the connection between Mexico and the Mexican-American diaspora. Yossi Shain claims that, in general, scholars have not paid much attention to this relationship, which has undergone significant changes in the past few decades. A complex historical association has existed between Mexico and its diaspora in the US since the 1840s, when Mexico ceded half its territory to the US, and when a significant number of Mexicans became US residents. Throughout the years, Mexico’s political and economic advancements and setbacks shaped its government’s position and attitude toward its diaspora. The Mexican government initially resented its diaspora for leaving Mexico and accused it of forgetting its culture and abandoning its country. It was also reluctant to interact with the diaspora in the US.

448 ‘Felipe Calderón and Barack Obama meet.’
because it feared that American politics and economics would overshadow, or possibly absorb, their culture.\textsuperscript{449} However, the government came to realize that the diaspora was a valuable asset and was increasingly acquiring more influence in the US. Out of self-interest, the Mexican government started to court its diaspora, and began to foster a relationship with it. Following a discussion of the Mexican state, this chapter will examine its relationship with the diaspora.

**The Mexican State**

Hal Klepak claims that most analysts and scholars consider Mexico to be a fragile democracy. Although it has made some progress in the past two decades, Mexico’s political system is still flawed. Mexico struggles with corruption, increasing violence, and a largely uncompetitive economy. The country has progressed from authoritarianism to democracy and economic reform within a generation, but the state itself has become weaker and its economy has become more dependent on the US.\textsuperscript{450}

As of 2010, Mexico had an estimated 112 million people. The dominant and official language in Mexico is, of course, Spanish, although 62 indigenous languages are also spoken. A total of 29 per cent of the population is 14 years old or younger; 64.6 per cent is 15 to 64 years old, and 6.2 per cent is 65 years or older.\textsuperscript{451} Mexico has made progress in recent years with respect to corruption, but it still struggles with the problems of transparency and accountability. Mexico lacks political stability as a result of the increasing power of the drug cartels, and the increased corruption that has resulted.

In the mid-1980s, the Mexican government implemented a pro-market policy.\textsuperscript{452} Mexico’s ensuing membership in both the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and NAFTA were significant measures and accomplishments. Since then, however, economic progress has been difficult and inconsistent. Policy mistakes have occurred, as well as a few

\textsuperscript{449} Shain, *Marketing the American Creed Abroad*, 183.
\textsuperscript{450} George Philip, ‘Mexico,’ *Political Insight* 1, 3 (December 2010): 101.
\textsuperscript{451} Klepak, ‘Mexico: Current and Future Political, Economic and Security Trends.’
\textsuperscript{452} Philip, 101.
major economic crises. But Mexico has shown that it is able to compete in US markets, and has become a notable exporter of manufactured products. In the past 30 years, manufactured exports from Mexico to the US have significantly increased and growth has persisted notwithstanding some cynicism about the long-term feasibility of the export model. Furthermore, as a result of the strong export sector, there is low inflation, low interest rates, and an overall enhancement in the quality of life for most Mexicans.\footnote{Ibid, 103.} Mexico’s standard of living continues to improve, and poverty has been reduced. As of 2008, the percentage of Mexicans living in “extreme poverty” has decreased from 24.2 per cent to 18.2 per cent, employing a food-based definition of poverty. However, according to an asset-based definition it is much higher, at 47 per cent.\footnote{Klepak, ‘Mexico: Current and Future Political, Economic and Security Trends.’}

Mexico faces a number of threats to its internal security, such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, illegal migration, and other aspects of international crime. The drug problem is one foreign policy issue that both the US and Mexico share. However, as mentioned, each issue affects the two countries differently.

Understandably, security concerns consume the Mexican government and the Mexican people. There is a significant range of organized criminal activity in the country, and it extends internationally; foreign interests are involved in this criminal activity, such as the Russian mafia and Middle East terrorist organizations.\footnote{Ibid} The violence continued to escalate, especially after the declaration of war on the drug cartels by the former president, Felipe Calderón. Mexico has experienced a massive increase in murders due to drug trafficking and fighting between rival drug cartels.\footnote{‘Felipe Calderón and Barack Obama meet.’} In Monterrey, the wealthiest city in Mexico, drug cartels have engaged in gunfights in the streets, on the university campus, and in hotels. The tourism industry in Mexico has suffered as a result of the increasing violence and the associated economic problems. Consequently, the legitimacy of Mexican democracy has been diminished, and the country’s national institutions

\begin{footnotes}
\item Ibd, 103.
\item Klepak, ‘Mexico: Current and Future Political, Economic and Security Trends.’
\item Ibid
\item ‘Felipe Calderón and Barack Obama meet.’
\end{footnotes}
weakened. In 2008, there were approximately 5,700 murders, which is more than double the number the year before.457 The issue of drugs has become worse over the past few years, and Mexico simply does not have the necessary resources to fight what President Calderón described as a “war on drugs”.458

The drug cartels have more money and better weapons than the police and even the army.459 Russell Crandall argues that Mexico needs increased US assistance to battle its drug violence.460 However, some regard this situation as being caused more by the US than by Mexico, and argue it is the obligation of the US to assist Mexico in fixing the problem. Codevilla maintains the US has an obligation to help Mexico with its “war on drugs” because the US plays a significant role in this issue. The US enables drug use, and permits this situation in Mexico to continue. He claims that the drug problem is serious and dangerous, and is ‘a deadly injection that the American people are inflicting on Mexico.’461 Americans pay roughly $50 billion a year to Mexican drug cartels for various types of drugs, which enables these cartels to corrupt Mexico’s courts, police, and institutions.462

Codevilla claims Mexicans are right in blaming the US for this increasing problem. In April 2009, President Obama recognized it was America’s hunger for drugs that maintained the cartels’ business. Furthermore, the President acknowledged that over 90 per cent of the guns reclaimed in Mexico initially came from the US.463 According to Mexico’s finance minister, Ernesto Cordero, as a result of the violence, Mexico’s annual growth rate suffers.464

457 Ibid
458 Philip, 103.
459 Ibid, 103.
461 Codevilla, 34.
462 Ibid, 34.
463 ‘Mexico and America. Gently does it,’ 38.
In 2007, Calderón initiated a significant offensive against drug cartels, which sparked an eruption of violence that essentially progressed into a regional war.\(^{465}\) From 2007 until the end of 2010, more than 26,000 people were killed as a result of the drug-related violence. The majority of these murders occurred in the north of Mexico, near the American border. In Ciudad Juarez, for instance, the murder rate is 165 deaths per 100,000 people, which is approximately four times worse than Baghdad.\(^{466}\) In 2007, there were roughly 11 active organized-crime groups in Mexico. In 2010, there were 114 such groups. It is difficult to separate the large gangs from “opportunistic youths”; since there is a lack of opportunities in Mexico for adolescents and young adults, they are engaging in amateur extortion rackets.\(^{467}\) Kleiman states that the increase in violence since Calderón initiated his war on drugs in 2007 illustrates how amplified enforcement can lead to more carnage.\(^{468}\) This foreign policy issue is a contentious one in both Mexico and the US, and while both countries are working together to combat the problem, they both interpret it differently.

The second foreign policy issue that the US and Mexico share, immigration, is also regarded differently by each country. Unlike the American government, the Mexican government is not overly concerned with the number of Mexicans that illegally cross the border into the US every year; it is more concerned with their treatment in the US. The Mexican government had originally hoped that the undocumented Mexicans in the US would have an opportunity to become legal, but it quickly realized this would not happen when President Bush’s immigration reform propositions did not receive support from Congress in 2007.\(^{469}\) Calderón expressed concern regarding the treatment of illegal immigrants by both police and immigration authorities.


\(^{467}\) ‘Mexico’s changing drug war. Shifting sands, \textit{The Economist} (November 26\textsuperscript{th} -December 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2011): 48.

\(^{468}\) Kleiman, ‘Surgical Strikes in the Drug Wars,’ 91.

\(^{469}\) ‘Felipe Calderón and Barack Obama meet.’
The Mexican government also expressed frustration and discontent concerning the building of the 1,070-kilometer fence along the border with Mexico.\(^{470}\)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Mexican government openly opposed Arizona’s SB 1070. It claims that a ‘multinational treaty gives it the right to protect the interests of its citizens abroad,’ and that Arizona’s law ‘creates an imminent threat of state-sanctioned bias.’\(^{471}\) The Mexican government argues that SB 1070 affects diplomatic relations between Mexico and America. It argues that those relations would be undermined by Arizona initiating its own policies which might conflict with those of the federal government. Arizona’s law would hamper widespread immigration reform, which has been discussed between both governments, and supported by President Obama. The Mexican government also argues that the Arizona law threatens business and trade. Not only will the law discourage the significant percentage of Mexicans that legally visit Arizona every year to shop, vacation, or go to school, but it also will strain international relations between both countries.

The Mexican government states that the law not only jeopardizes the American government’s effort at a comprehensive immigration reform, but also establishes an autonomous state system of immigration prosecution that derails bilateral social, economic, and security efforts.\(^{472}\) Furthermore, the government states that Mexico cannot effectively participate in important bilateral relations with America when states are permitted to impede the federal government’s policies. The Mexican government also maintains that in its five consulates in Arizona, it will provide consular protection and legal assistance to Mexicans in the state, and it

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\(^{470}\) Ibid


\(^{472}\) Ibid
will use all necessary resources to defend the rights of Mexicans in the US.\textsuperscript{473} Immigration continues to be a contentious topic on both sides of the border.

Mexico also suffers from political corruption. The main problem is the “institutional weakness of the presidency”.\textsuperscript{474} Executive weakness in Mexico is caused by restricted official presidential powers, political turnover as a result of a “no re-election” regulation, and three-party politics, with the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) playing a central role.\textsuperscript{475} Consequently, party elites hold the power, and these individuals do not have an interest in strengthening the presidency. Elites tend to abuse their power by making deals that benefit them, and by using their clout in the legislature to stifle dissent. Low levels of tax collection and the gradual diminution of oil production also cause executive weakness. Finally, governments also spend too much on appeasing political lobbies.

The PRI was in power continuously from 1929 until 2000, when Vicente Fox, from the National Action Party (PAN) on the centre-right, won the presidency. The tradition of one-party rule in Mexico finally came to an end. President Fox had more autonomy from drug-traffickers than the departing PRI.\textsuperscript{476} Unfortunately, Fox’s election did not politically stabilize Mexico. Political differences endured among the parties; the country’s politics remained acutely divided between the conservative PAN, the centrist PRI, and the leftist Party of the Democratic Republic (PRD).

The Mexican government is in need of revenue. In comparison to other Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, Mexico accumulates relatively little tax. Furthermore, Mexico’s oil production, which provides a significant percentage of public revenue, is in decline. President Calderón, whose six-year term ended in the summer of 2012, had been

\textsuperscript{474} Philip, 101.
\textsuperscript{475} Ibid, 102.
\textsuperscript{476} Gootenberg, 12.
attempting to ameliorate this situation with an ambitious tax and oil reform program, but it did not progress very far. Calderón passed various economic reforms through Congress, but as a result of the weak presidency these have not made a significant difference. Calderón’s predecessor, Vicente Fox, had the same problems in attempting reforms. With such constricted and limited powers, Mexico’s presidents have not, to this point, been able to reform a weak economy.

Dependence on the US

As of 2010, the Mexican government had established free trade agreements with roughly 40 countries; however, the US continues to be the country’s main trading partner. The US provides more than 60 per cent of Mexico’s imports. Almost 80 per cent of Mexico’s exports go to the US. In 2010, $400 billion worth of trade took place between Mexico and the US. Mexico is certainly dependent on the US with respect to trade. Understandably, such dependence concerns many Mexicans.

Mexico’s dependence on the US economy was clear during the American financial crisis that started in 2008. Russell Crandall states that ‘it has long been said that when the US catches a cold, Latin America catches the flu.’ This is certainly true with respect to the US and Mexico, and especially so in the economic realm. The financial crisis of 2008 that began in the US significantly affected its southern neighbour. Mexico suffered a great deal economically in 2009, and is susceptible to slower growth in the US. Philip claims that Mexico has become increasingly dependent on the US, and at a bad time. As a result of the weakness of the American economy, Mexico’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) dropped by more than six per cent

477 Philip, 101.
478 Klepak, ‘Mexico: Current and Future Political, Economic and Security Trends.’
480 ‘Mexico’s plunging peso. Arriba, arriba!,’ The Economist (December 10th-16th, 2011): 80.
481 Crandall, 87.
482 ‘Making the desert bloom,’ 59.
484 Philip, 103.
in 2009, and more than 700,000 jobs were lost from 2008 to 2009. Furthermore, between July and November of 2011, the Mexican peso dropped by 10 per cent against the dollar, its lowest level since the financial crisis began in 2008.\textsuperscript{485} It has since recovered slightly as economic projections for the US have somewhat improved. Essentially, Mexico is not selling if the US is not buying.

Mexico has expanded economically in the past few decades and has become the world’s 12\textsuperscript{th} largest economy. In 2010, Mexico’s GDP (purchasing power parity) was $1.567 trillion and per capita GDP was $13,900.\textsuperscript{486} In 2006, the economy’s growth rate was three per cent. In 2007, the economy increased by 4.8 per cent, but dropped to 1.3 per cent in 2009 as a result of the American financial crisis. As of 2010, however, Mexico’s growth rate was 5.5 per cent. Mexico is the sixth biggest oil exporting country worldwide.\textsuperscript{487} The country’s service sector accounts for more than 61 per cent of GDP; industry follows at 34 per cent, and agriculture accounts for four per cent. Each of these sectors is significantly connected to, and dependent on, the US economy.

Mexico’s economy has, however, made noteworthy steps toward the creation of an effective capitalist system. Mexico is open to, and encourages, foreign investment. According to the World Bank, Mexico is the most convenient country in Latin America in which to do business, and the 35\textsuperscript{th} most business-friendly country in the world.\textsuperscript{488} According to The Economist, Mexico’s economy has a great deal of potential. As a result of the NAFTA and various bilateral trade deals, Mexico engages in more trade than Brazil and Argentina combined. On a per-capita basis, Mexico trades more than China. As mentioned, in 2008 business between the US and Mexico amounted to $400 billion. Exports to America have attained a “record

\textsuperscript{485} ‘Mexico’s plunging peso,’ 80.
\textsuperscript{487} Klepak, ‘Mexico: Current and Future Political, Economic and Security Trends.’
\textsuperscript{488} ‘Making the desert bloom,’ 59.
Trade, the third foreign policy issue that both countries share, will be discussed further in the following chapters.

**Mexico’s Relationship with the US**

What happens in Mexico often affects the US, and vice versa, whether it be drugs, murders, migration, or trade. The relationship between the US and Mexico is complicated, and has certainly not always been positive. Mexico has often expressed feelings of resentment, hostility, and distrust toward its northern neighbor. Mexico has a “deeply ingrained suspicion” of the US and its motives. The authors of Mexican independence generally regarded America as a model for Mexico. However, various invasions by America, the forced relinquishment of approximately half of Mexico’s territory to the US during the 19th century, and more recently, American’s treatment of its Mexican illegal aliens, gradually eroded these positive views, at least, at the political level.

During the Second World War, however, the US and Mexico became allies. The US government invited millions of workers from Mexico to replace American workers in both factories and on farms who had gone to war. Mexicans would come to the US for work, and usually return to Mexico afterwards. But by the Cold War, in the late 1940s, this collaboration was ignored and Mexico’s defense forces reverted to their preventive role regarding the US. Peter H. Smith argues that until the end of the Cold War, US relations with Mexico were determined, to a significant extent, by factors outside of North America. Shortly after the Cold War, Mexico reached out to the US because it needed the latter’s assistance to stop the Chiapas insurrection. On January 1, 1994, the same day as NAFTA came into force, the two-year insurrection began in the most impoverished state in Mexico. The Zapatista Army of National

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489 Ibid, 59.
490 Crandall, 93.
491 Klepak, ‘Mexico: Current and Future Political, Economic and Security Trends.’
492 Codevilla, 31.
Liberation (EZLN) launched its uprising, and sent its manifesto to officials in Mexico City, which was also published throughout the country. The manifesto stated that the Mexican government did not care that Mexicans were dying of hunger and that they did not have land, jobs, food, education, health services, or the right to elect their own leaders.\textsuperscript{494} The goal of the EZLN was to bring attention to the social and political problems in their country.

Hal Klepak states that while NAFTA was not intended to incorporate political and military cooperation, it became impossible for Mexico to evade dependence on the US at such a critical time.\textsuperscript{495} The country was undergoing a financial crisis at this time. Mexico asked the US for assistance, and in January 1995, the Clinton administration created an international financial rescue plan that committed a total of 50 billion dollars. In return, policymakers in Mexico initiated rigorous controls on economic policy, and by 1996, the Mexican economy had recovered.\textsuperscript{496}

Because of the need for, and reliance on, US assistance during the Chiapas insurrection and the debt crisis, Mexico opened up to a greater extent to the US. Mexico had been pursuing economic liberalization since the early 1980s under the de la Madrid administration. President de la Madrid started the reversal of state control of the economy in favour of privatization; this trend hastened under President Salinas.\textsuperscript{497} There has certainly been a rapprochement between the two countries over the past few decades. The US and Mexico are not only connected by trade, but given their shared border, they often have to work together because of their common interests and concerns. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Mexico has progressively moved strategically and economically into a cooperative relationship with both the US and Canada, as a member of NAFTA and, since 9/11, the North American Security and Prosperity Partnership. In spite of this

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{494} Jerry W. Knudson, ‘Rebellion in Chiapas: insurrection by Internet and public relations,’ \textit{Media Culture & Society} 20 (1998): 508.
\item \textsuperscript{495} Klepak, ‘Mexico: Current and Future Political, Economic and Security Trends.’
\item \textsuperscript{496} Hufbauer and Schott, \textit{NAFTA Revisited}, 10.
\end{itemize}
trilateral relationship, however, Mexico still remains vastly distinct from its two northern neighbours with respect to matters of security, political stability, and economic and social development.  

The US government has been interested in establishing a stronger relationship with Mexico since the initiation of NAFTA. There are more US government agencies allocated to the US Embassy in Mexico than to any other country. Furthermore, many American agencies are involved and have jurisdictions over US policy regarding Mexico. Before September 11, 2001, Mexico shaped the agenda to a certain extent regarding discussions between the two countries. Shortly before the terrorist attacks, President Fox had been in Washington for an important meeting with President Bush that envisioned a significant immigration accord. A few days before 9/11, President Bush declared that Mexico was America’s most significant relationship. Their relationship changed dramatically, however, as a result of the terrorist attacks.

Post-9/11

Klepak states that when 9/11 occurred, there was already a remarkable military connection that existed between the US and Mexico. However, the events of September 11 disrupted the bilateral agenda, derailed cooperation between the two countries, and weakened the Fox-Bush relationship. When the discussion between the two presidents resumed in January 2002, there was no longer any urgency to discuss trade and immigration; Mexico-US migration discussions froze. Border security became the primary concern. In response to increasing numbers of illegal aliens crossing the border into the US from Mexico, as well as the security

500 Ibid, 479.
501 Leiken, ‘Enchilada Lite.’
503 Klepak, ‘Mexico: Current and Future Political, Economic and Security Trends.’
505 Hufbauer and Schott, NAFTA Revisited, 457.
fears prompted by the terrorist attacks, the US focused on improving its security and securing its borders. The number of US Border Patrol agents rose from less than 3,000 to over 20,700 in a short amount of time. When bilateral talks resumed, American concerns dominated the discussions. Since 9/11, Mexico has not received the same degree of attention from the US.

The US government did not proceed with the expected plan to normalize the millions of Mexicans illegally in the US. The Mexican government retaliated by endorsing its own type of legalization: it authorized its consulates to issue registration cards, or *matricula consular*, which certified that the possessor was an American resident. The relationship deteriorated to a certain extent, and the US’s “best friend” seemed to have lost prominence on the US agenda. Russell Crandall argues that the Obama administration must ensure strategic patience does not progress into neglect. Although the relationship between both countries remains strong, and they continue to work together on various issues, the US establishes the agenda now.

Cooperation between the US and Mexico nevertheless increased in some areas after 9/11 and various agreements between the two countries were reached. The “shotgun marriage” of security and economics instigated by 9/11 produced a prompt response in relation to border security. In 2002, at a meeting in Monterrey, Mexico, President Fox and President Bush approved a border partnership agreement, the US-Mexico Border Partnership Agreement or the Smart Border Plan. With respect to border security, this agreement is the most recent provision initiated by both governments.

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508 Huntington, *Who Are We?*, 281.
509 Crandall, 94.
The Smart Border Plan represents the two countries’ collaboration in the establishment of a “smart border” that fortifies and shields, while also attempting to ease the movement of people and trade in both directions. The agreement addresses the following three areas: ‘ensuring the secure and efficient flow of people; facilitating the secure and efficient flow of goods; and improving border infrastructure.’ Essentially this agreement further solidified the partnership between both countries. The Smart Border Plan assured an improved relationship that encouraged the sharing of information and technology, and that fostered collaboration in addressing shared issues.

In 2005, the US established the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) with Mexico and Canada. The SPP focuses on economic and security issues that all three countries share. It is an informal agreement between the three countries to synchronize various facets of security and defense, as well as the states’ economies, in order to combat shared threats. The SPP is the primary vehicle for dialogue on future security measures and activities regarding economic integration. The SPP was meant to resume where NAFTA had left off regarding North American economic integration.

*Maclean’s* claims that North American integration and harmonization was once “all the rage”, but now, under President Obama, the initiative appears to be dead. The SPP survived the transition from Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and the transition from Mexican President Vicente Fox to Felipe Calderón. It did not, however, survive the transition from President George W. Bush to President Barack Obama. In the summer of 2009, at the first trilateral summit attended by Obama in Guadalajara, Mexico, the leaders discontinued the SPP. There has not been a “three amigos” summit since that time.

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513 Ibid
514 Klepak, ‘Mexico: Current and Future Political, Economic and Security Trends.’
515 Ibid
In 2010, it was Prime Minister Harper’s turn to host a trilateral summit, but Washington was not interested, and there is essentially no momentum if Washington is not interested. Anderson states that if we do not have a summit, it is damaging because it indicates to the bureaucracy “North America can wait”.\(^517\) It signals that there are more pressing concerns, and more important countries and regions. Integration has arguably stalled. Scholars argue that there is a lack of interest and a great deal of unwillingness on the part of the three governments to continue the integration process initiated under NAFTA. Economic and security concerns have become more pressing than integration; perhaps the interest in increased integration will return after the economy is more secure.

Ruben Navarrette states that although Obama claims to be a “full partner” with Mexico concerning the country’s drug war, he has not been a very good one. In 2010, officials in the White House thwarted a proposition from the Justice Department that would have obliged gun-shop owners in border towns in the US to report large sales of semiautomatic rifles.\(^518\) Drug dealers tend to prefer this type of high-powered weapon. Obama has been less intent than his predecessors to cultivate a stronger relationship with Mexico and to help the country fight its war on drugs.

In May of 2010, President Calderón and President Obama publicly agreed that border security was a central topic for both governments.\(^519\) The US and Mexico are apparently working closely to ease legal trade across the border between the two countries.\(^520\) Although the relationship continues to evolve, its fundamentals will remain constant, and the US and Mexico

\(^517\) Ibid, 38.
\(^520\) ‘The United States and Latin America. Partnership, and its obstacles,’ The Economist (September 3\(^{st}\)-9\(^{th}\), 2011): 36.
will continue to enjoy a strong partnership. The US and Mexico are joined by more than just a border; trade, immigration, security, and other common interests and concerns unite them.

Codevilla observes that ‘for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, whether anybody likes it or not, the United States and Mexico are joined at the Rio Grande’ for all time. History, natural resources, and geography have certainly tied Mexico to the US, and vice versa.

Mexico’s Relationship with the Mexican-American Diaspora

The Indifference of the Mexican Government

Carlos González Gutiérrez claims it is important for the Mexican government to cultivate positive relations with the Mexican-American diaspora, noting that the diaspora has the ability to influence American foreign policy in a way that benefits the Mexican government. The Mexican government has finally realized this, but it took decades for this to occur. The initial relationship between the government and its diaspora was antagonistic to say the least.

The Mexican-American diaspora was crucial to the Mexican government during the Revolution of 1910, by ‘keeping Mexican opposition alive’ and ‘by harboring and protecting Mexican exiles and sponsoring resistance.’ Once the Revolution ended in 1921, however, the Mexican government began to ignore its diaspora and focused on domestic issues. For the majority of the twentieth century, the Mexican government, and Mexicans in general, scorned Mexicans who had moved to the US and depicted them as “traitors” to their homeland. The negative attitude of the Mexican government, and the Mexican people in general, toward Mexicans who had moved north was not just based on the belief that Mexican-Americans had

521 Crandall, 94.
522 Codevilla, 30.
523 ‘Making the desert bloom,’ 60.
525 Latapi and Janssen, ‘Migration, the diaspora and development: The case of Mexico.’
526 Huntington, Who Are We?, 279.
abandoned Mexico. Jorge Bustamante claims that the Mexican government worried that US politics and culture would dominate their society and culture, and this enhanced Mexico’s unwillingness to interact with its diaspora. Furthermore, from the 1930s to the 1970s, Mexico’s attitude and position toward its diaspora was reinforced by the country’s impressive economic growth, which averaged six per cent per year; this increased national self-confidence. During this time, the diaspora was not “politically empowered” and was thus not in the position to confront negative Mexican statements about it and its possible effectiveness.527

Starting in the 1970s, and especially in the 1980s, Mexico’s attitude changed dramatically. The Mexican government began to develop an interest in the Mexican-American diaspora. President Portillo, in office from 1976 to 1982, selected targets within the Mexican-American community to work with, and benefited from the existence of a new Chicano leadership and recently established organizations, such as the CHC, MALDEF, and NCLR. These organizations, along with more established and older organizations, like LULAC, had initiated a more profound and clearer interest in American foreign policy, including immigration and economic issues.528 The Mexican government therefore began to observe a benefit in creating a better working relationship with its diaspora.

External factors, such as the worldwide development toward economic liberalization and the increasing organizational complexity and political power of the Mexican-American diaspora, in combination with domestic factors in Mexico, like political chaos, economic decline, as well as the increasing dependence on the American economy all contributed to the progressive

rehabilitation of the diaspora in Mexico.\textsuperscript{529} The Mexican government hoped that it could use the growing empowerment of the Mexican-American diaspora politically as well as economically.

**Volte-face: the Rehabilitation of the Diaspora**

From the 1970s until 1994, the Mexican government consistently articulated five goals regarding its diaspora in the US: the defense of the civil rights of Mexicans in the US, the enrichment of Mexican culture in the US, the achievement of Chicano political support, the encouragement of Chicano political participation in relations between both the US and Mexico, and the stimulation of business connections.\textsuperscript{530}

The Mexican government’s attitudes toward Mexicans living in the US have changed frequently since the 1840s, when a significant portion of Mexican territory became American territory, and many Mexicans suddenly became American residents. The economic and political advances and setbacks in Mexico throughout the last 150 years ‘have been paralleled by equally dramatic changes within Mexican-American communities, and have been reflected in Mexico’s position toward its diaspora,’\textsuperscript{531} with both sides often demonstrating ambivalence toward each other.

As a result of Mexico’s increasing integration with the US, however, and its economic reliance on the significant remittances sent home by workers abroad, the Mexican government attempted to improve its relations with the increasingly influential diaspora in the US. Shain claims that Mexico’s new position toward the Mexican-American diaspora is associated with the latter’s increasing economic and political influence, and its dual identity as both a distinct diaspora and an intrinsic part of US society.\textsuperscript{532} Furthermore, the advances in the relationship between the US and Mexico, and the increasing political, economic, and social influence of the diaspora on Mexican affairs have contributed to the Mexican government’s new attitude toward

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{529} Bustamante, 183.
\item \textsuperscript{530} García-Acevedo, ‘Return to Aztlán: Mexico’s Policies toward Chicanas/os,’ 131.
\item \textsuperscript{531} Shain, *Marketing the American Creed Abroad*, 173.
\item \textsuperscript{532} Ibid, 175.
\end{itemize}
the Mexican-American diaspora. Furthermore, Mexico’s desire for free trade with the US led it to forge a new relationship with its diaspora, which was demonstrating increasing organizational refinement and political power.

It is certainly in the Mexican government’s interest to strengthen these ties and improve its communication with the progressively powerful Mexican-American diaspora. As mentioned, the Mexican government realized this in the late 1970s and early 1980s and began to change its attitude toward its diaspora. Instead of deriding Mexican-Americans for abandoning their homeland, the Mexican government finally realized that considering the diaspora’s potential political influence on US-Mexican issues, it should concern itself with the diaspora’s foreign policy thinking. The Mexican government started to demonstrate an increasing interest in the diaspora, eager to use its political empowerment to its economic and political advantage. The Mexican government therefore started to develop long-term relations with its diaspora.

The Mexican government began to strengthen ties with the diaspora, and began to publicly redefine it as a “cultural and economic bridge” between both countries, instead of a problem or a disappointment, as it had previously been defined. Furthermore, the government used the existence of its diaspora to illustrate the uniqueness of Mexico; it was a country with deep roots, and a rich culture. The Mexican government finally recognized, and appreciated that the Mexican-American diaspora in the US had established a distinctive identity that was not at all damaging to Mexico. Mexico made a resolute effort to forge a new relationship with it, which led to a substantial recreation of the notion of Mexican national identity.

534 Smith, Foreign Attachments, 156.
535 Shain, Marketing the American Creed Abroad, 175.
537 Bustamante, 188.
538 Ibid, 173.
There are various reasons why the Mexican government chose to foster an intimate and permanent relationship with the Mexican-American community. The diaspora constitutes a significant market for exports of products from Mexico, and it contributes an impressive amount of foreign currency through its remittances. The Mexican government believes Mexican-Americans have increasing influence on decision-making in the US in both domestic and foreign policy. The Mexican government is aware of its diaspora’s political potential and the natural penchant of the political system in the US to support the political participation of ethnic groups. The Mexican government has also tried to use its new relationship with its diaspora in attempts to influence US policy in numerous spheres, such as foreign policy. One clear example is NAFTA, which will be discussed at length in Chapter 7.

The Mexican government restored the role of its consulates as a significant link between Mexico and its immigrants in the US. The government ensured the consulates promoted educational and cultural programs, and participated in Mexican-American community affairs. For example, Mexican consulates helped organize Mexican-Americans into regional clubs, which encouraged the establishment of bonds between Mexican-Americans, and the strengthening of a sense of duty to assist their communities in Mexico. The Mexican government has increasingly paid attention to Mexican-American associations, utilizing its consular offices to generate official networks for the mounting cross-border participation. The Mexican government claims it changed its attitudes toward its diaspora because it was interested in doing so predominantly because it would advance Mexico’s power politically and economically. The Mexican government consistently conducts its relations with the Mexican-American diaspora according to its domestic goals.

539 Gutiérrez, ‘Fostering Identities.’
540 Ibid
541 Bustamante, 185.
The process of acercamiento continued under President Salinas. There was a great deal of corruption in Mexico at this time, and President Salinas’ electoral victory was controversial; the victory was tarnished by extensive irregularities and allegations that the election had been rigged. Consequently, President Salinas was concerned that this could lead to deterioration in the political influence of the Mexican government in the US.\footnote{Bustamante, 187.} Salinas therefore espoused a different attitude toward the Mexican-American diaspora, attempting to shift its focus and energy away from political issues and toward the development of the Mexican economy. Salinas argued that Mexico would work toward political reform, but that this could only take place once economic progress had been achieved.

According to Armando Navarro, the politics of acercamiento changed throughout the 1990s, specifically as a result of NAFTA. The Mexican-American diaspora became even more valuable for the Mexican government. The diaspora is usually identified as an economic asset by the Mexican government in times of crisis. This identification was first documented during the French invasion of Mexico from 1860 to 1863, and resurfaced throughout the years of the Mexican Revolution, from 1910 to 1920. The identification persisted in the era of the Great Depression in the 1920s.\footnote{García-Acevedo, ‘The [re]construction of diasporic policies in Mexico.’} Furthermore, during the economic crises in Mexico from 1987 to 1988 and from 1994 to 1995, the Mexican government regarded the diaspora as an especially valuable ally in encouraging neoliberal policies that would assist Mexico in confronting and rectifying its issues.\footnote{Ibid}

The neoliberal policies were exemplified in the 1990s and in the negotiation of NAFTA. Many scholars regard the neoliberal policies adopted in Mexico as a major part of the assertive policy adopted by the Mexican government toward the Mexican-American diaspora. The Mexican government’s desire to negotiate NAFTA with the American government in the early 1990s motivated it to expand outreach policies. The Mexican government needed the support of

\footnote{Bustamante, 187.}
\footnote{García-Acevedo, ‘The [re]construction of diasporic policies in Mexico.’}
\footnote{Ibid}
its diaspora to strengthen its connection with the US government, which would, in turn, advance the economic development of the country.

Since the 1990s, the Mexican government has managed to create a stronger relationship with diaspora organizations in the US. The government increasingly believed that relations between the US and Mexico would be likely to be “deeply affected” by the Mexican-American diaspora. The Salinas administration started to strongly support the leadership of various Mexican-American organizations in the US, such as MALDEF, LULAC, NCLR, SVREP, and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Mexicans in the US were increasingly becoming more important, politically and economically, for the Mexican government.

Mexico began to publicly recognize the value of its diaspora; it started to refer overtly to Mexicans in the US being part of the Mexican “global nation,” which consisted of the Mexicans living in Mexico as well as those living in the US. Furthermore, Mexico started to reward activists and intellectuals within the Mexican-American community for being guardians of what it now recognized as a significant diaspora culture. For five consecutive years, President Salinas granted the Order of the Aztec Eagle, Mexico’s most esteemed award, to specific Chicanos. Until 1990, the award had never been bestowed on a member of the Chicano community. In doing so, the Mexican government honoured dominant members of the diaspora. Among the beneficiaries of this award were Antonia Hernández from MALDEF, Raúl Yzaguirre from the NCLR, and Bill Richardson, Governor of New Mexico and member of the Hispanic Caucus.

In 1991, the Mexican Foreign Ministry began attempting to convey to its diaspora that the acquisition of US citizenship was no longer viewed as treasonous and unpatriotic in Mexico, or as being incompatible with Mexican cultural identity. Greater Mexican participation in US society was thus being encouraged and regarded as beneficial for the homeland. The Mexican

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547 Shain, *Marketing the American Creed Abroad*, 176.
549 García-Acevedo, ‘Return to Aztlán,’ 145.
550 Bustamante, 190.
government’s attempt to legitimize the Mexican-American diaspora as a vital part of the Mexican state has a significant political element. In 1996, Mexico altered its constitution to stipulate that dual nationality was acceptable; Mexican nationality would not be not lost if one were to obtain a second nationality. This had not always been the case. Previously, Mexicans who had assumed American citizenship were stripped of numerous legal rights in Mexico. The amendment of Mexico’s constitution was intended to augment the political influence of Mexican-Americans by eliminating obstacles to their becoming American citizens, and consequently, voters. It was also a way to repair and foster diaspora loyalty.

Ambrosio correctly argues that the acceptance of dual nationality in Mexico has fundamentally been due to Mexican-Americans in the US having used their economic influence, mostly revealed in campaign contributions and remittances, to effectively lobby their homeland. The Mexican government began to regard the procurement of American citizenship by Mexicans in the US as something that would empower Mexican-Americans as individuals and as members of an interest group capable of lobbying US politicians on behalf of its homeland. The Mexican government wanted Mexicans in the US to understand that their right to belong to their homeland was not affected by acquiring American citizenship. Many Mexican officials envisioned the Mexican government’s political acercamiento with the Mexican-American diaspora as an attempt to influence American policy on both bilateral and domestic issues. The Mexican government wanted to forge deeper ties with the Mexican-American community for these purposes.

551 Ibid, 189.
553 Smith, Foreign Attachments, 147.
555 Ambrosio, 122.
556 Bustamante, 190.
557 Ibid
Understandably, the Mexican-American diaspora has responded to these overtures by the Mexican government with some hesitation and suspicion. The diaspora tends to generally mistrust the Mexican political system and to regard the bureaucracy as corrupt. Its negative perception of its homeland has tended to strengthen its allegiance to the US, and reinforce its desire to fully integrate into American society. Although the diaspora welcomed the opportunity to have connections in both the US and Mexico, it also feared becoming a pawn and being manipulated in the context of US-Mexican bilateral relations.

In the past few decades, however, the relationship between the Mexican government and the diaspora has evolved as both actors reevaluated the significance of the other to their political future, culture and identity, and their economic standing.\textsuperscript{559} The Mexican government and diaspora cooperate with one another, and have created a partnership of sorts. Together, as associates, the Mexican government and the Mexican-American diaspora have created various projects, executed by countless government officials and political representatives.\textsuperscript{560} Mexicans in the US and Mexico recognize that their future as a people is intricately linked. The Mexican government continues to attempt to construct bridges between itself and its diaspora in order to foster cooperation and collective action.

Mexican-Americans in the US do not want to appear disloyal to their new country; they also do not want the legitimacy of their newly acquired status as pro-Mexican lobbyists to be questioned. As a result, when interacting with Mexico, many Mexican-American leaders emphasize their American identity. The Mexican-American community has successfully incorporated itself into US culture, politics, and institutions. American citizenship empowers Mexican-Americans both as individuals and as members of a diaspora capable of lobbying American politicians in the interests of Mexico.

\textsuperscript{559} Shain, \textit{Marketing the American Creed Abroad}, 173.
\textsuperscript{560} García-Acevedo, ‘The [re]construction of diasporic policies in Mexico.’
The Mexican-American elites recognize that they can have two allegiances without compromising the ties they hold with their homeland or their American identity. The Mexican-American diaspora is concerned with both its homeland and host state; its efforts are not confined to one or the other. Some members of the diaspora have advocated increased cooperation between Mexico and the diaspora. A “partnership of mutual benefits” can exist between the diaspora and the Mexican government on specific issues, such as economic and business matters, and can even secure the consent or support of the US government, as in the case of NAFTA.\textsuperscript{561} According to Shain, however, this partnership is not an equal one. He claims that the Mexican-American diaspora exercises more cultural and economic influence on the Mexican government than the other way around. In other words, the national identity of the homeland is more affected by its diaspora than the diaspora is by its homeland.\textsuperscript{562}

**Remittances: A Symbolic Retention of Diasporic Ties to the Homeland**

Mexico was the first country in Latin America to receive remittances from its kin abroad.\textsuperscript{563} The Mexican government has, for quite some time, encouraged Mexicans living in the US to send money to their families in Mexico. Members of the diaspora send remittances to family in their homeland, and these flows of money play an important role in the relationship that exists between the two communities. Remittances symbolize the retention of the diaspora’s ties to the homeland. The largest remittances from the US are to Mexico; these remittances have grown drastically over the years.\textsuperscript{564}

Each month, Mexicans in the US send millions of dollars to their communities of origin in Mexico. After oil exports and tourism, remittances are Mexico’s third greatest source of income. According to the Mexican Central Bank, remittances to Mexico have increased rapidly,

\textsuperscript{561} García-Acevedo, ‘Return to Aztlán: Mexico’s Policies toward Chicanas/os,’ 148.
\textsuperscript{562} Shain, ‘The Mexican-American Diaspora’s Impact on Mexico,’ 691.
\textsuperscript{564} Huntington, *Who Are We?*, 283.
with a surge from 2001 to 2004. From approximately 3.7 billion dollars in 2001, they rose to 9.8 billion dollars in 2002, to 13.4 billion dollars in 2003, and to 16.6 billion dollars in 2004. By 2003, remittances actually exceeded inflows from Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and Mexico receives the largest amount of FDI in Latin America. From 2004 to 2008, there was a growth of 164 per cent. Altogether, the remittances amounted to 2.2 per cent of GDP. In 2004, remittances increased by 24 per cent, and accounted for 2.5 per cent of GDP. Remittances sent from Mexicans in the US grew by 1.3 per cent in July 2011, in comparison to figures for the same month in 2010. Remittances have obviously become a significant source of foreign income for the country.

As a result of remittances, the economies of homelands become receptive to market forces. The funds received by the homelands have a substantial effect; among other things, remittances improve income distribution. For instance, poor families will acquire resources that would otherwise have been unattainable. Remittances also contribute to an increased standard of living in the homeland, which includes improved education, better housing, and support for senior citizens. Remittances also have a considerable impact on the economic development of home states, with respect to local and regional development. This clearly provides an incentive for home states to maintain ties to their diasporas. The Mexican government has publicly recognized the value of these contributions made by members of the Mexican-American diaspora. President Fox called the members of its diaspora “heroes” for the significant remittances to Mexico, and stated that Mexican migrants were crucial to developing a prosperous and modern country.

565 Latapi and Janssen, 7.
566 ‘Remesas de mexicanos aumentaron 1.3% en julio.’
567 Hufbauer and Schott, NAFTA Revisited, 37.
568 Sheffer, Diaspora Politics, 191.
570 Hufbauer and Schott, NAFTA Revisited, 456.
Various governments in Latin America have created programs in order to assist and unite their expatriate communities in America. The Mexican government has established the most developed programs designed to embolden Mexican-Americans to establish organizations, and to urge the members of these associations to participate in remittances and invest in their local communities back home. An example is the Program for Mexican Communities Living Abroad (PCMLA). The PCMLA was established in 1990 and through the Mexican Consulates, it provides various services and assistance to Mexican-Americans in the US; it also channels remittances to development projects in Mexican communities.

MHTAs play a large role in sending remittances to Mexico. Remittances have generally been the domain of individuals, but in the past two decades, HTAs have started to play a significant role in this respect. The Mexican government has recognized this and has implemented various programs focused on strengthening relations with the MHTAs to secure the continued transfer of funds home to Mexico. In 1990, the Salinas administration established the Programa de Atención a la Comunidad Mexicana en el Extranjero (PACME), or Program for Mexican Communities Abroad. PACME is part of the government’s Ministry of Foreign Relations. Through this program, Mexican Consulates have encouraged the establishment of migrant organizations, and have motivated these organizations to invest in their communities of origin.

PACME, also known as “two for one”, proposes that for every dollar the MHTAs raise for approved projects in their communities in Mexico, two dollars are provided by the federal and state governments. The moneys sent via the MHTAs generally go to public infrastructure projects, local development projects, education and health projects, among others. In 2004, these programs raised $60 million to match the $20 million donated by Mexican-Americans in the form

571 Ambrosio, 121.
572 Ibid, 121.
573 Robin Ruth Marsh, Working With Local Institutions to Support Sustainable Livelihoods (Italy: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2003), 64.
of remittances to develop their communities of origin in Mexico.\textsuperscript{574} Through its remittances and their significant investments in various development projects in their homeland, the Mexican-American diaspora contributes to Mexico’s economic security.\textsuperscript{575} Huntington claims that these remittances and investments are not only an attempt to assist family and friends, but also a communal effort to sustain their diaspora’s identity with Mexico.\textsuperscript{576}

Remittances clearly have a significant economic impact on Mexico. While they may go mostly to families or get diverted to Mexican enterprises with favoured connections to the diaspora, they still represent a net welfare-gain for Mexico as a whole. Interestingly, immigrants who remit funds home to Mexico are more likely to participate politically in the US than those who do not engage in remittances.\textsuperscript{577} If everything else is held constant, Mexican-Americans who remit funds are 9.4 per cent more likely to participate politically.\textsuperscript{578}

**Mexican Overtures: the Intensification of Relations**

We have seen that, throughout the 1990s, the Mexican government became increasingly interested in establishing relations with the Mexican-American diaspora.\textsuperscript{579} This effort continued well into the new millennium. In 2003, the Foreign Ministry established the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME) in order to strengthen Mexico’s network with Mexican-Americans in the US, and to offer strategic focus to the Mexican government’s relationship with Mexican-American organizations.\textsuperscript{580} The IME was the successor to both the PACME and the Presidential Office for Mexicans Abroad.\textsuperscript{581} President Fox appointed Juan Hernandez as its first director. Hernandez traveled throughout the US and went back and forth to Mexico, holding conferences

\textsuperscript{574} Hufbauer and Schott, *NAFTA Revisited*, 457.
\textsuperscript{575} Huntington, *Who Are We?*, 283.
\textsuperscript{576} Ibid, 283.
\textsuperscript{577} Barreto and Muñoz, 444.
\textsuperscript{578} Ibid, 444.
\textsuperscript{579} Huntington, *Who Are We?*, 280.
\textsuperscript{581} Ibid
with various groups and people on countless issues affecting Mexicans in the US. The IME is governed by the National Council for Mexican Communities Abroad and focuses on emboldening Mexican-American communities, as well as encouraging those communities to strengthen their connections to their communities of origin. The IME was created to cultivate a network of expatriate leaders and organizations. The IME unites all significant investors in Mexico and the US to discuss the opportunities and trials facing Mexican-Americans. The most important element of the IME is its Advisory Council, which is composed of more than 100 counselors that are elected by Mexican-Americans in their community to represent them in dealings with the Mexican government. A significant proportion of IME Councilors are actively engaged in MHTAs.

The IME builds networks for the transference of skills and expertise between the Mexican-American diaspora and Mexico, and it responds to the requests of Mexican-American communities by organizing the appropriate ministries in Mexico and conferring with the diaspora via the Advisory Council regarding policies and programs concerning Mexican-Americans. The Institute has successfully involved the Mexican-American diaspora in a more open and organized process; it has essentially strengthened the diaspora’s ties to Mexico.

In 2002, Fox appointed Candido Morales as director of the IME. Morales had two major responsibilities: to promote and deliver support to Mexican-Americans in the US, and to unite their political and economic power in order to assist the continued development of Mexico. Morales was assisted by an advisory council composed of 120 individuals from cities throughout the US. Activists and groups in the US had a threefold acercamiento agenda: protect Mexican-

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582 Navarro, 628.
584 Ibid
586 Ibid
Americans’ right to vote in elections in Mexico, fight for dual nationality, and ensure adequate representation in Mexico’s Congress. Those who supported dual nationality regarded it as an intermediate step to dual citizenship; such a status would enable them to vote in the 2006 presidential elections in Mexico.

In another maneuver toward greater political acercamiento, Fox established the Binational Commission on Voting Abroad in 2002. It was actually as a result of a recommendation by the IME that the extension occurred and Mexicans abroad acquired the right to vote. In 2005, the Mexican Congress allowed Mexicans abroad, for the first time, the opportunity to register to vote by absentee ballot. According to Navarro, Mexican officials expected that if Mexican-Americans voted in Mexico’s 2006 presidential election, they could generate approximately twelve million votes from the US. However, only a small percentage of individuals that were eligible registered to vote for the 2006 presidential elections. Only 57,000 Mexicans abroad actually applied to vote in Mexico’s presidential elections. In relative terms, however, this is standard for first-time voting among members of a diaspora.

A similar situation occurred with the presidential elections that were held on July 1st, 2012. Only 62,000 expatriates had registered to vote before the deadline. Three-quarters were in the US. Only approximately 40,000 expatriate votes were cast. Moreover, as part of their continued outreach to their diaspora, Mexican consulates were vigorously encouraging Mexicans

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587 Navarro, 630.
588 ‘Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME).’
589 Fox, ‘Mapping Mexican Migrant Civil Society.’
590 Navarro, 630.
592 Fox, ‘Mapping Mexican Migrant Civil Society.’
593 ‘Mexico’s presidential election. Diaspora apathy,’ 48.
in the US to naturalize and acquire US citizenship, while maintaining their Mexican
nationality.\textsuperscript{595}

Despite the low voting numbers, these events advanced the politics of \textit{acercamiento}
between Mexico and its diaspora in the US. In an unparalleled way, Mexico’s politics
transcended the US-Mexico border to become a fundamental part of the Mexican-American
political experience.\textsuperscript{596} Shain states that while Mexico may continue its efforts to reintegrate its
diaspora in Mexican national life, its attempts will be limited because Mexican-Americans ‘have
a strong sense of themselves as \textit{Americans}.’\textsuperscript{597} The “Americanized” diaspora exerts greater
economic and cultural influence on its homeland than Mexico does on Mexican-Americans.\textsuperscript{598}

Shain states that both the Mexican and American governments mobilized or abandoned
the Mexican-American diaspora, depending on their political and economic goals. Primarily, the
Mexican government thinks that Mexican-Americans, by acquiring US citizenship, increase the
number of Americans less likely to be un receptive to Mexico.\textsuperscript{599} For the US, there is an interest
in Mexican-Americans becoming American citizens because it enhances their political and social
integration into American society.\textsuperscript{600}

Currently, Mexico’s relationship and cooperation with the Mexican-American diaspora
consist of various projects coordinated and organized through the 42 consulates in the US. Many
of these projects encourage formal education for the members of the diaspora. For example, each
summer, the Mexican government sends roughly 250 Mexican teachers to assist in American
schools that need bilingual teachers, and it provides approximately 300,000 Spanish books to
American elementary schools and public libraries. The Mexican government also funds
American training courses for bilingual teachers. Furthermore, by providing technical assistance

\textsuperscript{595} Huntington, \textit{Who Are We?}, 282.
\textsuperscript{596} Navarro, 632.
\textsuperscript{597} Shain, \textit{Marketing the American Creed Abroad}, 195.
\textsuperscript{598} Ibid, 195.
\textsuperscript{599} Leiken, ‘The Melting Border,’ 42.
\textsuperscript{600} Ibid, 42.
and material, the government promotes literacy programs for roughly 5,000 Mexican-Americans who cannot read and write in Spanish, or for those who want to complete their elementary education.

Some projects initiated by the Mexican government on behalf of its diaspora support organizations in the Mexican-American community. Through its consulates, the Mexican government sponsors trips by Mexican-American associations to Mexico, organizes meetings between the leaders of migrant organizations and representatives in their communities of origin, and coordinates sports competitions in the US to help establish the identity of Mexican-American leaders and communities.\(^{601}\) The government also launches youth meetings in Mexico for young people in the Mexican-American community who were born in the US.

Over the past few decades, the members of the Mexican-American diaspora have become treasured for their financial contributions to their families, friends, and communities. Furthermore, the members of the diaspora are frequently regarded as heroes for enduring the threats of the border, as well as the challenges and difficulties of immigrant life. Many Mexican-Americans are political actors and economic donors. The Mexican government has come to perceive its diaspora as having acquired influence in American society, politics, and culture. Mexican officials now regard its diaspora as a ‘precious resource from which to draw support, both in the domestic and international arena.’\(^{602}\) Leiken writes that the Mexican government has started to perceive its interest in the Mexican-American diaspora becoming efficient and influential.\(^{603}\) When the interests of the Mexican-American diaspora coincide with those of the Mexican government, a type of “working relationship” is established, as in the case of NAFTA.\(^{604}\)

\(^{601}\) Ibid
\(^{602}\) Gutiérrez, ‘The Mexican Diaspora in California,’ 221.
\(^{603}\) Leiken, ‘The Melting Border,’ 8.
\(^{604}\) García-Acevedo, ‘Return to Aztlán: Mexico’s Policies toward Chicanas/os,’ 145.
Huntington argues that Mexico is an extreme example of a foreign government’s increased attempts to influence US policy, and to mobilize its diaspora for that objective. The Mexican government’s new policy toward the Mexican-American community can be viewed as part of a greater rapprochement of the US and Mexico. NAFTA, amplified trade, migration and investment, as well as the warmer and more entrenched bilateral relations have contributed to the creation of a special era in US-Mexico relations and a unique, multidimensional relationship between both countries.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the kin state, Mexico, and its relationship with the US. This relationship has evolved a great deal throughout the past century, especially in the last few decades, alternating between resentment, mistrust, and friendship. The relationship between Mexico and the Mexican-American diaspora has also changed significantly in the last few decades. The Mexican government once resented its diaspora, but over time and whenever it served its purposes, it fostered a relationship with the diaspora in order to exploit its growing political weight. Mexico now values its diaspora and recognizes the benefits associated with having a closer relationship with it. The Mexican-American diaspora has more influence on the Mexican government than the other way around, and the Mexican government needs the diaspora and its support, economically and politically, much more than the diaspora needs its homeland.

The following chapter will discuss the Mexican-American diaspora and the significant void that exists in the literature on it. It will also discuss the political interests of the diaspora, as well as the prominent Mexican-American political figures and leaders. The chapter will examine the socioeconomic status of the Mexican-American community, and demonstrate its political potential. Finally, it will describe the courting of the Latino vote by both major political parties in the US, and the Mexican-American community’s role in American elections.

605 Huntington, Who Are We?, 287.
606 Leiken, ‘The Melting Border,’ 42.
Chapter 6- Mexican-American Potential and the Void

Previous chapters have remarked on the gaps and deficiencies in the literature on the Mexican-American diaspora. There is not much information on the diaspora in general, and little or nothing in the way of recent statistics. Even in works published in the past year, scholars continue to refer to the survey on Mexican-Americans that was conducted in 1999. Although interesting and valuable, it underlines that we are still relying on data that are over a decade old. This study has used the 2006 Latino National Survey, as well as the 2010 US census, but neither provides much information regarding the voting patterns of Mexican-Americans.

There are, of course, statistics on Latinos, but Mexican-Americans as a sub-group are not usually accounted for. Scholars tend to include Mexican-Americans under the umbrella term “Latinos” and talk about this latter group as though it is homogenous. In fact, it is not, although there are many similarities between Mexican-Americans and other Latinos. Although what I observe in the data is a problem in general, for the purposes of this study, it is reasonable to operate on the basis of a rough similarity between the two groups.

As noted, Mexican-American demographics, political participation, and voting behavior are playing an increasing role in US policy-making, in trade as in other areas. Apart from lobbying, voter mobilization and voting patterns are the two channels of influence of the Mexican-American diaspora. This chapter will discuss prominent Mexican-Americans in US politics, and the increasing political participation of Mexican-Americans and other Latinos. It will examine the courting of the Latino vote by both major political parties, and the socioeconomic status and increasing potential of the Mexican-American diaspora. Finally, in an attempt to address, and possibly fill, a major void in the literature this chapter will return to the specific issue of Mexican-American voting patterns.

The Missing Data

Garcia and Sanchez note that our knowledge of Latino public opinion is somewhat new and
scarce. However, we know even less when it comes to Mexican-Americans in particular. The Mexican-American diaspora has been the least studied. There are no recent statistics on Mexican-Americans, apart from geographic distribution and population size. The statistics that do exist include all Latinos under one category, and do not differentiate between Latino subgroups. The most recent research that actually surveys Mexican-Americans regarding voting patterns is the 1999 National Survey on Latinos in America (NSLA).

Some scholars have, however, noted the scarcity of literature and empirical evidence concerning Mexican-Americans. Studies of partisanship in the US have usually relied on national data collections like the American National Election Study and Gallup Polls, which include few questions on Latinos. Most of the studies that have surveyed Latino political behaviour have samples that are comparatively small or ones that are not nationally representative. John A. García states that collapsing the numerous Latino groups into one broad group overemphasizes the case and misdirects policy makers, researchers, and journalists into looking at Latinos as mainly one unified group. Furthermore, we know little regarding the electoral patterns of Mexican-Americans. It is essentially difficult to generalize about Latino politics because Latinos are arguably the most diverse of all ethnic or racial groups in the US.

Considering Mexican-Americans make up the majority of the Latino population in the US, it does not seem accurate or justified to refer to all Latinos as one homogeneous group. However, there is something to be said for extrapolating information on Mexican-Americans from statistics on all Latinos. Considering Mexican-Americans and other Latinos in the US hold similar political opinions and interests, it is arguably acceptable for most purposes to use data on Latinos to speak for Mexican-Americans. One must be mindful, however, that this is a flawed endeavor.

607 Garcia and Sanchez, 105.
608 Rubenzer, 169.
609 Alvarez and Bedolla, 33.
610 Ibid, 33.
613 Garcia and Sanchez, 306.
since it will not be precise. Nevertheless, considering the limited and dated statistics on Mexican-Americans, this is the best option we have. It is important for scholars to acknowledge this issue and to not simply write about Mexican-Americans while employing statistics on Latinos as though there is no difference. The distinction should be made.

Recently published articles and books on Mexican-Americans still rely on the most recent data available on this subgroup- the NSLA published in 1999. Sometimes, however, scholars do not even rely on these dated statistics, but instead write about Mexican-Americans while relying on statistics pertaining to Latinos in general. They make no distinction between the two. In a book published in 2006, Xóchitl Bada, Jonathan Fox, and Andrew Selee use Latino voting statistics although they are only referring to one Latino subgroup in the US, Mexican-Americans. They do, however, use statistics on Mexican legal permanent residents and the geographic distribution of the Mexican population in the US, but nothing specific to Mexican-Americans when it comes to voting or political participation of any kind.

Using statistics on Latinos in general and attempting to make statements or draw conclusions on one specific subgroup is problematic, as discussed above. Failing to contemplate distinctive intergroup dissimilarities among Latinos can create confusion in voting studies that combine national-origin groups under a sole pan-ethnic title. Unfortunately, many authors do this; they refer to Mexican-Americans as Latinos, and do not differentiate between the two. For instance, Armando Navarro uses the term “Mexicanos/Latinos” in his writings. There are many such examples in the literature. A simple way to avoid misunderstandings is to be mindful of the distinction between the Latino subgroups, and to acknowledge at the outset the difficulty involved in using statistics on one group to describe another group. Again, I believe that it is reasonable to operate on the basis of a rough similarity between the two groups, and to use data on Latinos- with suitable caution- to speak to Mexican-American patterns.

614 Arvizu and Garcia, 121.
615 Navarro, 625.
In *Hispanics and the U.S. Political System*, Garcia and Sanchez used the 1999 NSLA although their book was published almost 10 years after that survey was conducted. Surprisingly, the authors also use statistics and data from 1992 and 1995. Another such example is an article published in 2011 by the *Political Research Quarterly* that speaks specifically about the Mexican-American diaspora and their political participation. The authors state that they confine their analysis to Mexican-Americans.\(^6\) This article was co-authored by the Director of Chicana/o Studies at Stanford University, Gary M. Segura, a renowned scholar in American politics, Latino politics, and Latin American immigration. Its data are taken from the NSLA, even though the article was published twelve years later. Another example is John A. García’s *Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests*, published in 2012. He also relies on the NSLA. The use of outdated statistics when writing about Latinos or Mexican-Americans today is a momentous problem: it seriously limits the contribution of such studies to our understanding of these significant communities.

Although the NSLA generated extremely interesting results, it is puzzling as to why scholars were still relying on this material over a decade later. There is no other explanation apart from the fact that empirical material on Mexican-Americans, specifically with respect to political participation, is severely lacking. As dated as it is, the NSLA is the most recent source of much information on the Mexican-American diaspora. It is important, therefore, to go over the relevant parts.

The NSLA was conducted between June 30 and August 30, 1999. The International Communications Research conducted fieldwork, and respondents were selected at random. This study was based on a countrywide representative sample consisting of 4,614 adults (18 years and older), including 2,417 Latinos and 2,197 non-Latinos.\(^7\) Regarding the non-Latinos, there were 1,802 white adults and 285 black adults. The Latinos were interviewed in either English or

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\(^6\) Santoro and Segura, 176.
\(^7\) ‘National Survey on Latinos in America (1999).’
Spanish, based on their preference. A total of 53 per cent of the interviews were conducted in Spanish. Interviews were conducted with 818 Mexicans, 318 Puerto Ricans, 312 Cubans, and 593 Central or South Americans. The results were weighted to the Latino population in the US, so that nationalities are represented in their actual proportions (based on the estimates from the Census Bureau’s Population Survey).

The data are basically composed of self-reports by Mexican-Americans and the other Latinos in the US. While surveys offer various benefits, it is important to keep in mind that all data are self-reported, so it is less accurate than records of voter registration or voter turnout, for instance.\textsuperscript{618} Whether people are absentminded or dishonest, they are inclined to say they voted even if this is not actually the case.\textsuperscript{619} Regarding Latino turnout in the 1996 presidential elections, Rodolfo O. de la Garza and colleagues show that larger numbers of Latinos claimed to have voted than actually presented themselves at the polls. Over-reporting was a serious issue in this election. It appears to have been most common among Latinos that were educated, successful, and had a sense of civic duty.\textsuperscript{620} Over-reporting is an issue with all surveys. Another issue with surveys is that they are basically a “snapshot in time”; they represent an opinion that is relevant to the respondent at that time but might not be relevant years later.\textsuperscript{621}

This survey is useful when it comes to showing the similarities between Mexican-Americans and Latinos in general. I will list certain questions that were posed to respondents, and it will be evident that the opinions and interests of both groups are very similar. One question in the NSLA asked Latino and Mexican-American respondents who they would vote for if the 2000 presidential election were being held on that day. As seen in Table 6.1, a plurality of

\textsuperscript{618} Barreto and Muñoz, 435.
\textsuperscript{620} Ibid, 344.
\textsuperscript{621} Arvizu and Garcia, 123.
all Latinos, including Mexican-Americans, claimed they would vote for the Republican, George W. Bush.

Table 6.1 Who would you vote for in the 2000 presidential election?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Al Gore</th>
<th>George W. Bush</th>
<th>Cannot vote/not registered</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another question asked the respondents about their opinions regarding the Democratic Party. They had the following answers to choose from: very favourable, somewhat favourable, very unfavourable, somewhat unfavourable, or don’t know. Mexican-Americans and all other Latinos answered in very similar ways. As illustrated in Table 6.2, the majority of respondents had a favorable (either “very” or “somewhat”) opinion of the Democratic Party.

Table 6.2 Latinos’ and Mexican-Americans’ opinions on the Democratic Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very favorable</th>
<th>Somewhat favorable</th>
<th>Very unfavorable</th>
<th>Somewhat unfavorable</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents were asked the same question with respect to the Republican Party. The figures for Mexican-Americans were once again very similar to the figures on all Latinos. As evident in Table 6.3, the majority of Mexican-American respondents claimed their opinions were “very” or “somewhat” favourable regarding the Republican Party, slightly higher than for all Latinos.

Table 6.3 Latinos’ and Mexican-Americans’ opinions on the Republican Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very favorable</th>
<th>Somewhat favorable</th>
<th>Very unfavorable</th>
<th>Somewhat unfavorable</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{622}\) ‘National Survey on Latinos in America (1999).’

\(^{623}\) Ibid

\(^{624}\) Ibid
Another question asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed that Latinos in the US share few political goals and interests. Table 6.4 shows that the answers from both Latinos and Mexican-Americans are very similar.

Table 6.4 Do Latinos in the US share few political goals and interests?625

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though the majority of Mexican-American and Latino respondents indicate that they thought Latinos in the US share few political goals and interests, the percentages for both groups are almost identical. Furthermore, as is evident with the other questions, the responses from both Mexican-Americans and Latinos are very similar.

The following question asked both Latinos and Mexican-Americans whether they thought that Latinos were currently working together to achieve political goals. Again, the figures for both groups were quite similar. As seen in Table 6.5, the majority of all Latinos think that Latinos are working together to achieve political goals.

Table 6.5 Are Latinos currently working together to achieve political goals?626

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Working together</th>
<th>Not working together</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both Mexican-Americans and Latinos were asked what would happen if various Latino groups worked together politically. The two groups responded in almost identical fashion again. As Table 6.6 shows, an overwhelming majority of respondents thought that Latino groups would be better off if they worked together politically.

Table 6.6 What would happen if Latinos worked together politically?627

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625 Ibid
626 Ibid
Better off | Worse off | No difference | Don’t know
--- | --- | --- | ---
Mex-Am | 85% | 2% | 12% | 1%
Latinos | 84% | 2% | 12% | 1%

One question asked the respondents whether they had worked as a volunteer or for pay for a Latino political candidate. As is clear in Table 6.7, the majority had not.

Table 6.7 Have you worked as a volunteer or for pay for a Latino political candidate?\(^{628}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents were also asked whether they had attended a public meeting or demonstration regarding Latino concerns. The figures for both Mexicans and Latinos were exactly the same; a total of 21 per cent said yes, and 79 per cent said no. The majority, therefore, had not. Another question asked whether they had contributed money to a Latino candidate or political organization. As is clear in table 6.8, the majority had not.

Table 6.8 Have you contributed money to a Latino candidate or political organization?\(^{629}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, the respondents were asked whether they had, in the past 10 years, been asked to work as a volunteer or for pay for a Latino candidate. As is indicated in Table 6.9, the majority had not been asked.

Table 6.9 Have you been asked to work for a Latino candidate in the past 10 years?\(^{630}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{627}\) Ibid
\(^{628}\) Ibid
\(^{629}\) Ibid
\(^{630}\) Ibid
Mexican-Americans and Latinos were also asked whether they had, in the past 10 years, been solicited to attend a public meeting or demonstration regarding Latino concerns. Table 6.10 shows that the majority had not been asked to do so.

Table 6.10 Have you been solicited to attend a public meeting or demonstration?\(^{631}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They were also asked whether they had, in the past 10 years, been asked to contribute money to a Latino candidate or political organization. The figures for both Mexicans and Latinos were identical. A total of five per cent said yes, while a total of 95 per cent said no.\(^{632}\)

The tables thus far indicate that the majority of respondents were not actively engaged in specific political organizations or parties, nor were they asked to participate by political parties or representatives. Latino mobilization will be further discussed at a later point, but suffice it to say that a great deal has changed since 1999; political mobilization has increased among all Latinos over the past decade or so. As will be examined, the courting of all Latinos by the two main political parties in the US continues to increase. Therefore, the figures would arguably be much different if the NSLA were conducted today. What is evident from the tables thus far is that Mexican-Americans and other Latinos are clearly interested in politics, and respond in almost identical fashion to each question. The views of Mexican-Americans and Latinos are, therefore, almost identical in most cases. This, consequently, justifies the use of Latino statistics to speak to Mexican-American voting patterns and political interests.

As illustrated by the NSLA, Mexican and Latino numbers are also similar when it comes to voter registration. Table 6.11 makes this clear. (RTV signifies “registered to vote”.)

\(^{631}\) Ibid
\(^{632}\) Ibid
Table 6.11 Voter registration percentages among Latinos and Mexican-Americans\textsuperscript{633}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RTV</th>
<th>Not RTV</th>
<th>Non-citizens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

US citizens were asked whether they had ever voted in an election in the US. As Table 6.12 makes clear, the majority had voted in an American election.

Table 6.12 Have you ever voted in an American election?\textsuperscript{634}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, regarding elections in their home country, Mexicans had mostly not participated. Since they moved to the US, a total of 28 per cent of Mexicans had voted in Mexican elections, while 72 per cent had not.

Respondents were asked which party they trusted to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faced over the next few years. Table 6.13 makes it clear that the majority thought the Democrats would do a better job than the Republicans.

Table 6.13 Would the Democrats or the Republicans do a better job?\textsuperscript{635}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Both equally</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another question asked the respondents which party they thought had more concern for Latinos. A plurality of Mexican-Americans and Latinos thought the Democrats had more concern for Latinos. As indicated by Table 6.14, the number of respondents that thought there was “no difference” between the parties was close to the number of respondents that chose the Democrats.

Table 6.14 Which party has more concern for Latinos?\textsuperscript{636}
Mexican-American and Latino respondents were asked who they voted for in the November 1996 presidential election and 1998 congressional election in their district. As illustrated in Tables 6.15 and 6.16, the majority of respondents voted for the Democrats in both the 1996 and 1998 elections.

Table 6.15 Which candidate did you vote for in the November 1996 presidential election?\(^{637}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bill Clinton</th>
<th>Bob Dole</th>
<th>Ross Perot</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.17 Which candidate did you vote for in the 1998 congressional election?\(^{638}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents were also asked how much attention they paid to politics and government. Table 6.18 reveals that 44 per cent of Mexican-Americans are interested in politics and government, although their interest level varies from “a lot” to a “fair amount”. The plurality of Mexicans (47 per cent) are not very interested in politics and government, but they are still in the category of those who are interested to some degree, since it is arguable that “not much” also means “a little”. Therefore, the majority of Mexicans are, in fact, interested to some extent in politics and government. The Mexican-American figures are again close to those of the Latino respondents.

\(^{636}\) Ibid
\(^{637}\) Ibid
\(^{638}\) Ibid
Table 6.18 How much attention do you pay to American politics and government?639

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Fair amount</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents were asked what their views were in most political matters. Table 6.19 shows that the majority of respondents claim their views in political matters are conservative and moderate, while only less than a quarter (Mexican-American respondents) claim their views are liberal (the figure is just over a quarter for Latinos).

Table 6.19 What are your views on the majority of political matters?640

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Garcia and Sanchez note that the Latino pattern was similar to that of Anglos. They claim that many scholars find this surprising since it is often assumed that Latinos are more liberal politically than non-Latinos.641

Another question asked respondents what they considered themselves politically. Table 6.20 illustrates that there is a bit of a discrepancy here since only 15 per cent of Mexicans consider themselves Republican although a plurality define their political views as conservative (in comparison to liberal). It is the same with Latinos.

Table 6.20 What do you consider yourself politically?642

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Something else</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

639 Ibid
640 Ibid
641 Garcia and Sanchez, 195.
642 ‘National Survey on Latinos in America (1999).’
The respondents that considered themselves Independent were asked which party they were closer to. As Table 6.21 shows, the majority of Mexican-Americans and Latinos said the Democratic Party; this is again in contrast to the fact that a plurality of both Mexican-American and Latino respondents consider their political views to be conservative.

Table 6.21 As Independents, which party are you closer to?643

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There has not been a survey since the NSLA that has focused explicitly on Mexican-Americans. The answers to the questions posed by the NSLA indicate that, in almost all cases, the views of Mexican-Americans and Latinos are pretty much the same. As mentioned, although it is not ideal, this suggests that we can, in fact, use data and information on Latinos to address the political interests and opinions of Mexican-Americans.

Mexican-Americans in Politics

Along with the rising numbers of Latinos in the US, there has also been a significant increase in the numbers of elected Latinos in politics at all levels of government.644 By 2015, there will be more Mexicans in the US than Canadians in Canada.645 Furthermore, an increasing number of leaders represent Mexican-Americans in the US.646 Although it could be argued that having Latino representatives is not a required condition for sufficient Latino representation, Latino-origin representatives and officials can influence outcomes in a way that benefits their community.647 Roughly 6,000 Latinos serve in elected office at all levels of government throughout the US. Many of those are Mexican-Americans. Salvador Espino is one example; he is a council-member in Fort Worth, Texas. Espino was born in Mexico and is a naturalized

643 Ibid
644 Ambrosio, 116.
645 Pastor, 157.
647 Arvizu and Garcia, 105.
citizen; he regards his candidacy as an occasion to demonstrate that the Latino community has a “stake” in what happens in city hall.\textsuperscript{648} The increased electoral competition of Latinos for political office is experiencing mounting success at both the local and state levels. California is an excellent example; this state has a large number of Latinos, primarily of Mexican descent. As of the 2010 census, 81.5 per cent of the Latino population in California is Mexican-American. Statewide, Latinos hold 762 elective offices, and account for a total of 20 per cent of the 120 assemblypersons and state senators.

Mexican-Americans have engaged in various political activities, including charity, social work, community involvement, and office-holding, which has resulted in the increased development of communal organizations within Mexican-American communities and the establishment of coalitions with other groups involved in US politics.\textsuperscript{649} Furthermore, as a result of their political engagement, Mexican-Americans are becoming increasingly represented at all levels of government, as both elected and appointed officials. Table 6.22 illustrates some of the many examples of Mexican-Americans in political office.

Table 6.22 Examples of Mexican-Americans in political office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position/title</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L.Roybal-Allard</td>
<td>1st Mexican-American woman elected to US Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Apodaca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Richardson</td>
<td>Richardson’s Mexican-American ‘identity and fluency in the Spanish language helped him to connect with his heavily Hispanic constituency’ in New Mexico.\textsuperscript{650}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. H. Castro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Bustamante</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Villaraigosa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{648} García, \textit{Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests}, 161.

\textsuperscript{649} Bedolla, 87.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F. Nuñez</td>
<td>Speaker of CA State Assembly (1998-2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Cisneros</td>
<td>Mayor of San Antonio (elected 1981-4 terms); Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (1993-1997)</td>
<td>1st Hispanic and Mex-Am to serve as mayor of a major US city; he was praised for the organizational and policy success of HUD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Echaveste</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of Staff under Clinton</td>
<td>Currently the President of the NCLR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Murguía</td>
<td>Deputy Director of legislative affairs under Clinton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Guzman</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>1st Hispanic woman (and 2nd Latino) to be appointed to the 14th Court of Appeals (2001); appointed to the Supreme Court of Texas (2009) and 1st Hispanic woman to serve on the state’s highest court; recognized as “Latina Judge of the Year” (2009) by the Hispanic National Bar Association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Gonzales</td>
<td>Attorney General</td>
<td>1st Mex-Am to serve as attorney general (under George W. Bush)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Marin</td>
<td>41st US Treasurer</td>
<td>1st Mex-Am woman to hold this post which made her the highest ranking Mex-Am woman in the Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. E. Cabral</td>
<td>42nd US Treasurer</td>
<td>Succeeded R. Marin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Salazar</td>
<td>Secretary of the Interior</td>
<td>1st Mex-Am US Senator from Colorado</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mexican-American representatives have been elected as mayors in various cities throughout the US and serve on city councils and in state legislatures. Mexican-Americans are judges at both the state and federal levels, as well as on state supreme courts. In 1996, in Texas, Mexican-Americans comprised 25 per cent of the State Senate, and 20 per cent of the House of

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652 Bedolla, 88.
653 Ibid, 88.
Representatives. Furthermore, in the US House of Representatives, there were a total of 19 Mexican-American members. In 2005, Mexican-Americans held the prominent positions of US Attorney General, Governor of New Mexico, US Senator from Colorado, and Mayor of Los Angeles. The numbers of Mexican-Americans in American politics continue to increase.

As a result of the 2010-midterm elections, and for the first time in US history, three Latino candidates (all are Republican, and two are Mexican-American) were elected to significant statewide offices. The first Latino governor of Nevada, Brian Sandoval, a Mexican-American, won the governor’s race. Voters in New Mexico elected America’s first Latina governor, Susana Martinez. Two of her ancestors, Toribio Ortega and Adolfo Martinez, were Mexican revolutionaries. Martinez is unique in that she is the only governor who is Latino, female, and Republican. Many Republican strategists are studying her because it looks promising that she will be able to appeal to Latinos. According to the Public Policy Polling, Martinez’s numbers are extremely impressive because she retains high marks in a state won by Obama in 2008. Furthermore, apart from her nearly undisputed support from Republicans, a significant number (32 per cent) of Democrats claim to like her, and a large number of Independents approve of her as well. Various polls put her approval ratings above 50 per cent.

Furthermore, in Florida, Marco Rubio won the US Senate race. At the time, he was identified as a possible Republican vice-presidential nominee. Many political commentators and journalists believed Rubio could attract the Latino vote and determine the victory in the

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654 Esman, Diasporas in the Contemporary World, 96.
655 Ibid, 96.
656 In 2004, Sandoval received the Latino Coalition’s “Most Influential Hispanic in the US Award”.
657 ‘New Mexico’s governor. How to grab them,’ The Economist (December 17th-30th, 2011): 42.
659 Ibid
Martinez had also been mentioned as a potential vice-presidential candidate. Many believed that Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney might strengthen his appeal among Latinos by choosing either candidate as running mate. Romney, however, chose Paul Ryan, a favourite among members of the Tea Party. For politically inclined Latinos, the pathway to elected office may be “greater” given the climate of both the political parties and the awareness that a Latino base often supports Latino candidates that address their community’s interests; party affiliation is less important.

**Courting the Latino Vote**

As mentioned, Mexican-Americans, like nearly all Latinos, are conservative on various social issues, are religious, and family-oriented. A plurality of Mexican-Americans consider religion the “most important” element in their daily lives, while 39 per cent consider it “very important”, and 30 per cent state it is “somewhat important”. The majority of Mexican-Americans (77 per cent) are Catholic. The same values also predispose Mexican-Americans to communitarian economic policies that are generally regarded as liberal. For example, in California, the majority rent rather than own homes, and they are inclined to be against Proposition 13, which limits property taxes. They instead favour taxes that contribute to better education. Although their culture and values align them more closely with Republicans, Mexican-Americans, and Latinos in general, nonetheless tend to vote Democrat. They do not, however, align themselves with either the Republicans or the Democrats; neither political party

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664 ‘National Survey on Latinos in America (1999).’
665 ‘Latinos and American Politics,’ 32.
can count on their vote. They are characterized as “swing voters” and vote with the party that represents their interests at the time of the election.

It has been said that with every presidential election, Latinos are discovered again. There are always great expectations when it comes to the political significance of Latinos. They tend to receive a great deal of attention in the beginning phases of a campaign, typically with a reference to their increasing numbers. The attention paid to Latinos by both political parties has proliferated, simply because of demographics. It has thus become the political campaigning custom to court the Latino vote. This development exemplifies recognition of the importance of the Latino vote. Both the Republicans and the Democrats exerted a great deal of effort in the 2000 presidential elections to court the Latino population, which they considered a swing bloc.

The Republican Party strategically used family values and social issues to mobilize Latino voters. By doing so, the party acquired a larger share of the Latino vote in both the 2000 and 2004 elections. In the 2000 presidential election, a great deal of attention, and approximately 10 million dollars, was spent courting Latino voters. Republicans were convinced that Latinos were inherently conservative and that in the 2000 presidential election the party had a candidate that was especially appealing to Latino voters. George W. Bush not only spoke Spanish, but he also had Mexican-Americans in his family. The Republican Party stressed conventional social values, like an emphasis on the family; they also underscored Latinos’ strong work ethic and stated that the Republicans’ support of a tax reduction would especially benefit small business (many Latinos own their own small businesses).

667 Ibid, 41.
668 Bedolla, 14.
670 Garcia and Sanchez, 196.
671 Ibid, 188.
Bush outspent Al Gore, his Democratic rival, on advertising that targeted Latinos. The Bush campaign spent a great deal of effort creating a strong Spanish-language outreach campaign. This effort is said to account for the significant increase in Latino support for Bush. In 2002, Bush introduced the first Spanish presidential radio broadcast as part of his and his party’s efforts to develop closer ties to the Latino community. Bush’s election shifted the Republican Party’s position on Latino immigrants and immigration in general. It also repositioned Latinos’ perspectives on the Republican Party.

Bush received some support from Latinos because his brother Jeb was Governor of Florida, and his sister-in-law was a Mexican-American. George P. Bush, George W. Bush’s nephew, is a young conservative leader who wants to attract more Mexican-Americans like himself to the Republican Party. President Bush, the first American president to speak Spanish, received roughly 35 per cent of the Latino vote. Some estimates put the percentage even higher; the Pew Hispanic Center maintains that Bush received roughly 40 per cent of the Latino vote. Many commentators claimed it was a victory for Latinos, who had received unparalleled attention as voters; Latinos turned out to vote in record numbers in 2000. Bush received more Latino votes than any other Republican presidential candidate in American history.

The 2004 presidential election was similar to the previous one in many ways. Regarding the Latino electorate, many of the efforts undertaken in 2000 were intensified this time around; both the Democrats and the Republicans amended and strengthened their campaigns to appeal to

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672 Bedolla, 14.
674 Ibid, 160.
676 Ibid
678 Garcia and Sanchez, 137.
Both parties spent a significant amount of money in courting the Latino electorate. Voter turnout increased from 5.9 million in 2000 to approximately seven million four years later. The same trends that were identified in the 2000 presidential election—specifically, the increased support for the Republican candidate—were present in 2004.

A great deal of attention was paid to Latinos in the 2004 presidential elections; they were regarded as the “target” or “battleground” group. The Democratic Party tends to view Latinos as committed partisans. While this was true of Mexican-Americans traditionally, the number of Latinos that identify with the Democrats has weakened since the population has become increasingly diverse with respect to class, national origin, and geographic distribution. 679

President Bush engaged in specific (and mostly symbolic) outreach actions to Latinos, including radio speeches in Spanish, various meetings with Mexican President Fox, and a Cinco de Mayo celebration at the White House. 680 These examples indicate that President Bush and the Republican Party were catering to the Mexican-American diaspora, as well as the Mexican government, and not simply to all Latinos. According to DeSipio and Leal, many people incorrectly state that Latinos were politically insignificant in 2004 because their vote did not contribute to the election’s outcome. They claim that the opposite is true and that these commentators disregard the increasing significance of Latino voters. 681 In the 2004 elections, Latinos were activists, voters, and political candidates. An unparalleled number of Latinos voted in the election, and a record number of Latinos are now in the Senate and House of Representatives. 682

679 Ibid, 137.
682 Ibid, 58.
Latinos’ votes are pursued, and their vote and their degree of participation will indisputably increase because drives and activists’ outreach efforts function as a stimulus to organize Latinos and motivate them to register and vote.\textsuperscript{684} The authors argue that Latino influence is increasing in the US, and cite examples of the Bush administration actively courting the Mexican-American diaspora.

In 2007, candidates competing for the Democratic presidential nomination partook in a bilingual presidential discussion broadcast on \textit{Univisión}, the most popular Spanish-language network.\textsuperscript{685} This had never before taken place. There was amplified use of social media to interact with and mobilize voters, increased use of Spanish-language media to influence Latino voters, and heightened investment and organization by labor unions pursuing Latino voters.\textsuperscript{686} Latinos represent the quickest-growing portion of the electorate, and both the Republicans and Democrats have taken note. Both parties continue to target Latinos.

Barreto, Collingwood, and Manzano argue that a group usually has the maximum influence during the last 30 days of a campaign. In order for this to happen, however, the campaign must have recognized the group as a prospective influence group and the media and the candidate campaigns must have acknowledged and monitored Latinos as a crucial voting bloc.\textsuperscript{687} These authors assess the influence of the Latino “group” through three different factors: media coverage of the Latino vote, campaign advertisements targeting Latinos, and campaign attempts to mobilize them.\textsuperscript{688} These three factors have certainly been present at every recent presidential election.

Leading up to the 2008 presidential elections, Barack Obama spent roughly $20 million on “Latino outreach efforts”, such as Spanish-language advertisements and the establishment of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{684} Garcia and Sanchez, 133.
\item \textsuperscript{685} Bedolla, 14.
\item \textsuperscript{686} García, \textit{Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests}, 98.
\item \textsuperscript{688} Ibid, 915.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
“Viva Obama!” clubs throughout the US (reminiscent of John F. Kennedy’s 1960 campaign).689 The Obama campaign encouraged Latinos to get out and vote. Both John McCain, the Republican presidential candidate, and Obama attempted to court Latinos and participated in various Latino-oriented events. Both candidates spoke at the annual conferences of LULAC and NCLR. Furthermore, Obama emphasized his immigrant background as well as his work with MALDEF as a civil rights lawyer in Chicago.690

Even in the most recent campaign, the candidates believed it was important to emphasize their “pro-immigration” stance. Romney spoke about how his father was born in Mexico.691 Although his stance on amnesty was less liberal, Romney clearly found it important to address immigration throughout the campaign. A former Republican candidate, Newt Gingrich, had a widespread Latino outreach association.692 While he was campaigning, Gingrich distributed a weekly newsletter in Spanish to Latino voters (the subject line was “Newt con nosotros,” or “Newt with us”), he held a monthly discussion with Latino community leaders, and was studying Spanish and using it while appearing on Univision.693

Both parties are presently more involved in including Latinos in the centre of their organizations.694 The Democratic Party is intent on maintaining its competitive advantage, while the Republican Party is interested in the possibility of expanding and diversifying the party base with a growing population. Since 2000, Republicans have been creating new paths into the Latino electorate and have been attempting to convince them that as natural conservatives, they

689 Marisa Abrajano, Campaigning to the new American electorate: advertising to Latino voters (US: Stanford University Press, 2010), 147.
690 Ibid, 147.
693 Ibid
are natural Republicans.\textsuperscript{695}

In 2008, the political climate changed; the media and political figures started to describe Latinos as the most significant voting coalition in presidential elections.\textsuperscript{696} Both parties were encouraged to try to win the Latino vote because of the following factors: the development of the Latino constituency in states with substantial numbers of electoral votes, a divided electorate, and the belief that the Latino vote is “up for grabs”.\textsuperscript{697} All of these factors are evident in American political society, and with respect to the last point, Latinos have certainly indicated that their political loyalties are flexible.\textsuperscript{698}

Latinos can be swayed by a combination of the right message, candidate, and mobilization. The majority of Latinos listen to individual candidates’ positions and opinions rather than what party they are from.\textsuperscript{699} Texas House member Raul Torres argues that Republicans and Latinos need each other. The Republican Party should “embrace” the opportunity and welcome Latinos into the party. Furthermore, he claims that not only is the Latino vote within the party’s grasp, but considering the Democratic Party has neglected and abused Latinos for decades, many Latinos are searching for a “new political home”.\textsuperscript{700} Furthermore, Torres maintains that the Latino vote is not one the Republican Party can afford to ignore. The Latinos ‘will find a home…will it be with the Republican Party or will they by default revert back to the Democratic Party’?\textsuperscript{701}

Mark Hugo Lopez and Susan Minushkin agree that Latinos ‘are a fast-growing community
that is strategically situated in presidential elections.\textsuperscript{702} Attention from both political parties will continue provided the Latino elites continue to show that the Latino community is not a permanent component of the Democratic Party. Arturo Vargas, the NALEO executive director, adds that ‘we need to have strong roots in both political parties because not one political party will always be in control.’\textsuperscript{703} As their enormous potential is progressively acknowledged, Latinos will increasingly be pursued and courted.\textsuperscript{704}

**Socioeconomic Status and the Potential of the Mexican-American Diaspora**

The director of the Pew Hispanic Center, Paul Taylor, argues that America’s Latinos have ‘traditionally failed to punch at their true weight’ in politics.\textsuperscript{705} Many are undocumented immigrants, others are too young to vote, and some simply have no interest in doing so. Another reason is that Latinos have generally been poorly organized. Agustín Escobar Latapí and Eric Janssen state that until the 1980s, the question was why the Mexican-American diaspora was not more effective in US politics and why its leadership was clearly inadequate. Explanations included the lack of education of most Mexicans, their limited understanding of the American political system and their scant commitment to American society.\textsuperscript{706} This question is still relevant today, and these elements remain present among the Mexican-American population. The predominant concern of most Mexican migrant workers was financial, including acquiring a legal work permit and the right to live in the US.\textsuperscript{707}

*The Economist* claims that all of this is changing and that voter apathy among Mexican-Americans, and Latinos in general, is diminishing. The sheer number of US citizens among Mexican-Americans now allows them to sway election results.\textsuperscript{708} The political empowerment of Latinos is conditioned by numerous demographic factors, such as population numbers, age, legal

\textsuperscript{702} Lopez and Minushkin, ‘2008 National Survey of Latinos: Hispanic Voter Attitudes.’
\textsuperscript{704} García and Sanchez, 133.
\textsuperscript{705} ‘Hispanics in America. Reshaping politics,’ *The Economist* (January 9\textsuperscript{th}-15\textsuperscript{th}, 2010): 15.
\textsuperscript{706} Latapi and Janssen, ‘Migration, the diaspora and development: The case of Mexico.’
\textsuperscript{707} Ibid
\textsuperscript{708} Esman, *Diasporas in the Contemporary World*, 92.
status, and education.\textsuperscript{709} The Latino voting rate is comparatively low. It is, of course, understandable that when a significant portion of the population is barred for lack of citizenship, this depresses the voting rate.\textsuperscript{710} However, ‘even when only citizens are counted, Latinos still have the lowest voter turnout rate of any distinctive grouping.’\textsuperscript{711} Why has the voting rate been so low among Latinos? Scholars have been attempting to determine the answer to this question for quite some time.

Political participation is viewed as being dominated by elections. Therefore, voter turnout and registration become the prime indicators.\textsuperscript{712} Political participation also includes campaign donations, volunteer work, and the seeking of political office. Especially since the 1960s, American political scientists have studied political behavior in order to determine why individuals vote, and why they participate in other types of political action.\textsuperscript{713} This work has concluded that a person’s socioeconomic status (SES) is the foremost predictor of their likelihood of voting. SES consists primarily of an individual’s education, income, and occupation.\textsuperscript{714} Other factors include age, stake in society, and citizenship status. Henry E. Brady, Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman confirm that SES is powerful in predicting political participation.\textsuperscript{715} People who are more educated, make more money, and hold professional positions are more likely to vote than people who are less educated, less wealthy, and perform manual labor. This is certainly logical. People with higher SES have more resources; they have more time, financial assets, and flexibility. They can afford to engage in politics.\textsuperscript{716}

\textsuperscript{709} DeSipio and Leal, 277.
\textsuperscript{710} García and Sanchez, 139.
\textsuperscript{711} Ibid, 139.
\textsuperscript{712} García, \textit{Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests}, 80.
\textsuperscript{713} Bedolla, \textit{Latino Politics}, 18.
\textsuperscript{714} Ibid, 18.
\textsuperscript{716} García, \textit{Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests}, 73.
SES is the principal determinant of political mobilization. Various studies have emphasized SES and have determined that the demographic factors that reduce the level of voting among non-Latinos also do so among Latinos. However, among Latinos these “vote-lowering factors” are greater and more widespread, therefore further reducing the percentage of voter participation. Latinos are generally expected to be less involved in political activities because they usually possess fewer resources than non-Latinos. As mentioned, with respect to Mexican-Americans, and Latinos in general, the ‘current socioeconomic distribution of community members is located at the lower end of these class indicators’ compared to the non-Latino population. Mexican-Americans’ lower levels of SES largely explain their lower levels of electoral participation.

Resources are required for all types of political participation. For instance, one needs money in order to financially contribute to a candidate’s campaign, and voting necessitates both time and citizenship. Among immigrants, education is a positive influence for participation, but for some immigrants it is a stronger influence than for others. According to a study by John R. Arvizu and F. Chris Garcia, increased education had a positive effect on Mexican-American turnout but practically no impact on turnout among Cuban-Americans. Out of all Latinos, increased education and occupational status most significantly increased turnout levels among Mexicans. Mexican immigrants with more than 13 years of education are 31 per cent...

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718 Garcia and Sanchez, 127.
719 Ibid, 127.
721 García, Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests, 73.
723 García and Sanchez, 146.
724 Barreto and Muñoz, 443.
725 Arvizu and Garcia, 111.
more likely to vote than Mexican-Americans possessing a grade 9 to 11 education. Exposure to college or university increases turnout for Mexican immigrants. As increasing numbers of Latinos achieve higher education, improvements in Latino voter registration and voter turnout will continue. Increased education positively influences political participation.

When it comes to Mexican immigrants, low occupational status or the absence of employment is also negatively linked to voter turnout. Latinos work more hours and generally have more time-consuming jobs than non-Latinos. A significant impediment to participation is of course resource-based. The absence of resources is directly related to less contact from major parties; these individuals are not contacted to the same degree as are more financially well-off Americans. Essentially, lower income levels in combination with younger voters leads to lower levels of voter turnout among Mexican-Americans.

Age is an important demographic variable to consider with respect to voting because young voters have a significantly reduced voting rate in comparison to older people. Mexican immigrants in the oldest age group are 44 per cent more liable to vote than the youngest age group. In 2000, people that were between the ages of 19 and 24 voted at half the rate of those aged 65 to 74. As discussed, the Latino population, and Mexicans in particular, are approximately nine to ten years younger than the median age of the non-Latino population. Therefore, age is another factor associated with low voting rates among Latinos and Mexican-Americans. The likelihood of someone voting increases as they age, since the anticipated accrual

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730 Arvizu and Garcia, 118.
of material possessions and the subsequent increase in obligations instill in that individual a vested interest in the politics and the administration of their community.\textsuperscript{731}

Similarly, research has shown that elements that denote a greater stake in American society tend to increase voting levels.\textsuperscript{732} For instance, homeownership contributes to the sense of having a greater vested interest in society, and in the politics of one’s community. Latinos, however, have a lower home ownership rate than non-Latinos. Since Latinos are generally less likely to own a home, they are therefore less likely to have a vested interest in society. Voter turnout is also increased by an individual’s length of residence in a specific area. Typically, Latinos tend to be more mobile than non-Latinos. Many Latinos have, however, been in the US for decades and own their own homes. These Latinos tend to vote at much higher rates in comparison to Latinos that have not been in the US long and are not homeowners. Furthermore, homeownership is increasing among Latinos, and as this continues, Latinos will be more encouraged to participate in the political process.

Latino immigrants who become citizens participate politically at a higher rate than the native-born.\textsuperscript{733} Obtaining citizenship stimulates a sense of obligation to partake in the political system by way of voting.\textsuperscript{734} Analysts of Latino politics have acknowledged the scarcity of American citizenship as the most significant factor regarding low Latino voting rates.\textsuperscript{735} Latinos have lower voter registration rates than non-Latinos. Approximately 40 per cent of the Latino population is composed of non-citizens, who are not eligible to vote. In comparison to all other immigrant groups in the US, Mexican immigrants have the lowest naturalization rates. At the

\textsuperscript{731} Ibid, 117.
\textsuperscript{732} Garcia and Sanchez, 127.
\textsuperscript{734} Arvizu and Garcia, 121.
\textsuperscript{735} DeSipio, ‘Making Citizens or Good Citizens?’, 194.
national level, the significant number of non-citizens is a fundamental obstacle to Latino political participation.\(^{736}\)

Most scholars agree that SES variables are significant with respect to political participation among Mexican-Americans, and Latinos in general. The SES variables mentioned above have a significant depressing effect on the participation of Latinos. There are, however, enduring gradual gains educationally and financially among Latinos.\(^{737}\) Garcia and Sanchez note that all of the negative SES variables that depress voting are slowly diminishing, and that their improvement will most likely be associated with increased voting rates among Latinos. Thus Latinos are increasingly moving into the mainstream.

Looking at psychological and attitudinal features is another approach to understanding lower Latino voting rates. It has been found that Latinos, and especially Mexican-Americans, typically have high levels of political trust and a sense of civic duty.\(^{738}\) These feelings are usually associated with higher voting rates. After controlling for socio-demographic factors, other studies have found that Mexican-Americans were more disposed to vote than non-Latinos.\(^{739}\) This research suggests that, controlling for SES variables, Mexican-Americans are at least as likely to vote and participate politically as non-Latinos. Add this to the research that indicates SES variables for Latinos are improving and it is easy to see why scholars are optimistic when it comes to Latino, and Mexican-American, voting patterns.

Not only do SES variables continue to improve, but so do the size and significance of the Latino electorate. Statistics indicate that Latino voting in national elections has continued to grow significantly and that Latinos as a proportion of the overall electorate have continued to

\(^{736}\) Navarro, 625.
\(^{738}\) Garcia and Sanchez, 128.
increase progressively.\textsuperscript{740} With every national election, the numbers increase further. In 1992, Latinos comprised four per cent of the total electorate. In 1996, they were five per cent of the total electorate, in 2000 5.5 per cent, and in 2004 six per cent. In 2008, this number reached nine per cent.

Garcia and Sanchez state that the potential is obvious. Politicians will continue to pay more attention to this continuously growing population of potential voters. Furthermore, since noncitizens are not eligible to vote, there will continue to be efforts to encourage the naturalization of more Latinos so that they can eventually perform their civic duty. Moreover, the future of Latinos politically and electorally looks encouraging if one takes into account the increasing numbers of Latinos in the US, the cumulative portion of the electorate that is Latino, and the heightened awareness and acknowledgement of Latinos’ potentiality for electoral influence.\textsuperscript{741}

\textbf{Ethnic Voting}

Many studies have been done on the effects of ethnic voting. John G. Bretting and Arturo Vega claim that the majority of voters generally prefer candidates with the same ethnicity as theirs.\textsuperscript{742} Similarly, Scott Graves and Jongho Lee state that ethnicity is directly related to issue stances and partisanship association.\textsuperscript{743} As discussed, however, there are significant problems associated with self-reporting. In this particular case, people may be hesitant to divulge that they prefer candidates of their own ethnicity, even if this is the case.

According to Santoro and Segura, a Mexican-American campaigning for office, or the existence of an “anti-Latino” ballot initiative may transform voting into an act of “ethnic

\textsuperscript{740} Garcia and Sanchez, 128.
\textsuperscript{741} Ibid, 134.
expression” for some individuals. Racially polarized voting is a reality in political life and reflects diverse professed self-interests on the part of both Chicano and Anglo voters.

In their 2010 study, Bretting and Vega attempted to determine the evolution of Mexican-American political participation, as well as the role, if any, played by racially polarized voting in elections. They found that there was a strong relationship between the percentage of votes for the Latino candidate and the percentage of Spanish-surnamed registrants at the district level. Their argument is similar to that made by Raymond E. Wolfinger almost five decades earlier, that ‘members of an ethnic group show affinity for one party or the other which cannot be explained solely as a result of other demographic characteristics.’ Various scholars believe that the importance of ethnicity diminishes with assimilation and improved economic conditions, but Wolfinger maintains that ethnicity persists as a significant independent variable in voting behaviour, not affected by changes in voters’ socioeconomic characteristics.

To Wolfinger, it seems probable that the heritage of ethnic politics will be the following: ‘when national origins are forgotten, the political allegiances formed in the old days of ethnic salience will be reflected in the partisan choices of totally assimilated descendants of the old immigrants.’ Thus, regardless of increases in socioeconomic status and increased assimilation, ethnic voting will persist. Therefore, we can expect that a Mexican-American will more likely vote for a Mexican-American or Latino candidate than for a non-Latino one.

**Mexican-Americans and the Vote**

The political capital of Mexican-Americans, and Latinos in general, in US politics became evident in the mid-1990s. Scholars and journalists alike referred to the “sleeping giant” that was the Latino population in the US. With every national election came the forecast that Latino voter

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744 Santoro and Segura, 178.
746 Ibid
748 Ibid, 908.
turnout would be considerable and critical. For decades, the mass media, politicians, activists and leaders from various Latino organizations and communities have been predicting that Latinos, and specifically Mexican-Americans, would have their “place in the sun”. They have spoken of the Mexican-Americans’ potential and the transformation of a noteworthy, expanding population into a foremost economic, cultural, and political force. John A. García states that since the mid-1990s, there has been increasing evidence that the “Latino vessel” has appeared on the “political and social shores” of the US.

The Mexican-American diaspora has “come of age” politically throughout the southwestern states. Mexican-Americans increasingly wield actual political influence through the vote, and they have two especially effectual national organizations in MALDEF and the NCLR. These are two of the many organizations that play an essential role in the political mobilization of the diaspora. The staff of Mexican-American organizations comprises individuals who can organize and unite the community and lobby efficiently within the US political system.

Barreto, Collingwood, and Manzano attempt to create an inclusive index of Latino influence. For influence to be present, a significant Latino community must be present in the state. Furthermore, influence is affected by the growth rate among registered voters. Significant shifts in the “ethnic composition” of the Latino electorate transpired in less than a decade, which is a clear indication of the prospective political influence of Latinos. Factors such as the degree of cohesive voting are important when it comes to electoral influence. The authors claim that theoretically, a state with great Latino political influence meets certain conditions, including a significant Latino population, growth in voter registration among Latinos, improved rates in

749 Shaw, de la Garza, and Lee, 338.
750 García, Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests, 212.
751 Ibid, 212.
752 Smith, Foreign Attachments, 75.
753 Ibid, 116.
754 Ambrosio, Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy, 117.
755 Barreto, Collingwood, and Manzano, 913.
partisan organization, a challenging electoral atmosphere, media attention on the Latino vote, as well as widespread Latino mobilization and campaign outreach. They maintain that there are thirteen “influence states” in the US that meet all of these criteria: Texas, Arizona, California, Florida, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, Virginia, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, Minnesota, and Washington. The first three states are the ones I will be focusing on at a later point, since they have the largest populations of Mexican-Americans.

Santoro and Segura argue that Mexican-American voting increases across generations. They base their argument on the SES model, and classic assimilation theory. Mexican-Americans who are not English-language-dominant have lower levels of politicization than do English-language-dominant Mexican-Americans. However, generational status has a positive effect on voting since English-language preeminence among Mexican-Americans amplifies swiftly through the first three generations. Typically, Mexican immigrants have fewer resources and speak less English than their children. Therefore, with each generation, SES variables improve, and voting rates will increase as well. Assimilation is the adoption of American cultural practices, such as the use of the English language, and of American political interests. According to assimilation theory, assimilation occurs in a linear manner from generation to generation with a corresponding increase in voting.

Santoro and Segura argue that with every passing generation of Mexican-Americans, the voting rates will continue to increase. Generational status has a ‘linear impact on voting across the first three or four generations because aspects of assimilation that facilitate voting tend to increase’ across these generations. Voting propensity will continue to increase until it reaches a “voting ceiling”, which in the US appears to be approximately a 70 to 80 per cent voting rate (it

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756 Ibid, 917.
757 Santoro and Segura, 174.
should be noted that this percentage is based on self-reporting). The voting rates will then flatten but will not decline.

Mexican-American voting can play a pivotal role in deciding who is elected to office, can make non-Latino politicians more responsive to Mexican-American issues, and can expand Mexican-American political representation. A priority for Latino associations is for Latinos to attain their potential cultural, political, and economical significance. However, in order to do this, Latino population growth must continue, and the community must transform itself into a greater voting force.

The presidential election of 2008 was one of the first elections in which Mexican-Americans, and Latinos in general, played a significant, and possibly crucial, role. By a margin of more than two to one, Latinos voted for Barack Obama over John McCain. Mexican-Americans voting for Obama helped him win the following southwestern states: Nevada, New Mexico, and Colorado. In the 2010-midterm elections, a record number of Latinos (6.6 million) voted. Latinos were a greater proportion of the electorate in 2010 than in any other preceding midterm election, denoting 6.9 per cent of all voters (the figure in 2006 was 5.8 per cent). Latinos’ increase in electoral participation stems largely from the rapid growth of their Latino population. This growth has significant consequences; it is altering the balance of US politics. From 2000 to 2010, there was an increase in the number of Latinos that were eligible to vote, from 13.2 million to 21.3 million. More Latinos were eligible to vote in the 2010-midterm elections than in any previous election.

758 Ibid, 174.
759 García, Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests, 98.
760 Esman, Diasporas in the Contemporary World, 96.
762 ‘Hispanics in America,’ 15.
Univision conducted a poll, along with ABC and Latino Decisions, on questions related to the 2012 presidential elections. Latino registered voters were asked a series of political opinion-based questions. I will first list the questions asked, followed with a table consisting of the percentage of Latinos and their answers. One question asked respondents how closely they had been following news about the Republican primary contest. Table 6.23 shows that the majority of all Latinos claimed to follow news about the Republican primary contest “very” or at least “somewhat” closely. (FB denotes “foreign-born”, while USB denotes “US-born”.)

Table 6.23 How closely have you been following news about the Republican primary contest?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very closely</th>
<th>Somewhat closely</th>
<th>Not too closely</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Latinos</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA Latinos</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TX Latinos</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB Latinos</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USB Latinos</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another question asked respondents what they considered the most important issues facing the Latino community that Congress and the President should address. According to Table 6.24, immigration is the main concern for all Latinos in the US, except for the US-born Latinos, whose primary concern is “jobs/unemployment”. For the latter, immigration is a close second. The secondary concern for all other Latinos is “jobs/unemployment”. In third place, all Latinos indicated “fix the economy”, except for the US-born Latinos who responded “education”, and the Mexican-Americans who said both “education” and “healthcare”.

764 Ibid
Table 6.24 What issues facing the Latino community do you consider to be most important?765

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Immigration</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Healthcare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Latinos</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA Latinos</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TX Latinos</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB Latinos</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USB Latinos</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Latinos were additionally asked about the 2012 elections, and whether they planned to vote in the Republican primary election. As Table 6.25 shows, only a slight plurality of Latinos planned to vote in the Republican primary election.

Table 6.25 Do you plan to vote in the 2012 Republican primary election?766

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Latinos</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA Latinos</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TX Latinos</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB Latinos</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USB Latinos</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One question asked about the effect on the respondent’s likelihood of voting for the Republicans in the November 2012 presidential election if Marco Rubio were nominated for Vice-President. Table 6.26 shows that a plurality of Latinos stated it would have “no effect” on their likelihood of voting Republican if Marco Rubio, a Latino, were nominated for the Vice-Presidency.

Table 6.26 Would you be more likely to vote Republican if Marco Rubio were nominated?767

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Much more likely</th>
<th>Somewhat more likely</th>
<th>Somewhat less likely</th>
<th>Much less likely</th>
<th>No effect</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Latinos</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA Latinos</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TX Latinos</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB Latinos</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USB Latinos</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

765 Ibid
766 Ibid
767 Ibid
As discussed in the previous section, many scholars would have predicted and argued otherwise. For instance, Santoro and Segura state that ethnic culture and identity constantly serve as an organizational device for political activity.\textsuperscript{768}

Another question asked Latinos about the future of the American economy, and which party they trusted more to make the right decisions concerning it. Table 6.27 reveals that the majority of Latinos trust neither party when it comes to making the right decisions for the economy.

Table 6.27 Which party do you trust to make the right economic decisions?\textsuperscript{769}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Latinos</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA Latinos</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TX Latinos</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB Latinos</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USB Latinos</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mex-Am</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the majority of Latinos, including Mexican-Americans, claim they would be more likely to vote for the Democratic Party (and often do), they have slightly more faith and trust in the Republican Party when it comes to the economy. These numbers are dwarfed by the “neither” column, which essentially confirms what was discussed earlier concerning the Latino vote being “up for grabs”. Latinos are not permanently tied to either the Democrats or the Republicans.

Another Univision question asked Latinos whether they thought the Democratic Party was doing a good job of reaching out to Latinos, if it does not care much about Latinos, or if it is being hostile towards them. The percentage of Latinos that thought the Democratic Party was doing a good job was very close to the percentage of Latinos that thought the party did not care

\textsuperscript{768} Santoro and Segura, 180.
\textsuperscript{769} ‘Univision News/ABC/Latino Decisions National Latino Poll Results.’
about Latinos. A total of 40 per cent of Mexican-Americans thought the Democratic Party did not care about Latinos. The numbers were even worse, however, for the Republican Party. A total of 45 per cent of Latinos, including Mexican-Americans, did not think the party cared about Latinos. Furthermore, more Latinos thought the Republicans were hostile towards Latinos than thought the party was doing a good job (27 per cent versus 17 per cent).\textsuperscript{770} A total of 44 per cent of Mexican-Americans thought the Republican Party did not care about Latinos.

When asked if they were more enthusiastic about voting in 2012 than they had been in 2008, a total of 46 per cent of all Latinos, as well as Mexican-Americans, said they had been more enthusiastic about voting in 2008. This corresponds with the various articles and literature that recounts how Obama has disappointed Latinos on various issues, including his inaction on immigration reform.\textsuperscript{771} Another question asked Latinos if they are more excited, or less, about President Obama and what he has accomplished after more than three years in office. The majority of Latinos (53 per cent), and the plurality of Mexican-Americans (49 per cent), claims they are less excited.\textsuperscript{772}

Finally, Latinos were asked what issues are most important in how they evaluate the candidates and in their decision to vote in 2012. A plurality of Latinos list the economy as their primary concern, followed by both immigration and jobs/unemployment. Education and healthcare come in fourth and fifth place for the plurality of Latinos. Again, as evidenced by these questions, Latinos and Mexican-Americans hold very similar views.\textsuperscript{773} The plurality of Mexican-Americans, and all Latinos, are interested in politics, and are concerned primarily about

\textsuperscript{770} ‘Univision News/ABC/Latino Decisions National Latino Poll Results.’
\textsuperscript{773} ‘Univision News/ABC/Latino Decisions National Latino Poll Results.’
immigration and the economy.\textsuperscript{774} There are three areas of foreign policy that preoccupy Mexican-Americans: NAFTA, the projections for democracy in Mexico, and immigration law in the US.\textsuperscript{775}

NALEO had predicted that Latinos would vote in record numbers in the 2012 presidential elections. NALEO estimated they would cast roughly 12.2 million ballots. The Executive Director of this organization, Arturo Vargas, claimed that the Latino electorate would play a “decisive role” in the presidential elections.\textsuperscript{776} The NALEO Educational Fund estimated that the Latino vote would increase 26 per cent from 2008, and Latinos would account for 8.7 per cent of America’s voters.\textsuperscript{777} This prediction was close; Latinos made up 10 per cent of the American electorate in the 2012 presidential elections.\textsuperscript{778}

Although Mexican-Americans, and Latinos in general, are frustrated with the Democratic Party and with the unfulfilled promises of President Obama,\textsuperscript{779} Latinos voted for Obama over Romney by 71 per cent to 27 per cent. Romney encountered problems with Latinos when he adopted an especially hard line on (illegal) immigration. He attempted to appeal to the Republican Party’s conservative base by openly supporting the Arizona anti-illegal immigration law, as well as the idea of self-deportation.\textsuperscript{780} This is arguably the main reason why Latinos voted for Obama instead of Romney. According to “America’s Voice”, an immigration advocacy group, immigration and the extreme discrepancy between the Republican Party and the

\textsuperscript{774} On August 26, 2012, Puerto Rico Governor Luis Fortuno stated on Fox News that jobs and the economy are the most important issues for all Latinos.

\textsuperscript{775} Smith, \textit{Foreign Attachments}, 73.


\textsuperscript{777} Ibid


Democratic Party in this respect was the main motive behind the political choices and votes of Latinos.  

Shortly after the election, two Republican strategists established “Republicans for Immigration Reform”. The impetus for this, of course, was the hammering Latino voters gave to Republican candidates who held a tough stance on immigration. On December 4, 2012, former President George W. Bush initiated a conference on immigration by listing its associated benefits. The George W. Bush Institute and the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas hosted this conference. Republicans have certainly taken note of the reasons behind their failure at the most recent presidential election and it will be interesting to see how the party chooses to adapt in the next few years. As Janet Murguia, the head of the NCLR, claims, ‘if Republicans care about getting into the White House again, they’re going to have to engage with the Hispanic electorate.’ The Economist states that ignoring the Latino vote is “suicidal” in politics, and that is why the Republicans are ‘at last getting serious about immigration reform.’

Elizabeth Llorente from Fox News Latino claims that Latinos received unprecedented attention in the 2012 presidential election because the community had become too large to overlook. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Latino population in the US continues to grow, especially the Mexican-American one. The population increases are especially visible in California, Texas, and Arizona. Table 6.29 illustrates the population of both Latinos and Mexican-Americans in these states for 2010.

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781 Ibid
782 ‘Immigration reform. This time, it’s different,’ The Economist (November 24th-30th, 2012): 30.
784 ‘Immigration reform. This time, it’s different,’ 30.
Table 6.29 Latinos and Mexican-Americans in California, Texas, and Arizona (2010)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>California</th>
<th>Texas</th>
<th>Arizona</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>37.23 million</td>
<td>25.15 million</td>
<td>6.39 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino population</td>
<td>14.01 million</td>
<td>9.46 million</td>
<td>1.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican population</td>
<td>11.42 million</td>
<td>7.95 million</td>
<td>1.66 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned, apart from the significant population increase, the Latino vote has also visibly increased. Throughout the decades, the number and proportion of Latino voters continues to grow. Between 2000 and 2004, Latino voter registration has increased by 55.8 per cent; one in seven Latinos is a registered voter. Presently, a record number of Latinos (approximately 24 million) are eligible to vote, and this number continues to increase. Naturalized immigrants vote at a higher rate than non-naturalized ones. More Latinos and more Mexican-Americans are becoming naturalized; this is one reason why the voting rates continue to rise with every presidential election.

Robert S. Erikson states that the Latino population has the potential to exert a great deal of influence on US politics. The Latino vote is vital in state and local elections, and the same could reasonably become true for presidential elections. With every presidential election, Latino voting statistics increase, although the numbers do tend to drop during midterm elections. The turnout gap is larger in nonpresidential election years, but this is typical among all voters. In the last decade of the twentieth century, the number of Latino voters increased by 105 per cent, compared to 23 per cent for the Anglo population. That trend continues. The electoral growth rate of Latinos is three times higher than the electoral growth rate of Anglos, and the numbers increase with every presidential election.

788 DeSipio and Leal, 37.
791 García, Latino Politics in America. Community, Culture, and Interests, 104.
Certain circumstances must present themselves for Latinos to be a noteworthy political force: competitive contests, unified Latino voting, increasing registration and voter turnout numbers, as well as an interest by parties in pursuing the Latino vote. Latinos can be key voting blocs in American elections (specifically presidential elections) because of the way in which they are distributed throughout the US. They are geographically concentrated in certain states like California, Texas, New York, Illinois, and Florida, which have the greatest numbers of (presidential) electoral votes. Latinos are advantageously situated to be pivotal players in presidential politics concerning the Electoral College since the candidate who attains the popular vote in these states wins all the electoral votes.

**Filling the Void: Mexican-American Voting Statistics**

As mentioned, there are few statistics specifically on Mexican-Americans, and no statistics on their voting behaviour. Given that Mexican-Americans and Latinos have very similar views on most political issues, however, one can extrapolate from voting statistics on Latinos in general to the voting behavior of Mexican-Americans in particular. This argument is even stronger and more pertinent in the case of Texas, California, and Arizona since more than 80 per cent of the Latino population in these three states is Mexican-American. I can therefore use voting statistics on Latinos to make reliable statements regarding voting patterns among Mexican-Americans. While this is not ideal, it is the best option considering the lack of more direct data and information.

The numbers of Latinos in Texas, California, and Arizona have been significant for the past three censuses and they continue to increase. Table 6.30 illustrates the percentage increases of the Latino population in each state.

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793 Garcia and Sanchez, 129.

794 Ibid, 129.
The Latino population in Texas, California, and Arizona continues to increase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Texas</th>
<th>California</th>
<th>Arizona</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of Latinos in these three states are of Mexican-American descent, and these numbers also continue to grow. Table 6.31 shows the percentage increases in Mexican-Americans in Texas, California, and Arizona from 2000 to 2010.

The following table, Table 6.32, gives us an idea of Latino voting patterns from 2000 to 2010. The percentages in the first row, the turnout share or “TO Share”, indicate the proportion of Latinos that voted in each election year. (The percentages are determined by the number of Latinos that turned out to vote divided by the total turnout number.) The percentages in the second row, the turnout percentage or “TO %”, indicate the number of Latinos that turned out to vote out of all registered Latinos. (The percentages are determined by the number of Latinos that turned out to vote divided by the number of registered Latino voters.) It is difficult, however, to ascertain the exact percentages since the numbers that are available are self-reported and vary from one source to another.

Table 6.30 The Latino population in Texas, California, and Arizona continues to increase

Table 6.31 The percentage increase of Mexican-Americans in Texas, California, and Arizona

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Texas</th>
<th>California</th>
<th>Arizona</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

796 Ibid
797 There are no available statistics on the population of Mexican-Americans in each of these states in 1990, just rough estimates or approximations. However, these estimates put the percentages well below 60 per cent, and are therefore not useful for my purposes.
Once again, although the numbers increase with every presidential election and every midterm election, the percentages for the presidential elections are always higher. According to these tables, the percentage of Latino voters continues to increase. The numbers are still relatively small for Latinos in comparison to the total turnout of American voters. However, the number of Latinos that turn out to vote among all Latino registered voters is significant. Moreover, both sets of numbers continue to increase.

The following table, Table 6.33, allows us to compare the Latino numbers against the numbers for Anglos, which is by far the group that has the highest voting rates in the US. The percentages in the first row, the turnout share or “TO Share”, indicate the proportion of Anglos that voted in each election year. The percentages in the second row, the turnout percentage or “TO %”, indicate the number of Anglos that turned out to vote out of all registered Anglos.

Table 6.33 Latino voting rates in comparison to that of Anglos (2000-2010)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TO Share (Latino TO/Total TO)</td>
<td>5.35%</td>
<td>5.34%</td>
<td>6.03%</td>
<td>5.82%</td>
<td>7.43%</td>
<td>6.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO% (Latino TO/Latino Registered Voters)</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>62.52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table, Table 6.33, allows us to compare the Latino numbers against the numbers for Anglos, which is by far the group that has the highest voting rates in the US. The percentages in the first row, the turnover share or “TO Share”, indicate the proportion of Anglos that voted in each election year. The percentages in the second row, the turnover percentage or “TO %”, indicate the number of Anglos that turned out to vote out of all registered Anglos.

Table 6.33 Latino voting rates in comparison to that of Anglos (2000-2010)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TO Share (Anglo TO/Total TO)</td>
<td>85.81%</td>
<td>86.31%</td>
<td>84.77%</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
<td>83.01%</td>
<td>83.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO% (Anglo TO/Anglo Registered Voters)</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>71.6%</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>70.36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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799 Ibid
The turnout percentage is similar between both Latinos and Anglos. Although the percentages for the latter are higher, the discrepancy between both groups is usually within ten percentage points. The major discrepancy, however, lies in the turnout share; the turnout share for Anglos is much greater than the turnout share for Latinos in the election years from 2000 through to 2010. Though, considering that Anglos account for the majority (72.4 per cent) of the total American population, this is understandable. Furthermore, as the Latino population continues to grow and its SES factors continue to improve, both the turnout percentage and the turnout share will continue to increase.

Texas, California, and Arizona are also important because of the number of electoral votes they hold. Texas and California are among the states with the most electoral votes, along with New York, Illinois, and Florida. These states are appealing to presidential candidates because they hold over half the electoral votes required to win an election. Table 6.34 illustrates the percentage of Latinos that voted in Texas, California, and Arizona from 2000 to 2010 (the turnout percentage). Again, since the majority of Latinos in these three states are Mexican-American, we can extrapolate from these data to obtain Mexican-American voting statistics.

802 Ibid, 274.
803 Although the majority of statistics on Latino voting patterns offer different numbers and percentages, they tell the same story, that voting continues to increase, especially with every presidential election.
Table 6.34 Turnout percentage of Latinos that voted in Texas, California, and Arizona

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
<td>43.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
<td>68.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>66.72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant numbers of Latinos (and therefore Mexican-Americans) in these three states vote.

Although there are some irregularities, for the most part, the numbers continue to increase.

Although the figures are rarely consistent in the literature (I have found various statistics for each election year, but they are usually a few percentage points away from one another), scholars agree that voting rates continue to augment with each presidential election. This also appears to be the case, for the most part, with respect to midterm elections. The Mexican-American vote continues to increase.

Summary

This chapter discussed the increase in political participation among Mexican-Americans, and Latinos in general. It examined the courting of the Latino vote by both major political parties in the US, and the SES and increasing potential of the Mexican-American diaspora. It also discussed Mexican-Americans and the vote. SES variables seem to play a considerable role in relation to voting rates; we have seen that when SES is controlled for, Latinos turn out to vote at the same rate as Anglos. Increased SES variables such as age, education, income, occupation,
and citizenship status are positively correlated with increased voting rates. Furthermore, SES variables among all Latinos are gradually improving and increase with each generation.

The empirical material in this chapter suggests that Latinos and Mexican-Americans have very similar demographics, SES, and voting patterns. That said, the statistics for both groups (especially Mexican-Americans) are for the most part outdated, and this is problematic. In order to fill this void in the literature, I made projections about electoral behaviour on the basis of statistics on Latinos in the three states with the largest populations of Mexican-Americans (Texas, California, and Arizona). I compiled my own statistics and relied on data regarding Latinos to speak to Mexican-American voting patterns. According to the statistics, since the voting rate for Latinos improves with each presidential election, so does the voting rate for Mexican-Americans.
Chapter 7- Mexican-American Influence: The Case of NAFTA and Beyond

This chapter will examine the Mexican-American diaspora, the MHTAs, and both the American and Mexican governments in the context of the founding of NAFTA, and the role they have played in significant trade-related events since 1994. The post-NAFTA events that will be examined are the American domestic political debates on fast-track authority and the Free Trade Area of the Americas, the debates regarding the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement, and the debates concerning the trucking issue. I will demonstrate the fundamental importance of the MHTAs as a political expression of the Mexican-American diaspora, and their influence as a lobby for its interests with respect to US trade policy. The diaspora has been able to exercise this influence as a result of the various resources reinforced and mobilized by the MHTAs, including organization, assimilation, and finance.

NAFTA, initially targeted as an immigration issue in the US, is essentially the link between the two areas of trade and immigration. Trade policy, since the early 1990s, provides an important set of illustrative cases of the diaspora’s growing force in US society and politics. That the Mexican-American diaspora’s political influence continues to increase will be evident in all of the cases.

NAFTA is the starting point, and I make the case that MHTAs were pivotal for the diaspora in its efforts to promote this important agreement. The diaspora certainly contributed to its negotiation with the help of the MHTAs. The latter’s existence established and enhanced the perception in both the US and Mexico that the diaspora was an emergent force to be reckoned with. Although I am not able to illustrate decisively that the diaspora was integral in the overall outcome of the other trade related cases, these cases nevertheless contribute to my argument regarding the diaspora’s growing influence in American trade policy.

NAFTA: Mexico, the US, MHTAs, and the Mexican-American Diaspora

Although Latinos intervene infrequently in the American foreign policy arena, when they do so, all Latino groups are not mobilized; only certain national subgroups are organized and
motivated to act, depending on the issue, as was the case with Mexican-Americans with respect to NAFTA.\textsuperscript{808} This section will examine the background and the initiation of the agreement, the aims and actions of the two governments, and the role of the Mexican-American diaspora. The years leading up to the negotiations over NAFTA saw the Mexican government attempting to mend its relationship with the diaspora. It had started to recognize the benefits of having a closer relationship with its kin in the US, especially when it came to significant foreign policy issues, which could affect both trade and immigration in particular.

In the 1980s, US President Ronald Reagan and Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney negotiated a preferential trade agreement, the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA), which came into force in 1989. Consequently, President Salinas worried that Mexican exports would be excluded from the North American market, and therefore felt compelled to be part of such an agreement.\textsuperscript{809} Furthermore, the Mexican government was struggling with the country’s drugs and corruption problems and needed US assistance.\textsuperscript{810} Salinas, educated at Harvard University in government and political economy, wanted to modernize Mexico’s economy and bring it into the developed world.\textsuperscript{811} In 1990, Salinas approached US President George H.W. Bush about accepting Mexico as a free-trade partner. Mexico supplied the initiative for a free trade agreement between both countries, much as Canada had done with CUSFTA. In June of that year, the Mexican and US Presidents announced negotiations for the establishment of a free trade area between their countries.

\textsuperscript{808} Ambrosio, 199. \\
\textsuperscript{809} ‘Bigger Is Better. The Case for a Transatlantic Economic Union,’ \textit{Foreign Affairs} 89, 3 (May/June 2010): 45. \\
\textsuperscript{811} Ronald L. Mize and Alicia C.S. Swords, \textit{Consuming Mexican Labor. From the Bracero Program to NAFTA} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 193.
Canada was concerned that the advantages it had gained from CUSFTA might be diminished, and therefore decided to join the initiative. Unlike CUSFTA, ‘which joined two countries already closely linked by trade and investment and highly similar in levels of development,’ the discussions with Mexico signified the first noteworthy attempt to join a developing country with developed countries in a free trade agreement. The US President could not pass up the opportunity to establish an important connection with a developing exporting country. It was not only economically advantageous, but it was politically advantageous as well since it was a chance for the US to improve the difficult relationship that existed between it and Mexico. Furthermore, NAFTA was regarded as ‘a way to support the growth of political pluralism and deepening of democratic processes in Mexico and as part of the long-term response to chronic migration pressures.’

The US was aware of the benefits associated with NAFTA and knew that a more economically stable and successful Mexico would also be advantageous for it. What Bruce Bagley said more than three decades ago is still relevant today: the US has a rational self-interest in assisting Mexico to become increasingly successful and secure, since a stable neighbour would guarantee economic growth and security in the US. Bagley’s argument is still sound; the US certainly benefits from a stable, democratic, and economically successful neighbour to the south. Mexico’s enhanced development is in the interests of the US because stagnation would lead to increased tensions between both countries as a result of the inevitable escalation of corruption, crime, migration, instability, unemployment, and an accompanying Mexican desire to blame the US. Essentially, a failed Mexico would have incalculable consequences for

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812 Hufbauer and Schott, *NAFTA Revisited*, xiii.
813 Ibid, 2.
816 Robert S. Leiken, ‘Enchilada Lite,’ 23.
America.\footnote{Mexico and America. Gently does it,’ 38.} This is why the US pursued a free trade agreement with Mexico, and why the US continues to work with the country to alleviate its economic and security concerns.

In February of 1991, the governments of Canada, Mexico, and the US formally announced their pursuit of a North American Free Trade Agreement.\footnote{Patricia H. Hamm, ‘Chicanos, NAFTA and U.S.-Mexico Relations: A 1988-1993 Chronology,’ Working Paper No. 10, Center for Research on Latinos in a Global Society, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0730q4b2 (accessed July 29, 2012).} As formal negotiations commenced later that year, a multitude of Mexican agencies became interested in Mexican-American issues; for example, the Ministry of Commerce hired public relations firms as well as some Chicano former politicians to lobby on behalf of the Mexican government.\footnote{García-Acevedo, ‘Return to Aztlán: Mexico’s Policies toward Chicanas/os,’ 137.} During the 1980s, important Mexican-American figures had come out in support of a free trade zone between Mexico and the US, including Mario Obledo from LULAC and Representative Bill Richardson from the CHC.

According to María García-Acevedo, a major goal of President Salinas was engagement in Mexico-US relations, specifically NAFTA and immigration, and his targets were the MHTAs, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (HCC), LULAC, MALDEF and the NCLR.\footnote{Ibid, 146.} From the beginning of his campaign for the 1988 presidential election, Salinas organized meetings with various Mexican-American organizations. He met with numerous Mexican-American leaders, and discussed the possibility of the establishment of a “Chicano lobby” that would be effective in relations between the US and Mexico. His efforts were successful. The Salinas administration attempted to acquire the backing of Latino leaders and organizations to bolster its campaign in support of NAFTA.\footnote{Navarro, 491.}

Salinas developed ties with the HCC, the NCLR, and various members of the CHC. According to García-Acevedo, these ties were invaluable during NAFTA negotiations. The

\footnote{Mexico and America. Gently does it,’ 38.}
\footnote{García-Acevedo, ‘Return to Aztlán: Mexico’s Policies toward Chicanas/os,’ 137.}
\footnote{Ibid, 146.}
\footnote{Navarro, 491.}
the agreement. Salinas courted the Mexican-American diaspora in order to gain access to the American government.

José Velez, President of LULAC, claimed that the organization would ‘play a key role in helping to negotiate an anticipated free-trade agreement.’ Businesses and organizations that supported the agreement, like the HCC, played a significant role in numerous states to generate support for NAFTA. The HCC actively lobbied for the agreement. The NCLR, in particular, was committed to lobby in favour of NAFTA. Similar to the MHTAs, the NCLR emerged as a strong political ally of the Mexican government in this regard. Raúl Yzaguirre, the organization’s director, acknowledged there were constructive changes in the perceptions of Mexico in the US as a result of Mexican-American participation in NAFTA negotiations. He emphasized that when it came to the agreement, the US and Mexico were equals; this statement certainly helped to improve the image and esteem of Latinos in the US.

In April 1991, President Salinas attended a MALDEF annual banquet in Chicago. In his speech to the organization, Salinas promoted Mexican-American support for NAFTA, inviting the Mexican-Americans in attendance to passionately lobby for it. In that same month, a coalition of Mexican-American organizations was established to apply pressure on the American Congress in order to approve fast-track authority for the free trade agreement. Ray Hernandez, of the Latino Business Association, was the director of the committee. The coalition involved ten Mexican-American and Latino regional businessmen, professionals, and community leaders. These members promised to send 10,000 letters to members of Congress in support of NAFTA.

823 García-Acevedo, ‘Return to Aztlán: Mexico’s Policies toward Chicanas/os,’ 140.
824 Ibid, 140. (This information was ascertained by María García-Acevedo in an interview she conducted with a Mexican official from the Direccíon General de América del Norte in Mexico City, July 1989.)
825 Ibid, 144.
827 Ibid.
and fast-track authority for the agreement. Mexican-Americans and Latinos were actively lobbying on behalf of NAFTA.

Fast-track authority is essentially when Congress sanctions the President to unilaterally negotiate trade agreements of an international nature for a certain amount of time. The President must perform certain tasks, however, in order to achieve fast-track authority. He is obliged to inform Congress regarding the development of the trade negotiations, to obtain input from Congress, and finally to present the agreement for congressional approval. At this stage, Congress has 90 legislative days to either approve or disapprove the final agreement as is, without modifications.

In May 1991, the NCLR announced its conditional support for the fast-track procedures regarding NAFTA. Its support was confirmed following the Bush administration’s assurance that the agreement would include policies that benefit Latinos, such as worker training programs and “border impact assistance”. The administration also had to affirm there would be no guest worker programs. In the same month, prominent Mexican-American figures and organizations openly endorsed NAFTA and the fast-track procedure. This list includes the HCC; Ray Hernandez, the Chairman of the Latino Business Association; Ricardo Romo, the Director of the Tomás Rivera Center in Texas; Representative E. Kika de la Garza; Representative Albert Bustamante; Representative Bill Richardson; Representative Solomon Ortiz; Representative Henry Cisneros; and the Hispanic Alliance for Free Trade (HAFT), the leading Latino pro-free trade agreement lobby group. The HAFT is an assortment of non-profit and non-partisan Latino leaders and organizations. President Bush strongly encouraged and supported the HAFT.

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829 Ibid, 154.
830 Ibid.
In May 1991, President Bush spoke in front of the HAFT in the Old Executive Office Building of the White House. He spoke about the opportunity the US had to establish stronger relationships with its neighbours to the south. Bush urged that the fast-track authority not be turned down. He emphasized that a free trade agreement with Mexico would create jobs in both countries. Bush exhorted the audience to use their friendships and alliances with people on Capitol Hill, and to use their influence to persuade Congress to support fast-track authority since it would create jobs, increase trade between both countries, and elevate the standards of living on both sides of the border.\footnote{Remarks to the Hispanic Alliance for Free Trade, The American Presidency Project, \url{http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=19565} (accessed July 31, 2012).} Bush concluded by stating they should ‘do exactly what Carla Hills tells you to do.’\footnote{Ibid} President Bush had appointed Hills to the post of US Trade Representative. A lawyer and a free trade supporter, Hills was the foremost US negotiator of NAFTA.\footnote{Jone Johnson Lewis, ‘Carla Hills,’ About.com, \url{http://womenshistory.about.com/od/cabinet/p/carla_hills.htm} (accessed July 31, 2012).}

President Salinas frequently met with Chicano leaders in the US, as did other government officials, and various representatives of Mexico’s three leading political parties. The Mexican government clearly recognized the ‘potential for using the Mexican American community … to influence both Washington’s stance toward Mexico and Mexican domestic policy.’\footnote{Hamm, ‘Chicanos, NAFTA and U.S.-Mexico Relations: A 1988-1993 Chronology.’} As noted at the time, Mexico’s pursuit for NAFTA was really the beginning of its ‘new, more vigorous approach to American politics, including its … efforts to improve relations with local Mexican-Americans.’\footnote{Ibid

\cite{García-Acevedo, 2016} President Salinas commended the involvement of the leaders and organizations of the Mexican-American diaspora in US-Mexico relations, specifically with respect to the debates on NAFTA.\footnote{García-Acevedo, ‘Return to Aztlán: Mexico’s Policies toward Chicanas/os,’ 134.} Other Mexican officials, including Secretary of Commerce Jaime Serra Puche, the main Mexican representative of NAFTA, followed the President’s lead, conveying the Mexican
government’s position that Mexican-American organizations could be vital allies in these negotiations. Serra Puche stated that NAFTA would create distinctive opportunities for the Mexican-American diaspora in the US, and that Mexicans in the US had come to realize this.

President Salinas undertook a strategic effort to court the Mexican-American diaspora as well as American governmental officials; among other things, he visited major American cities promoting the agreement. With President Bush, he met with Mexican-Americans in many states along the border. Furthermore, they met with Mexican-American businessmen, Mexican-American organizations, and human rights groups; they all expressed their support for NAFTA to the two presidents. On May 21, 1991, a news conference moderated by Representative Bill Richardson was held in Washington to demonstrate the extensive Mexican-American and Latino support for NAFTA. Many influential Mexican-Americans and Latinos spoke, including Representative Kika de la Garza, Representative Solomon Ortiz, Representative Albert Bustamante, Frank Herrera from MALDEF, Tony Salazar from the NCLR, Jose Nino from the HCC, Baltazar Vaca from the Hispanic National Bar Association, Edward Peña from LULAC, Elaine Coronado from the HAFT, and Judy Canales of the Mexican-American Women’s National Association. Canales was actually part of the Latino delegation that congregated in Mexico City with President Salinas to examine the effects of NAFTA. Canales became a member of the National Hispanic Leadership Institute because of her leadership abilities and contribution to the policy-making procedure.

The Mexican government, along with Mexican corporations, had essentially engaged in a vast lobbying campaign on behalf of NAFTA, with the purpose of influencing American policy-
According to Charles Lewis and Margaret Ebrahim, the debate over NAFTA generated the most widespread and costly ‘foreign lobbying campaign on a specific issue ever seen in the capital.’ Remarkably, the Mexican government was able to get various members of the Mexican-American diaspora to petition on behalf of NAFTA.

In October 1991, former New Mexico Governor Toney Anaya was hired by the Mexican government to lobby for NAFTA. A lawyer, Anaya was paid to act as a link between the Latino community and the Mexican government, lobby Congress, make speeches, and cooperate with the well-known public relations firm Burson-Martseller, Inc. In February 1992, the Hispanic National Bar Association openly endorsed NAFTA. In 1993, Mexico’s ‘Congressional efforts reached a high-water mark … when its lobbying expenditures outstripped all but a few perennial-champion foreign lobbyists.’

The Mexican government was spending less than $700,000 annually on lobbying Washington in the mid-1980s. After 1989, by comparison, the Mexican government and corporations spent roughly 25 million dollars to promote NAFTA. This figure, however, is conservative since it only denotes the total reported by Mexico to the Justice Department. A Mexican businessman, Hermann von Bertrab, the Director of Mexico’s Washington NAFTA office, claimed that the Mexican government devoted approximately 10 million dollars to “NAFTA-related activities” in 1993, and that it spent roughly 18 million dollars in 1991 and 1992. This already puts the number above 25 million, and that is not including the years 1989 or 1990. Salinas initiated a multi-million dollar campaign to secure congressional approval of Mexico’s entering NAFTA.

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845 Charles Lewis and Margaret Ebrahim, ‘Can Mexico and Big Business USA Buy NAFTA?,’ The Nation 256, 23 (June 14, 1993).
846 Ibid
848 Leiken, ‘The Melting Border,’ 32.
849 Lewis and Ebrahim, ‘Can Mexico and Big Business USA Buy NAFTA?’
850 Ibid
Mexican consular and political officials attempted to mobilize the Mexican-American diaspora to support the Mexican government’s agenda in Washington. President Salinas expanded the Mexican embassy in Washington, along with its congressional liaison officers and press attachés. The Mexican government mobilized its 42 consulates in the US, and selected a prominent agency, the Secretariat of Commerce and Industrial Development, to lobby the US Congress. The Secretariat organized an impressive campaign that included influential lobbying firms in Washington as well as MHTAs and other Mexican-American organizations. The Mexican government hired a mass of Washington public relations companies, law firms, and consultants, as well as 33 former US officials who had worked for government entities such as the State Department, the Office of the US Trade Representative, the Treasury Department, and Congress, and whose task was to influence the political process for NAFTA. As a result of the government’s strategy and actions, opponents of NAFTA insinuated that Mexico was attempting to buy the agreement.

In the 1990s, the Mexican government pursued the main Mexican-American and Latino organizations and made Mexican-Americans, as well as US-Mexico relations, their top priority. The Mexican government established transnational organizations to institutionalize its relations with the Mexican-American diaspora, such as the Program for Mexican Communities Living Abroad (PACME) in 1990, and began to develop Mexican-American leaders in order to increase its influence in Washington. An important role of the PACME was to enhance the image of Mexican-Americans in Mexico, which meant burying the notorious persona of the pocho. El pocho became popular in the 1940s to describe Mexicans born or raised north of the border. It

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852 Ibid
854 Ibid, 4.
855 Smith, Foreign Attachments, 156.
856 Shain, Marketing the American Creed Abroad, 176.
was a disparaging term employed to question Mexican-Americans’ loyalty and to mock their culture.\footnote{Shain, \textit{Marketing the American Creed Abroad}, 176.} The PACME was tasked with coordinating attempts by various government agencies to strengthen relations with Mexican-Americans, and to establish international projects proposed by Mexico to benefit its diaspora.\footnote{Gutiérrez, ‘Fostering Identities.’}

Other objectives of the PACME were to reply to the grievances of both Mexican-Americans and Mexican-American associations that Mexico was ignoring its American nationals, to help Mexican-Americans experiencing abuse in America, and to initiate a ‘political lobby—there was a great deal of discussion about creating the Mexican equivalent of the Israeli lobby.’\footnote{Leiken, ‘The Melting Border,’ 4.}

It was at this time that the notion of a “Mexican lobby” similar to the Israeli lobby was born.\footnote{Hamm, ‘Chicanos, NAFTA and U.S.-Mexico Relations: A 1988-1993 Chronology.’} Even as early as 1978, Eduardo Morga, chairman of LULAC, stated that the Mexican-American diaspora was willing to assist Mexico politically in the US. He said that Mexican-Americans felt as though Mexico could use them in the same way that Israel used AIPAC in the US. In 1995, President Zedillo unequivocally urged Mexican-Americans to become as efficient in endorsing Mexico’s interests as AIPAC was in supporting Israel’s interests.\footnote{Huntington, \textit{Who Are We?}, 287.}

This last objective is particularly relevant to this study. The Mexican government became interested in its diaspora because it was gradually acquiring more influence and political clout in the US. Mexico wanted to foster the diaspora’s influence, and essentially create a powerful political lobby that was partial to its home state. The Mexican government hoped that it could direct the ‘voting clout and economic power of Mexican-Americans to serve Mexican domestic and foreign interests,’ and this hope started to become reality when President Salinas publicly attempted to transform his country’s presence in America.\footnote{Bustamante, 184.} Mexican-born immigrants, as well as their HTAs, were the main focus of the PACME. Through it, the Mexican government

\begin{footnotes}
\item[858] Shain, \textit{Marketing the American Creed Abroad}, 176.
\item[859] Gutiérrez, ‘Fostering Identities.’
\item[860] Leiken, ‘The Melting Border,’ 4.
\item[862] Huntington, \textit{Who Are We?}, 287.
\item[863] Bustamante, 184.
\end{footnotes}
successfully improved its relationship with the main Mexican-American and Latino associations.  

The Mexican government was able to unite border-region communities, Mexican-American organizations, and the pro-NAFTA business coalition in the US. The organizations included MALDEF, NALEO, LULAC and the Hispanic National Bar Association. The Mexican-American diaspora was also a focus of Mexican lobbying. Mexican-American and Latino members of Congress were targeted and pro-NAFTA companies and associations such as the HCC played a vital role in mounting support for the agreement in numerous American states. President Salinas continued to court leaders and elite members within the Mexican-American diaspora to generate a lobby with the aim of swaying the American congressional vote for NAFTA.

The Mexican government flew delegations of Mexican-American leaders and representatives of Mexican-American organizations to Mexico for meetings, training them to be advocates for NAFTA. They were invited by the government to come to Mexico on a “fact-finding trip”, all expenses paid, to collect information. These delegations consisted of representatives from various MHTAs, such as the Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos, the Federación de Clubes de Jaliscienses del Sur de California, la Organización de Bajacalifornianos, and the Consejo de organizaciones Mexicanas de California. These MHTAs, among others, expressed their support for NAFTA, and actively promoted the agreement. The Mexican government explicitly supported the organization of Mexican-Americans into MHTAs. It sponsored these associations, and regarded them as an instrument

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865 Shain, Marketing the American Creed Abroad, 188.
866 Ambrosio, 119.
867 Ibid, 119.
868 Lewis and Ebrahim, ‘Can Mexico and Big Business USA Buy NAFTA?’

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created to endorse cultural and educational matters within the Mexican-American community. The government considered the diaspora, and specifically its *clubs de oriundo* as a main target of its “outreach policy”.

Other delegations consisted of the NCLR, the Hispanic National Bar Association, the HAFT, the Mexican-American Women’s National Association, and various legislators, mayors, and elected officials from Texas, Minnesota, Arizona, and New Mexico. The NCLR and the HCC organized trips to Mexico to enable officials in the US, as well as Mexican-American representatives from the community, businesses, and media to meet their colleagues in Mexico to encourage support for NAFTA. Leiken claims the NCLR often assisted in the negotiations between the Mexican government’s “lobbying campaign” and Mexican-American organizations. President of the NCLR, Raul Yzaguirre, explained that Mexican-Americans had to be participants on NAFTA and Latinos had to discover how to ensure their presence was felt. Clearly, then, the Mexican government, Mexican-American organizations in the US, and the Mexican-American community were showing a great deal of interest in NAFTA. Moreover, the Mexican government evidently considered the diaspora an important player in this matter.

Gutiérrez argues that the Mexican-American diaspora influenced American foreign policy in a direction favourable to the Mexican government concerning NAFTA. Mexican-Americans influenced the US Congress to allow the Bush administration complete authority to commence free trade discussions with Canada and Mexico. Roughly 200 leaders in the Mexican-American and Latino communities frequently traveled between Washington and Mexico City to meet with both presidents and demonstrate their support for the agreement. As a result of their efforts, President Bush had significant support in his endeavours to influence American

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870 García-Acevedo, ‘Return to Aztlán: Mexico’s Policies toward Chicanas/os,’ 143.
871 García-Acevedo, ‘The [re]construction of diasporic policies in Mexico.’
874 Ibid, 32.
public opinion against protectionist policies. Mexican-American congressmen such as “Kika” de la Garza (Texas) and Bill Richardson (New Mexico) lobbied for NAFTA. The agreement was an issue that united the Mexican-American community. As Gutiérrez states, this gave the Mexican government an important ally in its attempts to align American policy with its interests.

Bustamante, writing in 1986, claimed that if NAFTA were passed, Mexican-American and Latino business leaders may then request the initiation of trade quotas in exchange for their continued efforts to lobby on behalf of NAFTA. He argued that many observers regarded such a proposition as rational, considering the special treatment the Mexican government had started to offer the Mexican-American diaspora. This comment illustrates that many observers perceived the diaspora as influential at that time. Mexico also clearly regarded the diaspora as powerful and invaluable. Furthermore, as perceptively argued by Bustamante, it was evident that Mexico needed its diaspora more than the diaspora needed its homeland.

Although the Mexican-American diaspora has been a focus of Mexican lobbying, especially with respect to NAFTA, the influence of the Mexican government over the Mexican-American diaspora should not be exaggerated. It is true that all Latino members of Congress, except for one, voted on behalf of NAFTA; however, Shain states that this is not indicative of the influence held by the Mexican government. Instead, it is indicative of the influence held by the diaspora. Mexican-American support for the agreement was not primarily the product of lobbying by the Mexican government. It was the product of MHTAs and Mexican-American organizations working together to arrive at a unified position regarding NAFTA.

The Clinton administration was struggling to find votes in support of the agreement. In the case of NAFTA, Clinton had more support from the Republican Party than he did from his own party. Liberal Democrats comprised the majority of the opposition; they wanted

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876 Bustamante, 232.
environmental and labour protections included in the trade agreement. The President needed not only to appease members of his own party, but also to ensure he had the support of Mexican-Americans. The latter proved easier than the former.

The Latino Summit on NAFTA in March 1993 was the conclusion of a sequence of conferences and missions to Mexico, task forces of issue specialists organized by the NCLR, as well as research and interviewing by SVRI whereby more than 2,000 Latino leaders discussed the issue. The Summit meeting was organized by SVRI, MALDEF, and the NCLR, following a strategy meeting in El Paso, Texas, in November 1992. This strategy session concluded that Latinos were unified in support of NAFTA. The Latino Consensus exemplified one of the most widespread organizing initiatives on practically any issue in American Latino history. It prepared 21 local conferences in the 11 states with the most significant Latino populations, and assembled a wide range of national and transnational communities. These transnational communities included representatives from various areas, such as labour, human rights, environmental, academia, small business, and economic development. Furthermore, the main political parties from both countries also participated. The united support of more than 100 Latino officials and organizations was, however, conditional on certain factors, described below.

After more than two years of investigation and public deliberations, three main Mexican-American organizations, the SVRI, MALDEF, and the NCLR approved a document entitled

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879 ‘Latino group summit on NAFTA proposes a North American Development Bank,’ La Prensa de San Antonio IV, 39 (March 26, 1993): 1A.
880 Ibid, 1A.
882 Ibid
“Latino Consensus Position on NAFTA” at the concluding session of the Latino Summit. The Latino Consensus document contained specific concerns and conditions in relation to NAFTA; specifically, the associated implementing legislation, and the side agreements that still had to be negotiated. The Latino Consensus endorsed a “NAFTA-Plus” position that established a series of requests in specific issue areas and a number of goals to be discussed through the additional side agreements (hence the informal name “NAFTA-Plus”). This consensus would not have been possible without the MHTAs.

The requests made in the Latino Consensus were sustained as the foundation for negotiations on NAFTA with the White House in the fall of 1993. The Latino Consensus presented the following demands to the White House: the proposal for a North American Development Bank (NADB) to support border infrastructure between both countries; sustainable development and environmental upgrading in areas where NAFTA caused job losses; an initiative for worker reeducation and job development for those affected by NAFTA; environmental and labour standards panels; and a tri-national immigration board. Andy Hernandez, President of SVRI, emphasized the importance of the creation of a NADB, as proposed by Congressman Esteban Torres.

Torres is a Mexican-American politician in California and a former United Auto Worker union official. A leader of the CHC, he mobilized a group of dissenters to stand firm and wait for government concessions. By uniting this group of dissidents, and presenting their votes to the government as a united coalition, Torres was able to obtain the Clinton administration’s support on the conditions he sought to include in NAFTA. One of the main conditions was funding for the NADB. Referred to as the “Torres proposal”, the NADB would be established by the US and

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883 ‘Latino group summit on NAFTA proposes a North American Development Bank,’ 1A.
885 Hinojosa-Ojeda, ‘Institution Building within the NAFTA Context.’
886 Ibid
887 ‘Latino group summit on NAFTA proposes a North American Development Bank,’ 1A.
888 Ambrosio, 119.
889 Ibid, 119.
Mexico, in response to environmental issues, with approximately five billion dollars of capital to promote both private and public investment in development ventures. A NADB would sponsor environmental infrastructure ventures in both the US and Mexico. Businesses incapable of obtaining loans in certain American cities would be eligible to apply for loans through the NADB. The Bank would also offer economic support to populations suffering job loss as a result of NAFTA.

The Clinton administration was desperate for congressional backing, and needed Torres’ support; therefore, the NADB was “worth the price”. John Maggs, a former trade official, recalls that the joke concerning Torres was “one man, one bank”. Thus, to appease the 14-member House Hispanic Caucus, and particularly Torres, whose support depended on this issue, the NADB was created. The Bank was ultimately established in LA, near the Congressman’s district. The administration followed through on the Bank to win Torres’ support, and it paid off: Torres helped President Clinton pass NAFTA.

Torres ran a significant political risk voting for NAFTA, and when he announced his support for the agreement one month before the congressional vote, his decision persuaded others in the CHC to support the agreement as well.

As a result of Mexican-American and Latino groups’ political challenge, and in order to secure the ratification of NAFTA in the US Congress, the Clinton administration had to include three side agreements. These consisted of the North American Agreement on Environmental

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891 Hufbauer and Schott, NAFTA Revisited, 7.
892 ‘Fast Track and NAFTA.’
895 Hufbauer and Schott, NAFTA Revisited, 7.
897 Hufbauer and Schott, NAFTA Revisited, 7.
Cooperation, the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation, and the Agreement on Safeguards. To appease the critics in his party, Clinton added a $90 million transitional adjustment assistance (TAA) program to the legislation. The TAA provided income support and training for workers that were displaced as a result of the trade agreement.

Mexican-Americans were very involved in the modifications of the NAFTA text. They were interested in molding the agreement to their benefit. Antonia Hernandez, President of MALDEF, argued that the Clinton administration must assume legislation that addressed the concerns regarding job displacement as well as physical and social infrastructure. Furthermore, she stated that NAFTA must reflect the interests of the Latino community. Raul Yzaguirre emphasized that the Mexican-American community’s recommendations were meant to improve NAFTA and not to threaten its passage.

Mexican-Americans in and outside Congress supported the agreement on condition that certain domestic requirements were satisfied. As stated, Torres’ support proved crucial; his decision shielded other House Democrats, especially fellow Latinos that were anxious about incensing labour unions. Triumphant governmental officials organized an astounding press conference in the Treasury Department’s lavish Cash Room, where Torres was the guest of honour. In the end, there was certainly a strong Mexican-American and Latino consensus on NAFTA, and much of this was achieved as a result of Torres’ efforts.

The NAFTA campaign clearly shows that the diaspora was its own entity in the US-influenced or controlled by neither the Mexican nor the American government. The existence of the MHTAs generated the perception in both countries that the Mexican-Americans were an emergent force to be reckoned with. The development of the Mexican economy, which improved

898 ‘Latino group summit on NAFTA proposes a North American Development Bank,’ 1A.
899 Shain, Marketing the American Creed Abroad, 188.
900 Maggs, ‘Before and NAFTA.’
901 Ibid
significantly as a result of NAFTA, encouraged the Mexican government to take advantage of the US political process and pursue support among MHTAs and Mexican-Americans.

Writing at the end of 1994, Shain stated that the Mexican-American diaspora was rapidly evolving into a principal player as a result of NAFTA. He remarked that the Mexican-Americans constituted one of the more newly-empowered diasporas. It was empowered politically and economically, and perceived itself as both a fundamental component of US society and a distinctive ethnic diaspora. Mexican-Americans, with the help of MHTAs, certainly contributed to the ratification of NAFTA. Paul and Paul note that the trade agreement was a “pivotal issue” for the Mexican-American diaspora. Furthermore, many scholars claim that NAFTA assisted the diaspora in the fulfillment of a longstanding ambition: to be like the Jewish lobby, and to be for Mexico what AIPAC is for Israel.

Fast-Track Authority and the Free Trade Area of the Americas

As discussed, fast-track authority was the central legislative maneuver in the establishment of NAFTA. In 1997, Clinton wanted to extend NAFTA to the rest of Latin America, and he tried to obtain fast-track authority in order to do so. However, the 17-member CHC claimed that unless the government enforced provisions that would alleviate the detrimental effects of NAFTA, they would oppose any extension of the trade agreement. This would involve obstructing President Clinton’s effort to secure fast-track authority to create a FTAA.

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903 Shain, Marketing the American Creed Abroad, 166.
904 Ibid, 166.
905 Paul and Paul, 47.
The Mexican government supported the Clinton administration in its endeavour to extend NAFTA. Speaking to members of the Mexican-American diaspora, the Mexican Secretary of Commerce and Industrial Development, Herminio Blanco Mendoza said that an expanded free-trade zone would be beneficial for the diaspora as well as the homeland. Mendoza was the head of the NAFTA Negotiation Office and the chief Mexican negotiator of the agreement. The positive statements made by members of the Mexican government clearly clashed, however, with the opinions of the members of the CHC, united under Congressman Torres.

Although the Caucus members supported free trade, and recognized the benefits of NAFTA, Caucus chairman Xavier Becerra claimed that Latino lawmakers were unanimously against allowing fast-track authority until President Clinton confronted the problems caused by NAFTA. Torres argued that Mexicans had “borne the brunt” of job losses caused by the trade agreement and claimed that they also suffered most from the pollution of their borders. Essentially, he argued, not enough had been done to mitigate the negative impacts of NAFTA; instead of relegating provisions aimed at doing so to side agreements, more should have been done to help US workers harmed by its effects. Moreover, the programs established under the side agreements failed to alleviate the negative effects of the agreement. Torres criticized the NADB, worker retraining programs, and the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission as dysfunctional.

In August 1997, numerous Hispanic House members, along with Torres, sent a letter to President Clinton, arguing that NAFTA had harmed their constituents. Considering that six of the cosigners had initially voted for NAFTA, the letter was a major disappointment for the White House.

\[909\] Ibid
\[911\] Zirnite, ‘US-Commerce: U.S. Hispanic Community Hit By NAFTA.’
The Clinton administration had been depending on the support of Torres and other Mexican-American and Latino leaders. However, as a result of the administration’s failure to follow through with its promises made to Latinos in 1993 in order to guarantee their support, Torres opposed extending NAFTA and led a group of Congressmen against fast-track. They proclaimed that they would resist the extension of NAFTA to the rest of Latin America until significant improvements were completed with respect to trade adjustment assistance programs.

The White House had hoped that Latinos would regard the expansion of NAFTA as a method to establish an economic community of 250 million Latinos. The lack of support from Torres and his allies for this vision was primarily a result of constituency politics; they opposed extending the trade agreement predominantly because the Clinton administration had failed to fulfill its promises concerning the NADB and job training. As a result of the US government’s failure to fulfill its promises regarding the side agreements, Latinos, who had initially supported the “NAFTA Plus” consensus, withdrew vital support.

The main problem with the NADB was that the administration sanctioned it without a clear vision of what it was supposed to be. Essentially, the NADB was a negotiating tactic to ensure the support of Mexican-Americans and Latinos. Therefore, administrators were in no hurry to launch it, and they debated ceaselessly about its lending conditions. The financing rates of the NADB were extremely high, and requirements were so arduous that by 1999 it had only committed to five loans. Moreover, Torres blamed the Clinton administration for not instructing local administrators about how to gain access to NADB funds.

As mentioned, Torres and other Mexican-American and Latino leaders and organizations did not dispute the benefits of free trade and NAFTA. Although they were opposed to extending...
it, they still supported the trilateral agreement. Yzaguirre claimed the Mexican-American community had concluded that NAFTA would be beneficial for the US economy, and for Mexican-Americans in general. Similarly, Torres stated that the agreement had done “a lot of good.” He claimed that NAFTA was working because trade was creating opportunities, and that the future depended on expanding those opportunities.\textsuperscript{916} However, he again emphasized that specific promises made by the Clinton administration had not been kept.

Two weeks after Torres sent his letter to President Clinton, the White House responded publicly. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin proclaimed that the NADB had endorsed thirty-five districts in 19 states as qualified to receive economic development loans. Clearly, the Clinton administration considered it important to publicly address Torres’ letter. This indicates how influential Clinton and his administration perceived Torres and the Mexican-American diaspora to be. Clearly having the support of Torres and the diaspora for fast-track authority was crucial to the President. Robert Reich, former Labor Secretary under President Clinton, claimed that without the support of Torres and his allies, ‘a congressional majority may be even harder to craft than it was last time.’\textsuperscript{917} He was right.

Even though the Clinton administration responded to his letter, Torres was not satisfied with its announcement because, in his words, it promised ‘to release money in dribs and drabs to small businesses and farms’ instead of being used to create large infrastructure projects that create jobs.\textsuperscript{918} Clinton lacked the necessary votes in the House to pass the legislation. As a result, in November 1997, Clinton retracted his request for fast-track authority.\textsuperscript{919} The President did not have the support of Torres and the Mexican-American diaspora, and therefore, could not extend NAFTA.

\textsuperscript{916} Maggs, ‘Before and NAFTA.’
\textsuperscript{917} Ibid
\textsuperscript{918} Ibid
\textsuperscript{919} ‘Fast Track and NAFTA.’
This was unprecedented. Since the introduction of fast-track authority in 1974, this was the first time that an American president had been refused such negotiating authority. It was actually the first time since World War II that a proposal for trade liberalization had been rejected. The fact that President Clinton was unable to secure the support of both Torres and other Mexican-Americans played a role in the President’s inability to attain fast-track negotiating authority. As a result, the administration was unable to extend NAFTA. It is worth noting, however, that the diaspora’s opposition was not the only barrier this initiative faced. Even if the diaspora had supported the FTAA, it is unlikely it would have survived the opposition of several Latin American countries (primarily Brazil). However, my claim here is limited to the outcome of the US political process and in that context the diaspora was a contributing factor to the failure of the FTAA initiative. While not as overtly influential in the end result as it was in the case of NAFTA, the diaspora still played a significant role regarding this initiative, which clearly indicates its growing influence.

The Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement

A similar situation occurred regarding the negotiations of the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). The US signed the CAFTA-DR on August 5, 2004 with the Dominican Republic and five countries in Central America: Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. It is the first such treaty involving the US and a group of developing economies. As its main goal, the agreement aims to eliminate trade barriers between the US and these six Latin American nations.
The same arguments made against extending NAFTA in 1997 were made again by the CHC with respect to the CAFTA-DR. In May 2003, the Caucus sent a letter to Robert Zoellick, the US Trade Representative at the time, arguing that the agreement should include noteworthy labour and environmental commitments, and an enforceable guarantee by the countries party to the agreement to implement and apply internationally acknowledged labour standards.\footnote{‘Congressional Hispanic Caucus Statement Against CAFTA,’ Mediamouse.org, http://www.mediamouse.org/news/2005/05/congressional-h-1.php (accessed August, 4 2012).} Because this advice was not heeded, the Caucus, including Torres, refused to endorse the CAFTA-DR. Mexican-American and Latino leaders openly vowed to fight the CAFTA-DR and held various conference calls and press events to broadcast their position.\footnote{‘Bush Touts Latin Trade Pact,’ The Los Angeles Times, http://articles.latimes.com/2005/may/13/world/fg-cafta13 (accessed August 5, 2012).}

In a letter to the editor of *La Prensa San Diego*, Torres entreated readers to recall the unfulfilled promises of NAFTA and to reject the CAFTA-DR. These unfulfilled promises concerned environmental standards, wage and labour criteria, and the NABD.\footnote{‘Recall the broken promises of NAFTA and to reject CAFTA,’ La Prensa San Diego, http://laprensa-sandiego.org/archive/may13-05/forum.htm (August 4, 2012).} Torres concluded his letter by addressing his fellow Members of Congress: ‘the failure of NAFTA demands that all Members of Congress concerned about the fate of workers, farmers and immigrants reject CAFTA.’\footnote{‘Esteban Torres speak out: Regrets of a NAFTA supporter,’ People’s World, http://www.peoplesworld.org/esteban-torres-speaks-out-regrets-of-a-nafta-supporter/ (accessed August 4, 2012).} In the end, the Hispanic Caucus opposed the CAFTA-DR in a 14-1 vote. Four (Mexican-American) members of the Caucus abstained from voting (Ruben Hinojosa, Charles Gonzalez, Solomon Ortiz, and Silvestre Reyes), and one (Mexican-American) member, Representative Henry Cuellar, voted against the position and backed the CAFTA-DR publicly.\footnote{Hans Nichols, ‘Hispanic Caucus opposes CAFTA in a 14-1 vote,’ The Hill, http://thehill.com/homenews/news/10864-hispanic-caucus-opposes-cafta-in-a-14-1-vote (accessed August 5, 2012).}
Again it is clear that the main issue was not free trade; the Mexican-American community as well as the CHC supported free trade and NAFTA. As in the case of the FTAA, however, the unfulfilled promises of the Clinton administration undermined their support for a further extension of free trade to Latin America. In the end, all 21 members of the Caucus stood behind its official position opposing the CAFTA-DR.

More broadly, Mexican-American organizations and groups were divided over the trade agreement. Mexican-Americans and Latinos in the US seemed to take the same position they had assumed in 1997 regarding the proposed expansion of NAFTA. Unlike in 1993, however, there was no clear “Latino Consensus” on the agreement. Many Mexican-American and Latino business groups supported the CAFTA-DR because it would create new markets for US exporters and deliver political and economic stability to an area with intimate ties to countless Latino Americans. But the CHC, as well as various Mexican-American groups concerned with labour and human rights as well as immigration, refused to support the agreement. LULAC, which had strongly supported NAFTA in 1993, passed a “no-to-CAFTA resolution” at its 2004 national convention celebrating its 75th anniversary. This organization was also disillusioned with NAFTA’s unfulfilled promises.

The CAFTA-DR was eventually passed in the Senate by a vote of 54 to 45, ‘the lowest number of Senators to support a trade agreement in modern history.’ On July 28, 2005, the

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House of Representatives passed the trade agreement by only two votes. The day before the vote, President Bush was still attempting to rally support for the agreement on Capitol Hill. Before the House passed the CAFTA-DR 217 to 215, repeated visits from the President and Vice-President were necessary, along with persistent “arm-twisting” from leaders of the Republican Party. Unlike the FTAA debates in 1997, where Mexican-American support had been crucial and contributed to President Clinton’s failure to achieve fast-track authority, the CAFTA-DR passed without the support of the CHC and Mexican-American leaders and organizations- albeit by quite a small margin.

During the CAFTA-DR debates, two things failed to happen: the Mexican government did not support the American government as it did in 1997, and the main Mexican-American organizations did not concern themselves with the extension of NAFTA to Central America. Apart from LULAC, there were no statements made regarding the CAFTA-DR by the prominent Mexican-American organizations. There was no unified position. The US administration, which had depended on the support of the Mexican-American community in 1997, did not do so this time. There were no public appeals or lobbying on behalf of the administration, or on behalf of the Mexican government. The same elements that were in place in 1994, and again in 1997, were absent. Therefore, it can be argued that if the Mexican-American diaspora had assumed a stronger position on this agreement, it would have been influential- at least to a certain extent. In this case, although the diaspora’s influence had not declined since 1997, it had not, for a variety of reasons, been deployed effectively.

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The Trucking Issue

Trucking is a final example of a trade-related post-NAFTA issue concerning the Mexican-American diaspora. Before 1982, Mexican trucks could deliver goods anywhere in the US. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), a powerful labour union established in 1903 that is active in both the US and Canada, was the Reagan administration’s only support inside the labour movement. In order to satisfy the IBT and maintain its support, President Reagan constrained trucks coming from Mexico to the border area, where their cargo then had to be transferred to American trucks operated by American drivers. As a result, every day along the busiest border in the world, goods coming from Mexico have been unloaded from Mexican trucks and loaded onto American ones so they can reach their final destination in the US. Approximately three to seven trucks are involved in each transfer. Delays in the distribution of cargoes and additional costs related to the transfer of cargoes are common. In 2008, the Mexican government assessed the supplementary border transfer costs at roughly $616 million.

On paper, NAFTA abolished this restraint. The agreement promised truck drivers in the US and Mexico the right to travel freely in one another’s border states by 1995, and countrywide by 2000. In 1995, however, the US determined it would not permit trucks from Mexico outside the border area because of apprehensions that these trucks do not meet American safety standards. Furthermore, American unions, specifically the IBT, worried about the competition their members would face, and convinced Congress to prohibit Mexican trucks from going beyond the frontier. Therefore, Mexican trucks are not able to surpass the 20-mile border area.

935 Codevilla, 36.
937 Pastor, 128.
939 Pastor, 128.
941 ‘Mexico and the United States. Revving up,’ 40.
in the US. This infuriated the Mexican government, which brought the dispute to the NAFTA arbitration panel. On February 6, 2001, the panel sided with Mexico, concluding that the US had violated the terms of NAFTA.

The Bush administration vowed to comply with the panel’s ruling but Congress implemented even more confining legislation and followed a policy of “constructive delay” to avoid compliance with its NAFTA obligations. In 2007, however, President Bush moved closer to fulfilling NAFTA obligations by establishing a “pilot program” for Mexican trucks. The pilot program allowed 100 Mexican trucks into the US for one year, provided that the truck drivers could speak and read English, and were appropriately licensed and insured. The program’s main objective was to illustrate the efficacy of the safety standards adopted by Mexican drivers and the supervising and implementation systems initiated by the US Department of Transportation. The Teamsters, along with other unions, lobbied Congress to terminate the program, but the US Court of Appeals denied the stay of execution motion. The program commenced on September 6, 2007. Furthermore, in September 2008, it was extended for two years.

Many Mexican-American organizations condemned the treatment of Mexicans by the US government and the violation of NAFTA in this regard. The Latino Coalition and the Hispanic Business Roundtable accused the government of discriminating on the basis of national origin. They claimed that over 75 per cent of Latinos in the US wanted to expand and implement NAFTA, and that the American government was essentially acting contrary to what their constituents wanted. The San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, representing 900 businesses in the greater San Antonio area, prepared a position statement on the trucking issue. It

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942 Drennan, ‘Where the Action’s At: The U.S.-Mexican Border.’
943 Alexander and Soukup, 320.
944 Ibid, 322.
945 Pastor, 129.
supported NAFTA’s trucking agreement, and called on President Obama to honour NAFTA and comply with it in its totality.947

Pedro Celis, the chairman of the Washington State Republican National Hispanic Assembly, states that the trucking issue is essentially a fight between the supporters of free trade (and Mexican economic development) and the unions.948 Many Mexicans believe that beneath the Teamsters’ concerns for safety lies protectionism, meant to preserve the Teamsters’ jobs.949 Robert A. Pastor argues that the US can ‘acquiesce as the Teamsters Union sabotages an international agreement,’ or it can try to build a North American community.950 If the US pursued a community, it would be able to transcend a harmful policy while exhibiting respect for its neighbours and for NAFTA. The irony, he claims, is that the US would benefit more economically if trucks from all three countries could transit the continent freely.951

Mexico accepted the treaty violation for years because of the 50 billion dollar bailout the US had organized following Mexico’s 1994 economic crisis. Even when the NAFTA arbitration panel ruled against the US in 2001, Mexico declined to exercise the right it was given to impose tariffs, since a migration deal was being negotiated with the US.952 However, President Obama and the Democrat-controlled Congress terminated the pilot program.953

950 Pastor, 150.
951 Ibid, 150.
952 ‘Mexico and the United States. Revving up,’ 40.
Bryan J. Soukup describe the Obama administration’s position on NAFTA and the trucking dispute as “strategic ambiguity”.

Although Obama quelled his harsh rhetoric on free trade after taking office, he signed the FY 2009 Omnibus Spending Bill into law, which stopped funding for the pilot program. According to Angelo M. Codevilla, by prohibiting Mexican trucks to appease the Teamsters’ union, Obama was ‘unofficially but obviously looking for ways to negate as much of the treaty as possible. This decision by the administration and Congress was in violation of NAFTA. A spokesman for the Mexican Embassy in the US, Ricardo Alday, claimed that the trucking issue has never been about safety, and described the Congressional action as ‘protectionism, plain and simple.

Silvio Canto Jr. claims that Presidents Calderón and Obama did not have a fruitful relationship because Obama was never interested in Mexico. He is more ‘in tune with the labor unions … than with free trade with Mexico or Latin America.’ Furthermore, the relationship between the two presidents was doomed from the beginning since President Obama and the Democrats abandoned the trucking agreement without consulting the Mexican government.

Although it demonstrated extraordinary restraint, the Mexican government became frustrated with the “charade” and applied retaliatory tariffs on American goods. Mexico imposed 10 to 45 per cent tariffs on various minor American products as retribution for the
termination of the trucking program. The value of the products (on which the tariffs were imposed) that Mexico imports from the US was 2.4 billion dollars in 2007 and 2.3 billion dollars in 2008. Furthermore, Mexico aimed its tariffs at particular goods from states where influential politicians had pressured the American government to enforce stricter limits on Mexican trucks. The Mexican government was clearly making a point.

James M. Roberts, a Research Fellow at the Heritage Foundation, argued that the Obama administration should restore and expand the Mexico truck program. In an article published in the *Latin Business Chronicle*, Roberts stated that the Obama administration was causing significant damage to the US economy as a result of its decision to stop the pilot program. Not only did the unnecessary storing, loading, and unloading add 400 million dollars per year to the cost of Mexican imports, the retaliatory tariffs imposed by the Mexican government also cost American companies tens of millions of dollars.

Roberts concluded that the US and Mexico would benefit from increasing efficiency in trade between both countries, and that ameliorating the safety of both countries’ truck fleets will provide enhanced national security on both sides of the border. His view was that the Obama administration should reinstate funding for the pilot program immediately, as well as expand it. There was certainly consensus within the Mexican-American and Latino communities that the US was in the wrong, and that the pilot program should be reinstated.

Congressman Rubén Hinojosa was one of the three leading Mexican-American Congressmen from Texas that had welcomed the pilot program and encouraged Mexican trucking

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963 Alexander and Soukup, 314.
965 Ibid
from the beginning. He supported President Bush’s request for trade promotion authority. Furthermore, he claimed it was important to work with Mexico in instituting sounder trade agreements. Hinojosa argued that ‘history has shown that when our trade agreements are set, the U.S. economy prospers.’

The other two leading Mexican-American Congressmen, Henry Bonilla and Silvestre Reyes, also supported Mexican trucks operating in the US. Bonilla spoke of the benefits of NAFTA that he witnessed first-hand in El Paso. Reyes, then chairman of the CHC, also underlined the benefits of NAFTA and the importance of allowing Mexican trucks to operate within the US. On April 8, 2009, the *Latin Business Chronicle* published an open letter to President Obama on the trucking issue. The letter stated that the US was in violation of its bilateral trade obligations with Mexico, and claimed that thousands of jobs had been lost as a result of the retaliatory tariffs Mexico imposed on the US. The letter implored the president to work with Congress to resolve the trucking issue and to end the harmful retaliatory tariffs.

In July 2011, the US and Mexico signed an agreement that will finally permit Mexican trucks to deliver shipments to their final destinations in the US. This ended America’s 16-year violation of NAFTA. In return, Mexico agreed to lift the (retaliatory) tariffs on 2.3 billion dollars of American goods that it had imposed two years earlier. This experience may encourage Mexico to assume a tougher position in future trade conflicts with the US. Luis de la Calle, a former Mexican undersecretary for international trade negotiations, claims that the resolution of this issue illustrates that retaliation is effective and that, in the future, Mexico should go directly to the

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967 This power was formerly called “fast track authority”, but was renamed under the Bush administration.
969 McCoy, ‘NAFTA Expansion Hits Traffic Jam.’
NAFTA panel. Reacting to the agreement, Congressman Hinojosa stated it was ‘certainly great news for our farmers and other business owners in the state of Texas and especially in the Rio Grande Valley.’

The Mexican-American diaspora, Mexican-American organizations and leaders, and the Mexican government have always supported the trucking agreement. Despite this consensus in support of Mexican trucks operating in the US, however, the diaspora did not lobby on behalf of the Mexican or American governments. Mexico remained patient with the US until the pilot program was discontinued by the Obama administration. At that point, it initiated retaliatory tariffs, and Mexican-Americans voiced their opposition to the US government’s actions. Mexico had the support of the Mexican-American community, while Obama did not. In the end, the Obama administration capitulated and allowed Mexican trucks to deliver goods to their final destinations in the US.

There is no hard evidence linking the Obama administration’s decision to allow Mexican trucks into the US to the Mexican-American diaspora’s influence. However, the previous policy disallowing Mexican trucks to deliver shipments to their final destinations in the US clearly lacked the support of the Mexican-American diaspora, which has certainly proved influential when it arrives at a consensus on an issue. Again, this example is not as instructive as what took place with the initiation of NAFTA, but it shows that Mexican-Americans are interested in, and attempt to influence, US foreign policy with respect to trade between their home state and their host state.

**Summary**

The Mexican-American diaspora is an important and growing force in American society and politics. It is increasingly using its numbers, its votes, and its organizations to influence American policy, specifically with respect to trade. Trade policy, since the early 1990s, provides

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971 ‘Mexico and the United States. Revving up.’ 40.
972 ‘Mexico’s economy. Bringing NAFTA back home,’ 37.
an important set of illustrative cases. As demonstrated in all of the cases discussed, the Mexican-American diaspora’s political influence continues to increase, even if it is not always the decisive factor.

This chapter analyzed the creation of NAFTA and the activities of the main protagonists—the Mexican-American diaspora, the MHTAs, and of course, the Mexican and American governments. It made the case that MHTAs were pivotal for the Mexican-American diaspora in its efforts to promote NAFTA. As a result, the diaspora was instrumental in the establishment of the trade agreement. The diaspora has been able to exercise its influence as a result of the various resources provided by the MHTAs, including organization, assimilation, and finance. The MHTAs increased the perception in both the US and Mexico that the diaspora was an emergent political force. Both the Mexican and the American governments actively lobbied the diaspora to encourage it, in turn, to lobby for NAFTA. Essentially, the Mexican and American governments wanted and needed the support of the Mexican-American diaspora, and in order to gain access to it, they needed to go through the political arm of the diaspora, the MHTAs. Without the diaspora’s unified support of NAFTA, it is questionable whether this agreement would have been possible.

As well as tracing the events and political processes leading to the initiation of NAFTA, this chapter analyzed several post-NAFTA trade-related issues and found that the Mexican-American diaspora again played a role, albeit a less direct one than was the case with NAFTA. Although it was not possible to demonstrate conclusively that the diaspora was vital to the overall outcome of these other cases, they nevertheless support the argument that the diaspora’s influence in American politics and trade policy is steadily increasing. The diaspora influenced the debate over fast-track authority and the FTAA, the debate regarding the CAFTA-DR, and the trucking issue. With the help of MHTAs, the Mexican-American diaspora remained mobilized and united on each of these issues. All of these cases clearly illustrate the increasing influence of the Mexican-American diaspora.
In 2000, Smith stated that future developments would make ‘Mexican American lobbies much more potent forces in US foreign policy than they are at present.’\textsuperscript{973} He claimed that ‘the intensity of domestic concerns ensures that they will stay united, and their large numbers suggest their potential clout.’\textsuperscript{974} I would add that the diaspora’s intense interest in trade policy between Mexico and the US means that foreign-policy concerns will also help keep the diaspora united, and- with the help of MHTAs- mobilized.

\textsuperscript{973} Smith, \textit{Foreign Attachments}, 117.
\textsuperscript{974} Ibid, 117.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

It is generally assumed that Mexican-Americans, like other Latinos, are more interested in domestic issues than international ones. There is no common enemy in Mexico to unite the Mexican-Americans as Fidel Castro unites Cuban-Americans, or as the threat of Israel’s destruction by its surrounding enemies unites Jewish-Americans. Furthermore, because of the negative Mexican stereotypes that abound, their significance as a population (although consisting of more than 30 million people) is usually discounted when it comes to American politics. They tend to be brushed off as uneducated and unskilled, and therefore, not interested in politics. This study has shown, however, that Mexican-Americans are increasingly influential in US politics and foreign policy, specifically with respect to matters that concern them, like trade.

Bilateral trade between its homeland and its host state is one issue that mobilizes the Mexican-American diaspora to pursue and protect its interests. However, its interests are its own, and concern the Mexican-American community in the US first and foremost. Although the interests of the diaspora and the Mexican government tend to coincide, the diaspora is not a pawn that the Mexican government can manipulate at will. As discussed, the Mexican government certainly needs its diaspora more than the other way around.

Chapter 7 showed that there was a consensus in the Mexican-American and Latino communities in support of NAFTA. Furthermore, according to the evidence provided, it is clear that NAFTA would not have succeeded without the support of the Mexican-American community. It is striking that both the Mexican government and the American administration courted the diaspora and encouraged it to lobby on behalf of NAFTA. It seems clear that in the relationship between the diaspora and the Mexican government, the former had the upper hand. The Mexican-American diaspora is like most other diasporas in the sense that it retains strong links to its homeland, and is interested in assisting and improving it. It sends millions of dollars in remittances each year, and it works with the government on projects intended to improve local communities. While the interests of the diaspora once pertained only to these communities in
Mexico, its interests have broadened significantly over the generations. The Mexican-American community has increasingly started to play a role in American politics.

Tracing the exercise of influence in the political debates over NAFTA highlighted the critical role played by the Mexican-American diaspora. Analyzing the players and the events involved in the initiation, negotiation, and completion of the agreement allowed me to illustrate the significant influence of the diaspora with respect to the progress of this trade agreement. I was able to illustrate that MHTAs were pivotal for the diaspora in its efforts to promote NAFTA. MHTAs enhanced the perception in both the US and Mexico that the diaspora was an emergent force to be reckoned with.

The Mexican and American administrations both wanted NAFTA, but each side regarded the diaspora as important for getting the kind of agreement it desired. The fact that both governments perceived the Mexican-American diaspora as influential helped make it so in reality. As demonstrated, the diaspora’s strong support for NAFTA was vital for President Clinton’s successful effort to get the agreement through Congress.

I also examined several post-NAFTA trade-related issues, including those on fast-track authority and the FTAA, the CAFTA-DR, and the trucking issue. The analysis of the political process in each case revealed that the diaspora had some influence on the outcomes of each of the trade-related post-NAFTA events, whether to prevent the extension of NAFTA or to ensure its full application. As Mearsheimer and Walt did in their analysis of the Israel lobby, I examined relations between the US and Mexican governments and the Mexican-American diaspora since the early 1990s, focusing on trade-related issues in which policy changes occurred. These episodes presented further opportunities to determine the diaspora’s independent influence. NAFTA was the clearest case in this respect. However, the other trade-related cases indicated the diaspora’s growing influence, regardless of whether the Mexican-Americans won or lost.

My research allowed me to answer the following questions: 1-Does the Mexican-American diaspora have influence in US domestic politics and over the US-Mexico relationship? 2-Does
the diaspora have influence on US foreign policy, specifically issues related to trade? 3-Does the diaspora use its influence to achieve its interests or goals? If so, is it generally successful? 4-How does the diaspora influence decision-making? 5-How important in this process is the vote? 6-Do Mexican-Americans vote? These questions were explored in the context of American trade policy. The Mexican-American diaspora has the necessary tools and characteristics needed to exert influence; it has the required “influence resources”: size, money, assimilation, mobilization, organization, and a committed core of educated and politically active supporters. Taken together, these resources contribute to the diaspora’s growing and effective influence. NAFTA was the starting point, but the diaspora’s influence has continued to grow since it was negotiated and implemented.

I took a generous view of influence, where even marginal indications of “influence resources” grant influence to any group. I began with the presumption that the first question, whether the Mexican-American diaspora is influential, is answered in the affirmative. My expectation proved accurate. The diaspora holds both types of influence- actual and perceived. This was apparent in the cases observed in Chapter 7, especially the case of NAFTA. The Mexican-American diaspora used its influence to promote NAFTA, which it believed would both benefit its homeland and serve its interests in the US. The Mexican-American diaspora supported this trade agreement and it was successful.

In 1997, however, the Mexican-American diaspora opposed expansion of the agreement to the rest of the hemisphere. It was again successful; the US-led project for a FTAA was abandoned. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the diaspora’s opposition was not the only barrier this initiative faced. Furthermore, in contrast to the case of NAFTA, I was not able to draw a clear line of influence here, illustrating the diaspora’s influence on the outcome. Nonetheless, this case does show that the diaspora’s influence continues to increase.

975 I examined two primary means of influence- voting and lobbying.
Again, although there was no clear consensus on the CAFTA-DR as there had been on NAFTA, Latino lobbies generally assumed the same position they had taken in 1997 with respect to extending NAFTA into a FTAA- they opposed it. The CAFTA-DR passed by only two votes in the House of Representatives. It is arguable that if the diaspora had assumed a firmer, clearer position against CAFTA, it would have succeeded in killing it. Nonetheless, speculation aside, there is not enough evidence to indicate the type or degree of influence exerted by the diaspora in this particular case. I can say, however, that this case, not unlike the other post-NAFTA trade-related cases, still supports my claim that the influence of the Mexican-American diaspora is increasing.

As for the trucking issue, the Mexican-American community was against the US government’s decision to limit the access of Mexican trucks to American highways. It took quite a few years, but eventually the US government complied with its obligations under NAFTA. Again, considering the dearth of evidence, I am not able to state definitively that this outcome was a result of the diaspora’s influence. I can, however, make the same argument as above with respect to the diaspora’s growing influence. The same applies to the immigration issues I discussed. While not trade-related in nature, the immigration issues simply confirm the diaspora’s increasing influence; the diaspora can be mobilized and united by certain issues.

The Mexican-American diaspora’s influence is made possible principally by its political arm, the MHTAs. These associations play an essential role; they unite and mobilize the Mexican-American community. They form its key organizational structure. Notably, MHTAs facilitate and reinforce many of the diaspora’s influence resources; these associations provide the necessary financial backing, the organizational capacity, and the means of assimilation and mobilization necessary to render the diaspora influential. Mexican immigrants in the US rely on MHTAs to acquire access to economic and political power. As a result of the MHTAs, assimilation and naturalization rates have increased, and Mexican-Americans have become more politically involved in their host state.
The Mexican government has come to recognize these associations as the centre of the diaspora, and knows that it needs to go through the MHTAs in order to reach the diaspora and at times, Washington. The US government also recognizes that it has to go through the MHTAs to reach the Mexican-American community. In the case studies examined, both governments wanted and needed the support of the Mexican-American diaspora, and to get it they needed to work with the MHTAs. MHTAs played an important role throughout the negotiation and ratification of NAFTA, by organizing and uniting the community. They were especially pivotal for the diaspora in its efforts to promote NAFTA. MHTAs created and enhanced the perception in both the US and Mexico that the diaspora was an emergent force in American politics and trade policy.

Without these associations, the Latino consensus on the agreement could not have been possible. MHTAs also played a significant role in the post-NAFTA trade-related issues examined. These were all issues that served to mobilize the Mexican-American diaspora and encourage it to act. By focusing on MHTAs and the central filtering role they play for the Mexican-American diaspora, I was able to paint a clearer picture of the role the Mexican-American diaspora played with respect to NAFTA and other trade-related events, and the role it continues to play in US politics and trade between the US and Mexico.

Mexican-Americans, like other Latinos, are often referred to as a “sleeping giant”. This is accurate in the sense that they often do not make their presence known until specific issues unite and provoke them; NAFTA, post-NAFTA trade-related issues, Proposition 187, and the 2006 marches are examples of this tendency. As their population continues to grow and their interest in politics continues to increase, it really has become impossible for the American government to ignore Mexican-Americans. The same goes for the Mexican government; if it wants to accomplish anything in US politics or policy, it needs the diaspora on its side.

As mentioned, voting patterns are a clear indicator of growing influence, and the likelihood of its successful use. After each of the trade-related and immigration issues examined in this
study, specifically those related to immigration, voter registration and naturalization rates soared in Latino and Mexican-American communities. As an important premise of this analysis, it was necessary to determine whether Mexican-Americans were able- and perceived as able- to influence decision-making through the vote. Therefore, I attempted to answer the following questions: Do Mexican-Americans vote? And are Mexican-Americans politically active? The answers to these questions helped paint a more accurate picture of Mexican-Americans and their influence in relation to US trade policy. As seen in this study, Mexican-Americans do vote: since the 1990s, Latino and Mexican-American voting rates have increased with every presidential election.

Although there is a void in the literature when it comes to statistics specifically on Mexican-American voting, I argued it was possible to extrapolate from statistics on Latino voting patterns to speak about the Mexican-American population. Considering that the opinions, political and otherwise, of Latinos and Mexican-Americans are comparable, and the fact that in the three states I examined, the majority of Latinos are of Mexican origin, I argued it was justifiable to use the statistics for one to say something about the other. The statistical data I provided showed that Latinos and Mexican-Americans have similar demographics, socioeconomic status, and voting patterns.

Socioeconomic status variables play a significant role in relation to voting rates; when these variables are controlled, Latinos turn out to vote at the same rate as other Americans. Improved socioeconomic status, measured by variables such as age, education, income, occupation, and citizenship status, is positively correlated with increased voting rates. Moreover, SES variables among all Latinos are steadily improving. With each generation, voting rates increase as well. Therefore, I am confident that we can use the data on Latinos to speak about the Mexican-American community. However, it would be much better if we had distinct statistics on Mexican-Americans to work with. Moreover, as noted, the statistics and other data available on Latinos are quite dated.
I chose this topic because it had the potential to produce an original contribution to the literature on diasporas and the domestic politics of US trade policy. The fact that there has not been a lot written on the Mexican-American diaspora turned out to be both a blessing and a curse. It was a blessing because there was room to make a contribution and to say something original. It was a curse for the same reason—there was not a great deal of information available on the Mexican-American population. This suggested to me that they had been overlooked or disregarded as a force in US politics. The fact that there were over 30 million Mexicans in the US had to mean something; even if they were not influential presently, the potential was obvious. Fortunately, this intuition proved correct: the diaspora boasts more than just strong numbers.

One contribution of this work to diaspora studies is in providing a unique working definition of the term “diaspora”: a diaspora is a people with a common ethnic national origin and shared identities, interests, culture, religion, and language; living outside their home state, these people maintain material or sentimental linkages with it while adapting to the environment of their host state. This work provides insight into the Mexican-American diaspora, which is relatively under-studied. While these findings may have some application to all diasporas, that was not the primary intent of this work. Apart from providing some clarity to the study of diasporas in general, my aim was to contribute to the literature on the Mexican-American diaspora and its influence on American trade policy.

Not only is the literature on the Mexican-American diaspora not extensive, there is virtually no research on its influence in American politics or foreign policy. At best, scholars have claimed that the Mexican-American diaspora was “acquiring influence” or gradually “becoming influential”, but in what way was never specified. Furthermore, some have mentioned, without providing much evidence, that the diaspora played a role in the creation of NAFTA, or that its influence was recognized as a result of those negotiations.

In Paul and Paul’s work on ethnic diasporas, the Mexican-American one was ranked the 11th most influential in the US, but no explanation was provided—simply the ranking. What
information we have on this diaspora concerns mostly its size, character and composition. The research here not only contributes to our current knowledge of the Mexican-American diaspora and its relationship with both its homeland and its host state, but also says something beyond the usual general claims that the Mexican-American diaspora is becoming progressively influential. It makes clear that the diaspora is influential and that it played a decisive role in the creation of NAFTA and played a notable though less definitive role in the debates on hemispheric trade policy that followed.

With respect to policy implications, this study is important because it examined a significant North American issue: trade. This study should be useful for North American politicians, academics and policy-makers because it is not simply a theoretical study, but a practical one as well, with inferences for both the Mexican and American governments.

It is now known that the Mexican-American diaspora is interested and influential in trade between the US and Mexico. My study has illustrated not only the documented influence of the diaspora, but its potential influence as well. As the generations pass, the socioeconomic status of Mexican-Americans will in all likelihood continue to improve, as will its voting and naturalization rates. At the very least, this speaks to the fact that the diaspora will continue to grow in importance and influence. Governments should certainly take heed. As was illustrated in Chapter 7, the support of the Mexican-American and Latino communities goes a long way. Furthermore, it is clear that if the American government wants the support of these communities, it will have to cater to them.

The main reason behind the Mexican-American diaspora’s refusal to support President Clinton’s desire to extend NAFTA to the rest of the Americas was that certain promises made to gain the diaspora’s support for it were not fulfilled. It seems to be the case that the diaspora is only courted at election time. Considering the fact that neither party can depend on the Mexican-American vote American politicians and representatives would be well advised to lobby the diaspora more seriously and consistently.
The American government should also give greater priority to pursuing its current proposals for immigration reform. This study showed that immigration is certainly one issue that unites and mobilizes the diaspora. Although Mexican-Americans, and all Latinos, tend to be swing voters, the party that is able to compromise and appeal to this group will be successful in winning its political and electoral support. Although Mexican-Americans are not pleased with Obama at the moment, and their political and social views tend to be conservative, the Republican Party is alienating itself from Latinos because of its stance on illegal immigration. One has to wonder, as the Republicans did, how much their “anti-immigration rhetoric” contributed to Romney’s loss in the 2012 presidential election. A great deal, it would seem.

We need updated information and statistics concerning this increasingly influential population. Since the Mexican-American diaspora holds influence when it comes to American policy, particularly with respect to trade, and its influence should continue to increase, it seems sensible to find out more about it. At the very least, a new National Survey on Latinos in America is necessary—preferably one that introduces new statistics on its Mexican-American component; we need to know more about the largest Latino population in the US. The fact that immigration rates have recently slowed does not mean an end to Mexicans migrating north. Economists predict that immigration will pick up again once the US economy fully recovers. Furthermore, the number of Mexicans in the US is reason enough to want to learn more about this population.

More rigorous and widespread analysis should be conducted on Latinos in general, and Mexican-Americans specifically. The continuing national surveys, like the American National Election Studies and the General Social Survey, should start to include suitable samples of Latinos and Mexican-Americans so that an enduring historical account of Latino- and Mexican-

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976 ‘Liberalising migration could deliver a huge boost to global output,’ The Economist (November 17th-23rd, 2012): 72.
American participation can be recognized and examined. I hope that my findings help to inspire further research on the politics of Mexican-Americans and the incorporation of this important and influential population in studies of diasporas and foreign policy.

— Arvizu and Garcia, 123.
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