Diasporas Lobbying the Host Government: Mexican Diaspora as a Third Actor of the Bilateral Relationship Between Mexico and the U.S.

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Introduction

Lobbying is a cultural practice of the United States (U.S.) political and civil society. It is a common tool for bringing pressure by domestic or foreign interest groups to influence government decisions by hiring professional firms or through grassroots mobilization, rooted in the first amendment right of petition. In this context, Mexican-origin organizations have had to develop it over the years on the structure of the government of the host country; in this case, the U.S. Most of the academic work in the field of International Relations, argues that a Diaspora is a set of individuals that are living out of the borders of their nation of origin because of their dispersion. In spite of the fact that they are located in more than two different geographical points, they keep a close link with the motherland (country of origin, real or not) acting as a third actor in the relationship between both countries: the one that is hosting the Diaspora and its motherland.

Diasporas' cores are made up of well-organized elites of a group who mobilize the community. According to this logic, only a minority of the whole group is permanently active and not always visible. The majority are passive members who second the core group in the mobilizations. Although not permanently organized, they are receptive to the coordination by Diaspora elites. Most people in a Diaspora are silent members of the group. Ordinary people are not up to date on political, social, or cultural issues, but their number and weight in the economy make them the natural target

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of the Diaspora elites. The Mexican case has these characteristics (Shain, Yossi and Aharon Barth, 2003).

I define Mexican Diaspora in the U.S. as the group of people made up of Mexican immigrants and their descendants born there, known as Mexican-Americans. The latter, together with a segment of immigrants, children, or young people who have become naturalized U.S. citizens, they consider themselves as Latinos or Hispanics, and play that role to achieve greater acceptance in political life. The organizations that consider themselves representatives of the interests of the U.S. Latino population, like the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), or the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), are part of this group. I also identify the coalition of networks of Mexican migrants and the councils, federations, and clubs of Mexican born U.S. residents as part of the Diaspora.

Because the Diaspora concept means dispersion, and does not distinguish legal status, I also consider undocumented immigrants from Mexico living in the U.S. as an important part of the Diaspora. It is relevant to clarify that Mexican diaspora is not a unique category of people, but a heterogeneous community that includes groups with different levels of skills, social class, legal status, wages, and purposes, as most of the diasporas in the world. However, for the academic purposes of this analysis, I use the term diaspora because it is a concept that includes the divergences of those groups, and explain their collective action in specific contexts. By 2018, there are more than 36 million citizens of Mexican origin in the U.S. of first, second and third generation, who maintain ties with Mexico. This means that 12 % of the U.S. population have a Mexican origin. The Latino population represents 16 %. More than 12 million Mexicans living in the U.S. were born in Mexico (Gzesh and Schiavon, 2018, p. 6). Bearing this in mind, the main question that guides the current research is as follows, what are the main strategies used by the Mexican Diaspora to influence the U.S. political system? I argue that, under historical and difficult conditions, Mexican Diaspora living in the U.S. became an important player in the relationship between Mexico and the U.S. because it has developed strategies such as grassroots mobilization to get close to politicians on a national level, it sends economic contributions to Mexico, and make lobbying at a local U.S. Legislatures to influence some decisions that affect Mexican issues on both sides of the border. Those different strategies are the main issue of concern

of this study.

Concept of Diaspora

The study of Diasporas is theoretically located in constructivism because it seeks to explain the identities of the actors, their motivations and preferences, and also in liberalism, because they are groups of interests that try to influence the preferences of States (Shain and Barth, 2003; p. 451). From a constructivist perspective, identity is seen as the factor that allows an individual or group to visualize and differentiate itself from others. For Kubálková (2001), identity is established in relation to a series of differences vis-à-vis another, not only external but also internal (p. 230). In this respect, Wendt (1992) says that social interactions form structures in such a way that "practices are those that create a structure of identities or interests since it has no existence or powers outside the process ... Because of this, Anarchy-as a structure-is what states make of it." (Wendt, 1992; p. 128). An example of this is the construction of a group narrative in which it is given a central role in collective memory as a mechanism of identity creation.

According to Frederick Mayer (2010), shared narratives are the fundamental human devices that enable communities to act collectively (p. 1). In that sense, the author notes that the narratives serve as constituent structures, common interests in collective assets, align individual identities with group purposes and give meaning to collective acts (Mayer, 2006, p. 1). Langenbacher (2010) also observes that the intensity of the collective memory does not last forever, so it is necessary to make it more mythical so that it does not lose its grade of impact, hence the importance of the use of infrastructures, such as Memorials museums and academic documentation, to strengthen the existence and influence of memories (pp. 28-29). In that sense, Wendt (1992) is also right when he argues that "regular practices produce mutually constitutive identities, as well as their associated institutional norms". I argue that Diasporas use narratives to strengthen their collective action based on functional identities.

Concerning the treatment of liberal theory by interest groups as relevant social actors in the domestic politics of a state, Andrew Moravcsik (1997) points out that the fundamental actors of international politics are the

individuals and private groups that organize an exchange, and collective action to promote their differentiated interests under constraints. This happens due to material scarcity, social conflict, and variations in social influence (p. 517). In this line are the diasporas as, non-state actors, which, when participating in the construction of the agenda, have blurred the line between the internal and international dimensions. This analytical framework serves to study, under the logic of consequentialism, the ways in which Diasporas, as domestic interest groups, influence the preferences of the States.

William Safran (1991) defines diaspora as a community that goes from one center to two or more foreign regions or peripheral areas, retaining the collective memory of a vision or a myth, the consideration of the ancestral homeland as the true home and the ideal place for an eventual return, and a commitment to the maintenance or the re-establishment of the homeland as the guarantor of its cohesion under an ethnic-communal consciousness. Following the above, Cohen (1999) conceives Diasporas as groups of individuals residing outside the borders of their country of origin in, at least, two or three different regions as a result of traumatic events that bordered them. In them there is a reproduction and a frequent development of the idea of the country of origin, which has among its members a collective approval even though a good part of the group does not think it seriously (Cohen, 1999; pp. 45-57).

Dominique Schnapper (2011) also suggests that it is necessary to reserve the concept for populations that still maintain institutionalized (objective or symbolic) links, beyond the frontiers of the Nation-State (p. 173). It is useless to distinguish whether the dispersion has been provoked by political persecution, economic misery, and a project of colonization, commerce or culture because the diaspora comprises multiple meanings (Schnapper, 2011; p 172). Jose Moya (2011) agrees with Schnapper in arguing that, because although the term has changed from 1968 to date, one of the most important criteria to identify a diaspora is the degree of dispersion and interconnection among its organizations. Since the definition, in our contemporary world, describes groups that have dispersed throughout the world, regardless of whether their displacements are forced or not, from the relative prominence of the idea of return in their ethnic-cultural discourses, or from the conflict of their relationship with the receiving society, this concept is multifunctional (p. 209).

Shain and Aaron Barth (2003) argue that there are four possible (and not mutually exclusive) motivations for Diasporas to exert influence:

> 1. Their central interest in projecting a certain image of their national identity through their foreign policy of the country's receiver. (Shain and Barth, 2003; p. 450).
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> 2. They seek to keep a unique role in the political or foreign policy of the country of origin. (Shain and Barth, 2003; p. 454.)
>
> 3. They can perceive that the foreign policy of their own country could affect a particular community in the receiver country. (Shain and Barth, 2003; p. 455.)
>
> 4. Diasporas could see that the foreign policy of its countries affect the bureaucratic interests of their organizations. (Shain and Barth, 2003, p. 456).

As can be seen here, the term Diaspora, historically centered in the paradigmatic case of the Jewish experience, has changed from 1968 to date. This happened due to the fact that the current definition includes national groups that have dispersed throughout the world, regardless of whether their displacements are forced or not, from the relative prominence of the idea of return in their ethnic-cultural discourses, of their relationship with the receiving society (Moya, 2011, p. 209). Hence, the Mexican communities abroad may qualify as diaspora although this has not necessarily originated according to the pattern of the Jewish Diaspora model.

Diasporic lobbying in the U.S.

Discussion on U.S. policy is important because being the world superpower, what happens within it has concrete impacts on international politics due to the widespread scope of its decisions. Defined as a democracy with a presidential system, the U.S. has three branches of the Union: one executive headed by the president, who is elected every four years and can be re-elected for an immediate period, and has the power to appoint his cabinet in the different portfolios; One legislative that is formed of a

bicameral Congress; The House of Representatives that is composed of 435 members that represent the population by means of electoral districts, and the Senate, which counts on two senators by each one of the 50 States that conform the nation. On the other hand, the Supreme Court of the United States heads the judiciary, which is the highest court in that country. In this context, lobbying from interest groups is done primarily before the first two powers of the Union.

As Allan Cigler and Burdett Loomis (2005) point out, it is possible to see three well-marked paths in American political dynamics. First, a growing number of interest groups are engaged and involved in with to decisively influencing the American policy. Lobbying is the most effective strategy of all of them. Second, both argue that there is an increasingly less marked distinction between internal lobbying (for national issues) and external lobbying (for international policy issues). The most effective lobbying is a combination of both. Third, the distinction between the U.S. electoral system and its decision-making structure is increasingly blurred. The links between the public and private sectors are stronger, and both officials and interest groups seem to make decisions based on their electoral aspirations in the short and medium term.

In this context, observing lobbying here as a variable that explains the influence of non-state actors on the U.S. government is necessary, as this line is a vein that is often ignored among the Mexican academicians while studying the U.S. policy. According to Jefrey H. Birnbaum (2005), the term lobbying was first used in the U.S. in the year 1829 during the administration of President Andrew Jackson to refer to the activity of lobbies seeking privileges in favor of important New York bankers. For authors such as Thomas Clive (1998), the first regulation of this activity occurred in the year 1876, when the lower house demanded a resolution to make the lobbyists register their activities before its secretariat.

In that sense, Walter Astier-Burgos (2011) suggests that the most illustrative examples of what institutionalized the practice, were the meetings held in the lobby of the Willard Hotel in Washington, DC-located a couple of blocks from the White House- between the president of that time Ulises S. Grant and certain businessmen, to whom it was more difficult to access in his presidential precinct than in the lobby of this hotel. This practice was then stipulated as lobbying and was identified as an effective tool with which

lobbyists streamlined their lobbying and petitioning mechanisms to enable them to make things happen as they hoped, by contacting government officials without having to follow the ordinary communication protocols of that time.

In 1938 lobbying was approved in the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), as a legal framework for lobbyists who represent the interests of foreign groups. These agents were required to register with the Department of Justice. By 1946, the Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act was enacted to regulate lobbying in domestic affairs at the parliamentary level and in 1995 the Lobbying Disclosure Act was passed to regulate the practices of pressure groups on the Executive. Other laws such as Lobbying Disclosure Act, Technical Amendments 1998, Leaership Honest and Open Government Act of 2007, and the Lobbying Disclosure Act Guidance 2010 were passed to regulate the lobbying practices of the stakeholders, which had become recurring practices. Due to this legal framework, both foreign governments and Diasporas as domestic interest groups can influence the U.S. government decisions from inside. In other words, on the one hand, the U.S. - friendly policy toward Israel or Armenia, meaning permanent annual economic and military assistance, would not be understood without the help of the Jewish and Armenian Diasporas in front of the Congress and the White House in favor of those countries. They are emblematically considered ancestral homelands, or symbols of the unity of Jews and Armenians, respectively. On the other hand, the aggressive U.S. foreign policy against Cuba would not be understood without the pressure exerted by the Cuban Diaspora in Florida and Washington again the Cuban regime.

Among the most important achievements of the pro-Israel lobby -led by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) mainly carried by the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League (Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, 2016) - are the institutionalization of unconditional annual economic aid of 3 billion dollars, as well as U.S. military support to Israel for any defensive emergency since 1949 (Stauffer, 2003). For every dollar the U.S. government invests in foreign aid to Africa, it allocates $ 250 to Israel, and for every dollar given to Latin America and the Caribbean, $ 214 goes to Israel (Curtiss, 1998). For fiscal year 2016, the U.S. Congress approved annual aid of $ 38 billion, just to mention another example. At the diplomatic level, only from 1982 to 2006, the United States, as a permanent member of the Security Council,

vetoed more than thirty resolutions against Israel (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2006, pp. 3-12). According to Hossein Alikhani (2000), economic embargoes against Libya and Iran (well-known enemies of Israel) were also promoted by AIPAC and executed by former presidents Ronald Reagan, George Bush Sr. and Bill Clinton, even against lobbying of domestic oil lobbies (p. 45).

As far as pro-Armenian Diaspora lobbying is concerned, among its most important achievements are the annual 90 million dollars, which were provided to sustain Armenia in the 1990s, the maintenance of the 907 legislation that was blocked until 2002, any American aid to Azerbaijan with the warning that hostilities against Armenia should be stopped, the stagnation of a larger arms agreement with Turkey and the increasing support of different political sectors of the U.S. government to officially acknowledge the genocide (Gregg, 2002, p. 1). To that end, both the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA) and the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) have promoted the creation of an Armenian Caucus in Congress, which reached, by 2014, the 113 members with permanent membership, of which 30 come from California, 11 from New York, 9 from Michigan, 8 from Illinois and 7 from New Jersey; States where up to 85% of the population of Armenian origin is estimated at 1.5 million (Armenian Assembly of America, 2014).

On the other hand, Cubans represent the paradigmatic case of lobbying a diaspora against the government of the country of origin. It is composed of organizations such as the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), the U.S.- Cuba Democracy Pac, the Free Cuba Pac (disappeared in 2004), and the Cuba Liberty Council. Its main objective and its core mission it is to influence US policies to provoke the fall of the Castro regime, which has turned this diaspora into the most influential lobbyist organization from Latino origin in this country, especially in the context of the Cold War (Santamaría Gómez, 1998; p. 260). Such controversial laws against the island of Cuba, such as the Torricelli Act of 1992, as well as Helms Burton of 1996, whose ultimate purpose was to consolidate the embargo against Cuba, were the result of Cuban-American lobbying on the basis of the U.S. political system of State (1992). Its speech is in total harmony with the leading approach of U.S. national and foreign policy.

For Lara Quint, “although foreign policy decisions are not as affected at the

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same level as at the domestic policy level, pro-Israel groups such as AIPAC, or anti-Cuba as the CANF, of the Cuban diaspora in the exile, are the most influential Diasporas because they understand the game. Depending on the member of Congress to which they are addressed, they can enhance their reach: 'Again, it depends on who the target is and where they are from" (Quint, 2014). Both the Jewish and the Armenian diaspora, as well as the Cuban diaspora, allow us to observe that these groups reproduce the dominant discourse of the country, as pointed out by Constructivism, and assume it as their own to justify the cause they promote (common world of life). In this context, the Mexican diaspora would be placed in that category of groups that lobbyist; first, to consolidate themselves as autonomous actors with their own political needs and interests; Second, as a potential ally of the government of their country of origin (Mexico) in the U.S. to counterbalance hostilities from it.

The Mexican diaspora as a factor of the bilateral relation

The Mexican diaspora holds relevance in the U.S. as a third actor of the bilateral relationship, although not new from a migration-focused approach, it is from an approach oriented towards the politicization and transformation of this community as an actor that influences the American politics with direct benefits for itself and indirect benefit for Mexico. Ruddy O. de la Garza (1997) had pointed out for decades that the use of the Mexican diaspora to try to influence the American political system was a clear objective of the Mexican government. When the first Program for the Mexican Communities Abroad (PCME) was launched, it was aimed at encouraging Hispanics of Mexican origin to be on the side of the Mexican government in their intention to promote the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), whose effects had been limited to that of "Mexican-American" until that moment (Escamilla-Hamm, 2001).

For David Ayón (2006), the sustainable development of diverse networks of leaders of migrant activists and organizations of Mexicans was decisive in organizing hundreds of orderly and disciplined marches involving millions of protesters over a period of approximately 10 weeks; the greatest mobilizations to be remembered in the history of that country (p. 115). One point to emphasize in Ayón's analysis is that the context of Mexican

politics regarding migration and its diaspora underwent a profound transformation from 1986 to 1991. (p. 127). The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was aproved and signed in November 1986 after nearly a decade of political maneuvering by Mexican-American leaders and Latino organizations, but in which the Mexican government played no role. It legalized about 2.7 million undocumented immigrants and once legalized, they expanded their political perspectives to empower themselves as an autonomous community with their own interests.

Gustavo Cano (2004) developed a study that analyzes the work of organizing migrant communities in American cities. Cano argues that a complete understanding of immigrant political mobilization must simultaneously focus on the relations of Mexican immigrants with relevant political institutions and processes in their 'home' (in this case, Mexico) and 'host' societies (the United States). In that direction, the work of Myriam Hazan (2006), analyzes the political incorporation of Mexican immigrants into both their home and host countries through the examination of the origins, dynamics and patterns of action of first-generation Mexican-American organizations in four American cities: Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and Dallas. According to Hazan, Mexicans in the U.S. can potentially affect local and national electoral processes, particularly taking into account the fact that their naturalization rates have been on the rise (p. 1). This fact makes the Diasporas a key player for the Mexican government to work together in order to influence some U.S. decisions related to both, the Mexican community in the U.S. and the Mexican Government in the bilateral relationship.

On one hand, Brenda Lara (2010) analyzes the role of the Consultative Council of the Institute of Mexicans Abroad, the potential of state cooperation with the Mexican diaspora organized in North America, and the scope and limitations of this body. For Lara, the consultative council has been functional to the demands of the diaspora because it has offered a channel of expression and structured participation in two ways; 1) its organization has management capabilities since it is divided into thematic commissions which mostly articulate concrete proposals to improve the conditions of their communities; 2) the dialogue between the State and its diaspora is representative according to the circumstances of its origin, but limited in its future possibilities, since it requires constant negotiations between activists and/or community leaders with the government authorities in charge. (p.

132). On the other hand, Alexandra Délano (2011) talks about the positive effects of the approval of double nationality law of 1996 which had on the Mexican diaspora, which allowed the Mexicans to opt for a nationality without losing their Mexican nationality, so they could nationalize and defend themselves as Americans by obtaining a legal status against the racist policies of that country. Délano also points out that the president of Mexico at that moment, Ernesto Zedillo, went further than the traditional speech that characterized other presidential administrations, arguing that following the passage of the law of dual nationality, he hoped that Mexicans would opt for US citizenship, not only to defend their community rights, but also to form a pro-Mexico lobby in the terms in which Jewish groups did it for Israel (p. 47).

Carlos González Gutiérrez (2003) has argued that it was clear that without diminishing the loyalty that the descendants of the Mexican diaspora felt for the U.S., their growing access to the political and economic circles in that country opened the door to Mexico´s issues. González underlined that democratic change in Mexico, the consolidation of a Mexican-American middle class, and the growing maturity of diaspora organizations had generated the conditions conducive to an institutional relationship between the Mexican government and them (p. 166). In this vein, Carlos Heredia (2012) developed an important analysis on the diplomacy of non-governmental actors, specifically, of Mexicans in the U.S. as transnational political actors who seek to influence public policies both in their country of origin as in the one of destination. According to Heredia, the central components of citizen diplomacy are, interalia, lobbying activities or influence among foreign governments and multilateral organizations, the building of transnational community power through community organization and civic participation, and the impact on research agendas. This is what many Mexican Diaspora organizations started doing since, at least, two decades ago in the U.S. (p.168)

Finally, López Almejo (2015) proposed that, in terms of foreign policy, the U.S. government is more sensitive to the influence of diaspora lobbying than to traditional lobbying hired by foreign governments, due to their role as domestic interest groups with the capacity to legitimize their demands when they adjust their practices and speeches to the American political system. Taking the Mexican diasporic lobbying as a case of study, the author points out that both diaspora organizations created by Mexicans of first-

generation and those led by Mexican Americans have political activism, even over other Diasporas in the U.S. Their leaders are able to agree on the major issues related to all of them, such as the defense of the use of Consular Matriculation, driving licenses for undocumented migrants, the impetus for immigration reform and the high total to deportations.

The Role of Remittances to the Mexican Economy

As previously seen, the study mentioned the importance of the Diaspora as a relevant non-state actor, to the bilateral relationship. To a large degree, Mexicans in the U.S. have been more important to their country of origin in economic than political terms. It is precisely this that has motivated the Mexican government to have a strategic institutional approach with the Diaspora, since remittances represented, at the beginning of the nineties, the third important source of income for Mexico. According to Bancomer (2015) in 2014, remittances to Mexico from the U.S. reached 23.6 billion dollars, 7.8% greater than that of 013. According to data from The Central Bank of Mexico (Banco de México-Banxico) (2016), from 2005 to 2015, the accumulated remittance inflows exceeded the 21.3 billion dollars at their minimum level and reached the annual amount of 26 billion. If in 1995 remittances were 3.7 billion, according to the Banxico database, by 2016 they exceeded 20 billion from January to September itself, with a projection of at least 26 billion dollars by December (Banxico, 2016). This means that remittances may constitute the first source of income for Mexico, above oil or foreign direct investment.

Table 6.1:U. S. - Mexican Remittances to Mexico

Years	Annual amount
2016	26 billion dollars
2015	24 billion dollars
2014	23.6 billion dollars
2013	23 billion dollars
1995	3.7 billion dollars

Source: Bancomer (2015), Banxico (2016)

It is important to mention that remittances have represented an escape

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valve for the Mexican economy due to the fluidity that is maintained in the purchasing power of the sectors that receive them and by the liquidity that it injects to the industries that provide services to the receiving communities. In other words, money sent by the Mexican diaspora from the U.S. to Mexico encourages the Mexican government to maintain strong ties with its Diasporas permanently. Despite the fact that in 2010 there was a zero migration in the number of Mexicans going to the U.S., because of the impacts of the 2008 financial crisis and the increase in border security measures, the economic power of the Diaspora did not stop growing and unlikely reached historical levels of economic growth. The demographic consolidation in USA gave Mexico the incentive to have the large consular network of a country that provides credentialing services, passports, consular protection, mobile health services, and political training (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2016).

Mexican Diaspora lobbying the host government

When we talk about Mexican diasporic lobbying delivered at the local level, we shall bring to the table what happened in California in 2005, when the Californian legislature approved the law SB670 -the Apology Act for the 1930s Mexican Repatriation Program-, thanks to mobilizations and demands carried by the Diaspora. This law emphasized the unconstitutionality of the deportations of U.S. citizens and legal residents of Mexican origin to Mexico between 1929 and 1944, in the framework of the Mexican Repatriation Program. Due to this act, California offered a public apology to those individuals illegally deported and forced to emigrate to Mexico and requested a special place with a commemorative plaque in a public place in Los Angeles. This bill, introduced in the California legislature by Senator Joseph Dunn on February 22, 2005, was signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger on October 5, 2005. The legislators who sponsored it in California's Congress were U.S. politicians of Mexican origin whose electoral campaigns were supported by Mexican-American organizations. During the discussions about the bill, MALDEF presented speeches and reparations petitions of surviving deportees before different legislative committees in 2003 with the support of Cruz Reynoso, a former official of the California Supreme Court, and Esteban Torres, a former federal congressman for District 38. When the issue was reported in

the press and pressure on California's Congress stepped up, the legislature gave in. (Almejo, 2015)

A similar case took place in Illinois 4 years later: the SB1557 was signed into law by Governor Pat Quinn on August 25, 2009, condemningthe deportation of 1.5- 2 million Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in 1933 as unconstitutional. This state law mandates all state-funded educational institutions, from primary schools to high schools, to include a specific module in their history study plans to teach about those racist and illegal deportations. In Illinois, journalist Vicente Serrano led the Diaspora lobbying efforts to get this bill passed; he later produced a documentary called "Unforgotten Injustice" to tell the story (Serrano, 2014). The senator for Illinois District 2, William Delgado, took up the fight in the state legislature. In Illinois, Mexican immigrants were the ones taking the lead to get those laws approved, but in California, Mexican-Americans did it. In both cases, groups of Mexican Diaspora supported each other's efforts. What happened in California in 2005 was key for inspiring what was done in Chicago in 2009. These two cases of successful Diaspora lobbying on the issue of deportations united the community, given the perception of a collective threat. They recovered the historic memory in the same way that the Jews and Armenians have done by remembering their traumatic events: the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide. (Almejo, 2015)

In terms of lobbying at a national level, experiences at the local level, as mentioned before was being transferred to the national arena. Another relevant issue for the Mexican Diaspora is the formation of non-profit diasporic organizations to jointly fight along with local organisations for Immigration Reform. A particular example of this is the way the Illinois Coalition For Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) -created by MALDEF in Illinois- works with the Federation of Michoacan Clubs in Illinois -defined itself as a nonprofit organization formed by organizations of migrants from Michoacan (a Mexican province). These two organizations, work together to help migrants, benefited by IRCA in 1986, to get the U.S. citizenship by means such as consulting, teaching about the U.S. political system, civic participation and the importance of the grassroots mobilization (FEDECMI, 2013).

MALDEF at the national level, ICIRR at the state level, and Casa Michoacan at the local level, particularly in the Chicago metropolitan area, created

a national-level lobbying network for an immigration reform that allows observing how organizations of Mexican immigrants and Mexican-American communities work together to foster it as a theme of common interest. From the offices of the ICIRR, in the particular case of Illinois, they performed a constant monitoring through mapping to identify the voting record of the state congressional representatives. Once they located which Congressmen are totally against immigration reform, which ones favor it and which are the undecided ones; MALDEF, ICIRR and Casa Michoacan, design campaigns of telephone calls, letters and public mobilizations to press them and influence the campaign in the sense of their vows. These steps were followed in the same way as it was done when the local Legislature was lobbied for the passage of Illinois driver's license issued in 2012 (Arreola, 2013). Now, 13 states such as California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii and Illinois, among others, allow undocumented immigrants to use a driver's license (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2016).

When in spite of the approaches and negotiations to influence the meaning of their vote, congressional representatives still maintain a position of skepticism regarding what the organizations demand of them, diasporic organizations hold events to raise funds and offer them to finance some of their political campaigns. As Casa Michoacan is legally prevented from carrying out political activities and financing campaigns, some of its members created the Michoacan Binational Front as a Political Action Committee, specifically for these kind of activities. At the national level, some members of Mexican Diaspora support the candidacy of Representative Luis Gutierrez from District 4; who is still in his charge. At the local level, they have also supported winning candidates, such as Senator William Delgado (District 2), Representative Edward J. Acevedo (District 2) as well as the first state attorney for Cook County, who in 2008 became the first Hispanic woman to win the job - to ensure continued support for her demands at the national, state, and county levels. (Arreola, 2013).

The same experience is being replicated for the achievement of immigration reform around the whole country. Not only Michoacans allied with ICIRR in other states , but also Pueblans and the New York Immigration Coaliton (NYIC) in New York, Guanajuatans and the Zacatecans in Houston and Dallas; and, especially, the Zacatecans in Californi (Moctezuma, 2004; pp. 245-259). Moctezuma argues that within the communities of Mexicans

residing in the US, there is a close relationship between their political participation in the destination country and a Mexican membership of the nation-state. (Moctezuma, 2004; p. 245). The author points out that the Zacatecans were an important link between the governors of Zacatecas and California between 1998 and 2004. To illustrate it, he underlines the cases of Rudy R. Rios, member of Section 652 of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), and Guadalupe Gómez de Lara (president until 2004 of the United Zacatecan Federation of Southern California, co-founder of the Zacatecan Civic Front and adviser to the CCIME). (Moctezuma, 2004; p. 247).

From economic contributions to electoral campaigns done by Mexican Diaspora, it is possible to observe the work of the Zacatecan Civic Front (FCZ) to promote the candidacies of Lou Correa, originally born in Calera, Zacatecas, on his way to the California State Legislature, District 69 and later, to the California Senate for District 34. Members of this Political Action Committee also sponsored Linda Sanchez to become a congressional representative for District 39, and later they did the same when she ran for District 38 in 2013. Miguel Pulido, also received support from FCZ when he ran for the mayoralty of Santa Anna. Former Sheriff Lee Baca, was helped for his re-election like sheriff of Los Angeles (1998-2014). According to Moctezuma, FCZ also lended support to the winning formula-winners of California, Governor Gray Davis and Cruz Bustamante. Finally, the nominations of Loreta Sánchez (District 46) and Grace Napolitano (District 32) to the United States Congress also received support of Mexican diasporic organizations (Moctezuma, 2004; p. 247).

Moctezuma also points out that the United Zacatecan Federation of Illinois, which has made important contributions to the campaign of Luis V. Gutierrez (District 4) and Edward Burke (District 14 Councilor), replicated the experience of California in Illinois. This organization has also been an intermediary for official meetings of the Mexican governors of Zacatecas and the mayor of Chicago. (Moctezuma, 2004; p. 247) When Antonio Villaraigosa competed for the mayoralty of Los Angeles in 2005, Maricela Talamantes and Guadalupe Rodríguez, who were active members of the FCZ, which did not participate directly as an organization because most its members belonged to other counties, also supported him. This shows that although FCZ did not intervene because of legal impediments, its wing settled in the city, did it. (Moctezuma, 2005; p. 79).

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Conclusion

Mexican-Americans and Mexican migrants have learned to work together to influence the U.S. political system in order to help themselves to become a stronger community. They also send remittances regularly to Mexico, which is very important for the Mexican economy and the Mexican trade toward the United States. They also learnt the strategies to deal with the U.S. political system, dynamics and at times, they are natural targets to become key allies for the Mexican government to influence some U.S. decisions in specific cases that could affect Mexican oriented issues. This makes the Mexican diaspora, embedded in the world of the Hispanic community, a third player in the relationship between Mexico and the U.S., specifically in times of President, Donald Trump, who represents a big threat to the Mexican people in both sides of the border.

The U.S. political system has created structures where politicians pay more attention to demands made by the local constituencies, than to those made by foreign actors. Due to this, Diasporas become key allies for the governments of their countries of origin to push combined interests. Therefore, grassroots mobilization is important because, as mentioned earlier, Mexican-Americans made calls to their congressional representatives, sent them demand letters, organized rallies, donated to electoral campaigns and showed public political support to push their interests. Mexican Diaspora is not as influential as Jewish or Cuban Diasporas are, but its organizations are learning to consolidate themselves as political players that contribute politically and economically to both economies: Mexican and American.

Mexican organizations have been progressively taking control of their own narrative as a community that are part of the U.S. political society, and, at the same time, keeping their Mexican identity. Issues such as deportations, Immigration Reform and racists attacks are not only Mexican issues, but also Americans. That's why, the lobbying strategies of Mexican Diaspora to push the Apology Acts for the 1930s, Mexican Repatriation Programs at the local level, showed how important they are becoming, to be considered a third actor of the bilateral relationship. It is also true that Mexican-American advocacy also requires being more "professional" and keep permanent structures of pressure by tapping media-savvy spokespersons and, maybe, Public Relations experts rather than just relying on unpaid helpers or community leaders. However, they are in their way to advance

their interests in more evoluative ways.

The Mexican scholar Rafael Fernández De Castro (2016) also adds that the Mexico's 50 consulates in the United States are lobbying political, economic and social figures in each local district. The goal here is to promote the contributions of Mexicans, and to educate the American public and politicians in how jobs are being generated through the U. S. exports to Mexico as well as the direct investments Mexican companies make in American cities. This could not be possible without the help and combined work of the Mexican Diaspora and Mexican government; a variable that must remain present in the studies of the bilateral relations to come.

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