

# TRANSNATIONAL IMMIGRANT ACTIVISM

*Mexico y Los Estados Unidos*



by

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# INTRODUCTION

In the United States, undocumented Mexican immigrants face heightened discrimination and constant threat of deportations. In response, immigrant serving organizations engage in activism by providing direct legal services and engaging in organizing as well as advocacy. Despite extensive efforts and successes by the Immigrant Rights Movement to keep families together and create just immigration policies, hundreds of thousands of Mexican nationals are deported every year. However, upon deportation or return many do not return “home”. Often times deportees and returnees actually face discrimination—like what they faced in the U.S.—in Mexico, and simultaneously encounter additional hardships that affect multiple aspects of their lives. Similar to immigrant serving organizations in the United States, several groups have emerged in Tijuana and Mexico City, two of the eleven repatriation points across Mexico. Groups in Mexico have varied long-term goals, but all offer immediate support and aim to facilitate the experiences of deportees and returnees post deportation or return.

Immigrant serving groups in the United States as well as deportee and returnee groups in Mexico serve the same population: Mexican immigrants—people who were born in Mexico and at one point in their lives immigrated to the United States. In the U.S., immigrant serving groups engage with those facing deportation as well as those at risk of deportation and therefore conduct extensive efforts to prevent and fight deportation. Groups in Mexico resume similar activism and support those who have already undergone deportation or return. Most Mexican groups have similar goals to their American counterparts and aim to influence U.S. immigration policies, keep families together, and work to find ways to send their members back to their homes in the U.S. Thus, on both ends of the border groups help meet immigrants’ needs, both before and after

deportation or return, by providing access to resource and services, and engaging them in other forms of activism.

Nonetheless, upon deportation or return many immigrants are lost and alone as they navigate unfamiliar cities. Matters are worse for those that lived most of their life in the U.S. and do not know the language, don't have any family or acquaintances in Mexico, and don't have housing or job opportunities. The traumatic experiences that deportees and returnees face post deportation or return is a pressing bi-national immigration issue; however, it is currently only being addressed by activists in Mexico. This study explores the role that transnational activism currently plays in the work of immigrant serving groups located in U.S. cities, Mexico City, and Tijuana. More specifically, it aims to discover whether transnational activism helps, or can help, alleviate the hardships faced by deportees and returnees post deportation or return. Findings in this paper offer an insight on existing forms of transnational collaboration, among other types of transnational ties.

# BACKGROUND

## *Immigration and Deportation Trends*

According to data by the American Community Survey, 43.7 million immigrants lived in the United States in 2016, making up 13.5% of the total U.S. population (Hallock et al., 2018). Of the nearly 44 million total immigrants, the Migration Policy Institute estimates that approximately 11.4 million “unauthorized” or undocumented immigrants resided in the United States in 2014 (Hallock et al., 2018). By 2016, the number of undocumented Mexican immigrants living in the U.S. had dropped from its 2007 peak of 6.9 million and stood at 5.4

million, still making up about half of the total undocumented population (Gonzalez-Barrera et al., 2018). Immigrant populations tend to be geographically concentrated, with more than half of the total undocumented population living in four states including: California (27%), Texas (13%), New York (8%), and Florida (6%) (Hallock et al., 2018). In 2016, 69% of California's undocumented immigrant population were Mexican (approximately 1.5 million undocumented Mexican immigrants—the highest total for any state) (Gonzalez-Barrera et al., 2018). That same year, undocumented Mexican immigrants made up more than 75% of the undocumented immigrant populations in four states: New Mexico (91%), Idaho (79%), Arizona (78%), Oklahoma (78%) and Wyoming (77%) (Gonzalez-Barrera et al., 2018).

Despite the fact that more than 12 million lives are at stake, the United States government consistently acts on widespread anti-immigrant sentiments that further threaten the livelihoods of immigrants. In 2015 Donald Trump spearheaded his presidential campaign with alarming anti-immigrant, sexist, and fascist comments. Since his election, Trump's crackdown on immigration has affected a mass amount of immigrants and has resulted in: consistent efforts to build a border wall, decreased refugee admissions, increased asylum application rejections, the ending of both Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) which stripped hundreds of thousands of immigrants of protection from deportation, skyrocketed arrests, etc. (See Appendix B) (Lind et al., 2019). However, even under Barack Obama, who governed on a democratic and alleged pro-immigrant platform, the United States saw a total of 3,094,208 removals and 2,186,907 returns under his eight year term (See Table 1) (Gonzalez, 2017). Obama set the record for the most deportations under any other president which resulted in his nickname of "Deporter in Chief". Altogether, anti-immigrant efforts overseen by the Obama and Trump administrations have made the lives of immigrants increasingly precarious

and have spread anxiety about deportation. Recent deportation records (Table 1), amongst other anti-immigrant statistics (Appendix B), highlight that immigrants are always under threat of deportation, even under a progressive president.

Table 1: Deportations under Obama, 2009–2016

Year	Removals*	Returns**	Total
2009	391,341	582,596	973,937
2010	381,738	474,195	855,933
2011	386,020	322,098	708,118
2012	416,324	230,360	646,684
2013	434,015	178,691	612,706
2014	407,075	163,245	570,320
2015	333,341	129,122	462,463
2016	344,354	106,600	450,954
<b>Term Totals</b>	<b>3,094,208</b>	<b>2,186,907</b>	<b>5,281,115</b>

*Note.* Fiscal year (FY) 2003–15 data from Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2015>

\*Removals: deportations with court order

\*\*Returns: “voluntary” returns without court order, also known as “voluntary departures”

Deportation records as well as growing numbers of “voluntary” returns show that hundreds of thousands of immigrants are forced to return to Mexico each year. In 2016 alone, there were 245,306 removals to Mexico (“Table 41. Aliens Removed By Criminal Status And Region And Country Of Nationality: Fiscal Year 2016”, 2017). Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) refers to deportation as “removal” and defines it as the movement of an undocumented immigrant based on a formal court order known as an order of removal. That



same year 37,190 undocumented immigrants were returned to Mexico (“Table 40. Aliens Returned By Region And Country Of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2014 To 2016”, 2017). Voluntary returns, also known as voluntary departures, differ from removals because they do not involve a court order, individuals can depart on their own without the control of immigration agents, and they are not barred to seeking admission at a port-of-entry at any time. While “voluntary returns” refers to situations when immigrants return to Mexico under their “free will”, returns can never truly be “voluntary” as there is no legal way for them to stay in the United States. Additionally, discriminatory conditions such as limited job opportunities can also force them to “voluntarily” return. Altogether, at least 282,496 individuals were forced to return to Mexico in 2016 which subjected them to difficulties often experiences by deportees and returnees.

Table 2: Removals and Returns to Mexico, 2016

Year	Removals*	Returns**	Total
2016	245,306	37,190	282,496

Note. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Yearbook of Immigration Statistics 2016, <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2016>

\*Removals: deportations with a formal court order

\*\*Returns: “voluntary” returns without court order, also known as “voluntary departures”

### *Immigrant Rights Movement in the United States*

Due to their citizenship status, undocumented immigrants in the United States are subjected to discriminatory, unjust, and substandard conditions. In solidarity, millions of people use direct and mobilized action to create change in the lives of immigrants. The Immigrant Rights Movement has been a long social, political, economic, and cultural battle to improve the lives of immigrants in the United States. The Immigrant Rights Movement’s goals include “full rights for all immigrants, including amnesty, worker protections, family reunification measure, a

path to citizenship or permanent residency... an end to attacks against immigrants and to the criminalisation of immigrant communities” (Robinson, 2006). While the Movement serves to meet immigrants’ immediate needs, it also addresses the underlying systems of oppression that creates unjust conditions. In fact, the Immigrant Rights Movement has consistently challenged unjust, discriminatory, and anti-immigrant policies and practices that directly affect immigrants.

Federal immigration policies in the United States have historically been flawed, inefficient, discriminatory, and have consequently harmed millions of immigrants and their families. In response, immigrant activism has often emerged to fight discriminatory policies and practices. For instance, in 1986 Ronald Reagan signed into law the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). IRCA served as a pathway to citizenship for 3.2 million immigrants who had entered the United States before January 1, 1986, as long as they had resided there continuously and met certain requirements (Badger, 2014). However, it was a fundamentally anti-immigrant law that aimed to eradicate immigration by limiting jobs opportunities, requiring employers to confirm their employees’ immigration status, and criminalizing the hiring of undocumented immigrants. Myriad activism efforts emerged and immigrant serving organizations mobilized immigrant communities in order to prepare them for the law’s impact. For instance, The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) was founded that same year and embarked on community education and organizing efforts. Similarly, in 2005 The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 (HR 4437) made it illegal for any employers and agencies—including churches and charities—to help undocumented immigrants. The next two years there were a series of mass protests in major U.S. cities including Chicago, New York, Atlanta, Washington DC, Phoenix, and Los Angeles. The *Gran Marcha* alone, held on May 25, 2006 in downtown Los Angeles, was estimated to have

had between 1.25 and 1.5 million attendees (Watanabe, 2006). Not only were the millions of protesters rejecting HR 4437, they also demanded a comprehensive immigration reform. However, without organizers, educators, attorneys, as well as their corresponding organizations, the mass mobilization efforts of 1986 or 2006 would not have been possible.

Today, the Immigrant Rights Movement is largely made up of key players that range from small community groups to national service organizations and include legal and organizing groups, churches and faith-based organizations, small service organizations, state and city advocacy organizations, as well as trade unions and labor federations (Engler, 2009). Without such key players, the Movement would be unable to make concrete and tangible improvements such as the passage of California state law California Assembly Bills 540 (2001) and 60 (2013)—which attained more affordable tuition rates for students pursuing higher education and drivers licenses for undocumented Californians. In fact, the passage of AB 60 was a 20 yearlong battle to restore access to licenses after being banned from undocumented folks in 1993. However, some obstacles shared by players in the movement including: human resource, management, and other resource challenges that impact the quality of their programs (Cordero-Guzman et al., 2008). Nonetheless, the diversity in the work of groups that contribute to the movement allows them to cover a broad array of immediate as well as long-term needs that collectively enhance the well-being of immigrants.

Community-based and immigrant serving organizations primarily cover three sectors of activism: services, organizing, and advocacy. Social services are meant to improve the socio-economic status and incorporation of immigrants in the United State and include: educational programs, health care, housing assistance, job training, and emergency services. Another important area of service provision is the legal sector which helps protect, inform, and defend

immigrants by providing interpretation and translation services, citizenship services such as citizenship classes, immigration support services, and direct legal services such as legal advice and counsel. Organizing efforts supplement services by empowering immigrants around issues relevant to the immigrant community, and in turn influences service delivery by informing members of the group about service needs in their communities. Additionally, organizing is a form of activism because it is intended to create social change, but is different from advocacy because it empowers constituents and equips them with the knowledge and skills to create change for themselves. Similarly, advocacy groups within the movement advocate on behalf of the community and its members, their ethnic/national-origin group, and advocate to elected officials, government bureaucrats and others on particular challenges and needs of the community (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005). One example of advocacy is when CBOs represent the needs and concerns of their constituencies in media discussion on immigration, ethnicity and social-service provision to immigrant populations. This type of representation ultimately influences policy making decisions and is important because advocates make sure that the interests of immigrants are considered.

### *Deportee and Returnee Groups in Mexico*

While the Immigrant Rights Movement in the United States empowers immigrants and often protects them from deportation, similar activism has recently emerged in Mexico that aims to alleviate hardships faced by deportees and returnees. Today these groups exist in Mexico City and Tijuana, two popular repatriation point where ICE deports Mexican immigrants to. From 2013 until May 2018, ICE sent two weekly flights of deportees directly to Mexico City (Sieff, 2019). There are no accurate statistics on the number of returnees that currently live in Mexico; however, approximately one million people left the United States for Mexico between 2009 and

2014 (González-Barrera, 2015). Additionally, between 2014 and 2016 there were 150,030 returns to Mexico (Table 3) (“Table 40. Aliens Returned By Region And Country Of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2014 To 2016”, 2017). While the numbers of returns have decreased since 2014, those numbers do not account for the thousands still being deported. Thus, on any given year thousands of deportees and returns arrive in Mexico after having lived in the United States for an extended period.

Table 3: Returns to Mexico, 2014–2016

Year	Returns
2014	73,312
2015	20,528
2016	37,190
<b>Total</b>	<b>150,030</b>

*Note.* Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Yearbook of Immigration Statistics 2016, Table 40  
<https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2016/table40>

Upon deportation or return deportees and returnees face a series of challenges similar to those that they were most likely to experience when they first arrived as immigrants in the United States. For instance, they may be challenged due to a lack of knowledge of the Spanish language, Mexican history and culture, or the local lifestyle and relevant networks (Lorena 2017). These challenges further inhibit their ability to prepare, and mobilize financial and human capital and that affects their capacity to meet their basic needs such as securing shelter and job opportunities. In fact, their lack of familiarity or connections with Mexico can result in them feeling excluded, “othered”, or on the outskirts of society (Black et al., 2004). Beyond the social obstacles that deportees and returnees may face upon deportation or return, they often have to

deal with bureaucratic challenges and must therefore navigate bureaucratic spaces that they are unfamiliar with. For instance, if they are detained by the police and do not have a Mexican identification—which many deportees and returnees do not have since they lived in the U.S. for extended periods—they may be jailed. Additionally, deportees are often removed directly from detention centers which means that they are often less prepared and less willing to return. Unwillingness to return can further trigger emotional difficulties throughout their reintegration experience (Ghazaryan et al., 2002). Overall, the social, bureaucratic, and emotional obstacles faced by deportees and returnees subject them to precarious conditions that impact their livelihoods.

Acknowledging the high rates of deportations and returns, as well as the myriad obstacles faced upon deportation or return, the Mexican government launched a federal program in 2014 aimed at helping both deportees and returnees in their reintegration experience. *Somos Mexicanos* established a network of reception centers along the border that “greet deportees with food, help them sign up for health insurance, provide access to a phone and local transportation, and give information about how to get work” (Semple, 2018). *Somos Mexicanos* is one of seven Mexican federal programs that operate to provide explicit and implicit support to returning and deported Mexicans. However, the program has been critiqued as “minimal” and merely a “band-aid” solution for a much larger problem. In “Bilingual, Bicultural, Not Yet Binational Undocumented Immigrant Youth in Mexico and the United States” (2016), Jill Anderson writes that Mexico’s support for deportees and returnees has been “particularly inadequate for bicultural, bilingual immigrant youth and children in Mexico, who need a differentiated route across multiple years in order to integrate into Mexico’s government programs, public schools and labor markets”.

Aware of the lack of or inadequate resources available to the thousands of deportees and returnees that arrive in Mexico each year, as well as the subsequent difficulties that they face, activists have embarked on their own efforts to support them through those experiences. In fact, various founders, co-founders, and leaders of these groups have experienced deportation or return themselves. In Tijuana, deportee and returnee serving groups include: Madres Soñadoras Internacional/DREAMers Moms USA/Tijuana A.C., Deported Veterans Support House, and Al Otro Lado. In Mexico City: Poch@ House/Otros Dreams en Accion, Deportados Unido@s en La Lucha, and Hola Code. The groups do not identify belonging to a specific social movement but are related to and can be seen as an extension of the Immigrant Rights Movement in the United States.

Like immigrant-serving organizations in the United States, groups in Mexico meet both the immediate and long-term needs of deportees and returnees. For instance, a key area of their work is accompaniment of deportees and returnees and involves receiving them at the airport or border crossing, providing food, clothing, temporary shelter, psychological support, resources such as bus tickets and connections to job opportunities, and helping them attain the necessary Mexican identification. Such immediate and initial support helps avoid unnecessary bureaucratic hardships, invites deportees and returnees into a community of folks with similar experiences, and helps them be better prepared for their reintegration experience. In terms of advocacy and organizing, groups also strive for long-term social change and aim to influence U.S. immigration policy, achieve family reunifications, and creating a Mexican society more receptive of deportees and returnees.

Not only do the post-deportation or return experiences in Mexico parallel the experiences of immigrants when arriving in the United States, but service delivery and advocacy efforts in

Tijuana and Mexico are also comparable to current efforts of the Immigrant Rights Movement in the U.S.. Organizations can be categorized based on “what they do (the type of services they provide), where they are located (the communities where they provide services), or who they serve (the characteristics of the clients)” (Cordero-Guzman, 2005). By this criteria, the work of immigrant rights organizations in Mexico are comparable to that of immigrants rights organizations in the United States, because they are serving the same population during the “adaptation” process of immigration. In fact, immigrant-serving organizations in Mexico are a continuation of the work of immigrant rights organizations in the U.S. because they focus on the lives of immigrants post deportation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review introduces and explores the meaning of transnationalism, situates its theoretical and practical roles within immigrant activism at both the organizational and individual levels, and then considers various case studies of both immigrant and non-immigrant transnational activism. The guiding examples are tied back to the literature and illustrate the benefits and challenges that organizations and social movements may face when they work transnationally. Altogether, the literature review sets the stage to answer the question whether current immigrant activism in the United States and Mexico is transnational, or whether those possibilities exist.

### *Immigrant Activism is Theoretically Transnational*

Existing literature shows that a single definition of transnationalism does not exist, but situates the Immigrant Rights Movement within a transnational political framework. In fact,



transnationalism can be analyzed from three perspectives: the micro-level (in which the units of analysis are the individual and the family), the meso-level (in which organizations are the main unit of analysis), and the macro-level (in which society, state politics, and the economy, are the units of analysis) (Smith et al., 1998). Additionally, Angler (2009) and Cordero Guzman et al. (2008) concur that community-based organizations are key players of the Immigrant Rights Movement in the United States. Thus, even though some immigrant activism occurs at the macro-level, such as policy making, this text studies transnational activism at an organizational level and therefore elevates a meso-level analysis. At the same time, immigrant serving organization would be non-existent without immigrants; therefore, their individual transnational ties are also considered.

Immigration is a transnational phenomenon and issue, which in turn indicates that immigrant activism and immigrant serving organizations are theoretically transnational. In “Organizing Immigrant Communities in American Cities: Is this Transnationalism, or What?” (2004) Gustavo Cano explores the transnationality of immigrant activism. He explains that transnationalism is an interdisciplinary term that has different meanings that vary by field, and later identifies immigrant activism as an example of political transnationalism. Moreover, Cano writes that immigrant serving groups apply a transnational political framework by setting their agendas based on immigrant issues that are directly correlated to global and local politics and policies. Cano concludes that immigrant serving organizations are transnational as they engage in the transnational politics of immigration. Beyond addressing a transnational phenomenon, immigrant serving organizations also engage directly with immigrants, a transnational population. However, while immigrant serving organizations are theoretically transnational, they are not always transnational in practice. For instance, immigrant-serving organizations in the

U.S. are transnational because they address immigration issues and support immigrants that hold ties to both the U.S. and their home country, but they are not transnational organizations when their work is only intended to social create for those living in the United States. In other words, the transnational foundation of immigrant activism is built by a transnational issue and a transnational constituency, but doesn't always translate into transnational action. Even though transnationalism in theory and transnationalism in practice are not mutually exclusive, Cano presents the argument that immigrant activism, and therefore immigrant serving organizations as well as immigrants, are fundamentally transnational.

Other scholars expand on Cano's analysis and assert that transnationalism exists at the micro-level, and that individuals not only develop transnational political ties, but geographic and cultural ties as well. Basch et al. situate transnationalism within the immigrant activism as: "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders" (Basch et al., 1994). Basch et al. still acknowledge the political ties that Cano writes about, but highlight a micro-level analysis and write directly about individual transnational ties. The array of transnational ties that immigrants develop demonstrate that transnationalism is an important part of their identity as the ties affect multiple aspects of their lives. Similar to the conclusion that immigrant serving-organizations are transnational by nature, immigrant populations are as well.

As key players within immigrant serving organizations, the individual transnational ties of immigrants are relevant and important to immigrant activism and the Immigrant Rights Movement. In fact, the mere act of migration engenders transnational ties. Phillip Ayoub and

Lauren Bauman further iterate the transnationality of immigration and claim, “migration is itself self-fulfilling of transnational ties for the act of migration creates and expands networks... migrants often have, and maintain, contacts with home post-migration” (Ayoub et al., 2018). The authors write about migration; however, their analysis is applicable to immigrants who like migrants, have traveled back and forth between Mexico and the U.S. (both voluntarily and by force). Moreover, even after immigrants settle in a “host” country, their connections to their “home” country persist in many forms. In fact, deportees and returnees in Mexico may experience similar connections to the United States, as often times they have lived there for extended periods. Contacts to their home country can be symbolic of emotional attachment to a country; however, are an example of how not all transnational ties translate into activism. While migration experiences do create transnational ties, not all ties create social change.

While not all micro-level transnational ties translate into activism, individual transnational ties can facilitate immigrant activism. According to Ayoub et al., “A characteristic common to activists who are most likely to facilitate and take part in cross-border activism: mobile histories of their own... transnational social networks position migrants as crucial actors in transnational organising and activism” (Ayoub et al., 2018). The authors highlight that the migrant identity and individual ties to two countries often influence them to become active in transnational activism. They expand and explain that transnational ties help build migrant networks which influence activism by facilitating the movement of resources (human, material, moral), dissemination of information and awareness, etc. Thus, being rooted in two spaces can spark solidarity and influence immigrants to engage in transnational activism.

Literature on transnationalism demonstrates that immigrants’ rights activism is an inherent example of transnationalism because its founding principles involve the politics and

members of two countries. Nonetheless, while all immigrant serving organizations are transnational in theory, not all engage in transnational work. At the same time, while not all individual transnational ties lead to activism, they can encourage and facilitate activism. While literature highlights the transnational nature of the Immigrant Rights Movement in the U.S., similar scholarly work does not exist for the work of organizations in Tijuana and Mexico City. Still, the same analysis can be applied to groups in Mexico as they provide similar support to the same population affected by the same issue as they go through an experience similar to that of newly arrived immigrants in the United States. Therefore, at both an organizational and individual level, immigrant activism in both the United States and Mexico is transnational in theory but not always in practice.

### *Transnational Activism in Practice*

Extensive literature and case studies of transnational activism exists. Scholars including Sidney Tarrow, Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, and Sonja J. Pieck write about the benefits and challenges of transnational activism; however, applied examples are valuable first-hand experiences that can serve as lessons for current immigrant activism. While not all examples engage immigrant populations and issues, they all serve to teach lessons about transnational activism.

In *The New Transnational Activism* (2005), Sidney Tarrow writes about the micro-level benefits of engaging in transnational activism which have implications for the meso-level. Tarrow includes, “individuals who move into transnational activism are both constrained and supported by domestic networks; that in making this move they activate transnational processes between states and international politics; and that when they return home, they bring with them new forms of action, new ways of framing domestic issues, and perhaps new identities that may

someday fuse domestic with international contention”. Tarrow asserts that transnational efforts can serve to develop and enhance the way that activism is carried out by helping activists breaking free of domestic constraints. More specifically, he points to potential gains, such as valuable knowledge and innovative ideas. New knowledge can offer new perspectives that allow individuals to revisit, reanalyze, and reinterpret issues, problems and solutions. For instance, the framing or interpretation of an issue—such as immigration—may differ by country, but by engaging transnationally activists can gain both contexts and treat transnational issues in a transnational manner. While Tarrow focuses on transnational activism at the micro-level, individual contributions contribute largely to transnational organizations and therefore are relevant to the meso-level of transnational activism.

Other scholars echo Tarrow and further emphasize the need for transnational activism when addressing bi-national issues, such as migration or immigration. In “Binational Organizations of Mexican Migrants in the United States” (1999), Gaspar Rivera-Salgado writes about various Mexican migrant cross-border social organizations and urges activists to consider their experiences and participate in binational networks and coalitions. Rivera-Salgado echoes Cano, Basch et al., and Ayoub et al. who claim that immigrant activism is transnational, and writes that binational Mexican migrant organizations, “respond to the complex problems confronting migrants on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border”. He emphasizes the binationality of migration and simultaneously elevates the capacity of transnational activism by saying that issues of migration, “can only be solved through binational actions” (Rivera-Salgado, 1999). Upon analyzing transnational grassroots migrant organizations, Rivera-Salgado concludes that the groups’ actions on both sides of the border helped them accumulate “a plethora of experiences”, which he also calls “political capital”. Moreover, he emphasizes that transnational issues should

be addressed with transnational action, which can result in political power capable of creating social change. Rivera-Salgado illuminates the successes of binational migrant groups to exemplify the transnational activism.

While transnational activism may result in social change, bureaucratic obstacles may hinder or make these efforts difficult. For instance, in “Transnational Activist Networks: Mobilization between Emotion and Bureaucracy” (2012), Sonja J. Pieck writes about the North-South inequalities that made environmental activism difficult for American and Indigenous activists. Lack of resources, funds and even documentation for travel may create inequalities that make it difficult for activists to engage transnationally or work with other groups across the border. Furthermore, even when transnational activism may be considered the best strategy to address bi-national issues, as Tarrow and Rivera-Salgado suggest, human and material resource may not always allow for it.

#### *Case Study: LGBT Movement in Europe*

Unlike the case studies that follow, which primarily highlight meso-level transnational tactics and strategies, the LGBT example also represents a social movement—which can be comparable in scale to the Immigrant Rights Movement in the United State. In “*A Struggle for recognition and rights: expanding LGBT activism*” (2017), Phillip M. Ayoub writes about the opportunities that come from organizing transnationally at the meso-level. Ayoub studied the LGBT movement in Europe and conducted a case study on the transnational collaboration between Germany and Poland.

Ayoub establishes that the nations’ gay and homophobic histories resulted in myriad LGBT social spaces and organizations, which mobilize local, national, and transnational activism. Affected by homophobic sentiments across Europe, LGBT activists initiated

transnational efforts and manifested their transnational character by founding the International Committee for Sexual Equity (ICSE) in 1951. The organization consisted of activists from Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland (Beachy, 2014). As the ties across nations became stronger, they were able to pressure other countries for more just policies and used “resources available in Berlin to pressure the Polish society and state” (Ayoub, 2017). Ayoub points to victories resulting from the LGBT Movement’s transnational human rights activism, including a “newfound global visibility of LGBT people” (Ayoub, 2017). In fact, the transnational ties and collaborative efforts influenced public opinion and European values. Connected by a common identity and a transnational network, LGBT activists mobilized resources that were readily available in Berlin but scarce in Poland to increase LGBT recognition and defend the population’s human rights.

The transnational LGBT example in Europe demonstrates that shared identities, such as the LGBT or immigrant identities, can create transnational solidarity and in turn lead to concrete changes. Additionally, meso-level groups—such as the ICSE—prove to play a crucial role in achieving concrete gains for social movements. In fact, the organized and physical space brought transnational activists and material resources together, which facilitated the transition from solidarity to direct-action activism. The case study thus confirms Gaspar Rivera-Salgado’s assertion that transnational organizations are quite successful and efficient when addressing transnational issues.

*Case Study: The Indigenous Front of Binational Organizations (FIOB): Get Out The Vote (GOTV)*

In “The Power of Transnational Organizing: Indigenous Migrant Politics of Oaxacalifornia” (2010) Marisol Raquel Gutierrez highlights the victories that resulted from

transnational activism by organized migrants. The state of Oaxaca, Mexico had gubernatorial elections in July of 2010 which resulted in a victory for Gabino Cue, of the Peace and Progress Coalition (CUPP). Cue's win replaced the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which had been in power for an uninterrupted 80-year reign. The election saw an unprecedented 56% voter turnout and was a gain for the indigenous community that had seen violence, repression, and impunity at the hands of PRI (Gutierrez, 2010). The Indigenous Front of Binational Organizations (FIOB), a transnational community-based organization and coalition of indigenous organizations in Los Angeles, oversaw the efforts that heavily promoted Gabino Cue's campaign and ultimately contributed to his victory.

FIOB recognizes that indigenous people, both within and outside of Mexico, have the right to “organize autonomously in defense, rescue, dissemination and consolidation of their customs, languages and cultures” (Gutierrez, 2010). Thus, the organization/coalition makes part of their mission to collaborate with other organizations to combine, “ideas and projects over the economic, political, social and cultural factors that our indigenous brothers/sisters migrants and non-migrants face in Mexico and the United States, to fight for respect for their rights and identity as indigenous peoples” (“Mission & Vision”, fiob.org).

In response to, then gubernatorial candidate, Gabino Cue's call for organizations in Los Angeles (given Los Angeles' large and growing Oaxaqueno population) to help with his campaign, FIOB conducted extensive direct-action activism. FIOB practiced their transnational mission and supported Gue's campaign in Mexico by conducting voter engagement in California, Baja California, and Oaxaca. The organization provided the people, phones, and space needed to deliver their message across the borders to other organizations, family members, and friends. FIOB also collaborated with other organizations to develop *Migrantes con Gabino*



*Cue*, an interactive radio program that magnified the voices of indigenous leaders, migration scholars, indigenous women, and others who discussed topics related to the political climate in Oaxaca. The binational radio show is an example of FIOB's mobility and outreach facilitated by their transnational structure.

Overall, FIOB's transitional efforts were made possible by collaborating with other organizations that had offices in the US and in México including: the Oaxacan Federation of Indigenous Communities and Organizations (FOCOICA), the Regional Organization of Oaxaca (ORO), and the Binational Center for Indigenous Oaxacan Development (CBDIO). Additionally, FIOB had a binational structure as well and had one office in Juchitán, Oaxaca as well as three California office locations in Fresno, Los Angeles, and Santa Maria. Together, these transnational organization organized between 5,000 and 6,000 Mixtecs, Zapotecs, Triquis, and Chatinos that are both migrants and non-migrants.

FIOB's infrastructure made their possible and allowed the organization to easily work with other activists in both California and Oaxaca. Additionally, its joint efforts with other transnational organizations within the coalition allowed them to reach more people, magnify their impact, and result in a victory. In fact, their own transnational structure as well as their collaborative efforts allowed them to overcome human and material resources issues that Sonja J. Pieck writes about. Similar to the LGBT movement case, the FIOB example shows the power behind shared identities to build solidarity and create change. While *Cue* and FIOB's joint campaign resulted in a victory, their collaboration continues to hold him accountable. Before agreeing to join his campaign, FIOB established three demands. FIOB demanded better and improved services to migrants of the Instituto Oaxaqueño de Atención al Migrante (IOAM), improved economic opportunities in the forms of jobs and educational access, and an end to

violence. Moreover, this example of transnational activism led by FIOB demonstrates that the transnational structure facilitates large impact and even structural change.

*Case Study: Centro de Accion Social Autonomo-Hermandad General de Trabajadores (CASA-HGT)*

In 1968 Centro de Accion Social Autonomo-Hermandad General de Trabajadores (CASA-HGT), originally just CASA, emerged in the United States to fill a gap that labor and civil rights movements of the time were not: protecting the rights of undocumented Mexican immigrants. At first, CASA reflected and directly addressed the challenges faced by Mexican immigrants by providing legal services and politically-oriented education. Soon after, CASA also used political organizing to forge the two challenges faced by undocumented Mexican immigrants: the working class and immigrant struggles. CASA was dealing with a transnational issue and addressed it in a transnational manner, as defined by Cano, by addressing the social and political implications of the immigrant identity in the U.S. as well as their existing ties to their countries of origin.

By 1974, new leadership reimagined CASA into the dual nature embodied by CASA-HGT, which focused on its multifaceted agenda that addressed, “part-national liberation, part-Marxist-Leninist, and part *Magonista* Mexican working-class organization” (Garcia, 2002). However, the new CASA and the Hermandad (HGT) worked separately. The Hermandad worked on the original CASA’s mission by providing services and organizing. The new CASA simultaneously started to develop radical perspectives on “international solidarity, the nature of the Mexican nationality in the United States, and a redefinition of the U.S.- Mexico border as a politically enforced division imposed on the Mexican people” (Garcia, 2002). The new CASA’s

focus on “international” solidarity demonstrates the importance of supporting immigrants and migrants on both ends of the border.

Unfortunately, the period between 1976 and 1978 marked CASA-HGT’s decline, ultimately dying in 1979. While it is difficult to pinpoint the cause for decline, Arnoldo Garcia discusses “growing differences over the politics of the organization”, and recalls questions that arose during that time, such as, “Do we just organize Mexican workers or are we a multinational organization?” (Garcia, 2002). While the dismantling of CASA-HGT was in part due to differences in agendas and beliefs regarding the international nature of their work, it is an example of transnational activism geared toward helping immigrants. Some CASA-HGT members including Jose "Pepe" Medina, Felipe Aguirre, and Juan Jose Gutierrez, continued to internationally organize migrant workers at their point of origin. Still, CASA-HGT was an example of failed transnational activism. Garcia highlights a trend of the rise and fall of left, anti-racist, internationalist oriented groups such as: the PSP, the Black Panther Party, the Congress of African Peoples, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, various sectors of the Asian-American movement and the American Indian Movement (Garcia, 2002). This example cautions that organizations engaging in transnational efforts should have cohesive transnational agendas and goals. CASA-HGT’s national and transnational efforts were successful independently, but not together because they were not cohesive or of the same scale.

*Case Study: Mexicano Latino demographic Transformation (MLDT) against the Anti-Mexicano/Latino Nativist Crusade (AMLNC)*

According to Armando Navarro, the Latinoization or browning of the United States—which he refers to as the Mexicano Latino demographic transformation (MLDT)—has resulted in a siege against Latinos by white nativists and the U.S. government. In fact, he deems the siege so

severe against Mexican and Latino undocumented immigrants that he considers it an “anti-Mexicano/Latino nativist crusade (AMLNC)” (Navarro, 2015). In response, activists organized summits, including one held in 1995, which brought immigrant activists together and resulted in a united front to combat anti-immigrant efforts.

Upon coming together, activists engaged in direct action and outreach, with both domestic and international support from Mexican and other Latin American countries. Under Navarro’s leadership, the movement denounced the Clinton administration’s militarization of the border with a march along the San Ysidro/Tijuana border. Other transnational efforts included a border summit in San Ysidro that was attended by 200 pro-immigrant activists. Members of MLDT including the National Alliance for Human Rights (NAHR) sent delegates to Mexico City to meet with government members as well as political party officials and succeeded in garnering their political support. As a result of gaining international support, NAHR led border meetings and summits which served as a space to discuss common issues such as rancher vigilantes and militias in Arizona. NAHR also maximized national and international media coverage of every event and protest against the rancher vigilantes and was meant to politically educate people within the United States as well as the Mexican government. The MLDT’s transnational collaboration with allies in Mexico magnified their efforts to push back against the AMLNC and resulted in great media coverage as well as increased political education on immigrant issues.

Similar to previous examples, the MLDT against the AMLNC case shows the importance of transnational collaboration in addressing transnational issues. In order to create change however, organized tactics are key, such as transnational summits and media coverage. Together,

the tactics brought together activists who were interested in addressing the same but also used media to garner transnational support in numbers.

### *The Gap in Literature*

Anti-immigrant sentiments have long existed in the United States; however, history also shows consistent reactionary waves of immigrant activism that aims to eradicate discriminatory policies and practices. While literature covers previous examples of reactionary immigrant activism in the U.S., it does not exist for similar mobilization that has emerged in Mexico to support deportees and returnees through their reintegration experiences. In fact, limited literature exists on the reintegration experience, but little focuses on the Mexican integration experience, and has not been explored in relation to transnational activism. Throughout this research, I considered the difficulties faced by both undocumented immigrants in the United States and deportees and returnees in Mexico, and aimed to:

1. explore the role that transnational activism plays in the work of immigrant-serving groups in U.S. cities, Tijuana, and Mexico City by identifying existing transnational ties, and
2. determine how transnational ties alleviate, or can alleviate, the hardships of the reintegration experience for deportees and returnees.

## METHODS

This research was conducted through semi-structured and open-ended interviews with leaders from immigrant serving organizations in Tijuana, Mexico City, and various United States cities, as well as with two scholars (Sala-F18118). The interviews were conducted in-person or over the phone. Before the interviews, each participant gave oral consent from an oral consent script or reviewed and signed an informed consent form that included: the purpose of the study,

an option to remain anonymous, risks, and an option to opt out as well as contact information. After each interview the participants were compensated for their time.

Tijuana and Mexico City were selected as areas to study because they are popular repatriation point cities that receive many deportees and returnees. As a result, various groups in both cities have recently been established by deportees and returnees with aims to alleviate hardships of the repatriation experience for others. Los Angeles was initially chosen as a city of interest because it is home to a large Mexican immigrant population as well as a plethora of elite immigrant serving organizations. However, upon myriad efforts and little success in securing substantial interviews with leaders from immigrant serving organizations in the Los Angeles, the search was broadened to other U.S. cities with large undocumented immigrant populations. It is likely that some leaders may have stopped responding due to their own busy and pressing schedules, but may have also lacked interest in transnational activism or saw their work as incompatible with transnational activism.

Ultimately, thirteen interviews were conducted with three organizations in Tijuana, Mexico: Madres Soñadoras Internacional/DREAMers Moms USA/Tijuana A.C., Deported Veterans Support House, and Al Otro Lado; three in Mexico City: Poch@ House/Otros Dreams en Accion, Deportados Unido@s en La Lucha, and Hola Code; and five all together from the United States: Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)—Los Angeles, CA, Instituto de Investigación y Práctica Social y Cultural (IIPSOCULTA)—New Haven, CT, Kino Border Initiative (KBI)—Nogales, AZ, and Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)—San Antonio, TX. Leaders interviewed included: directors and co-directors, founders or co-founders, organizers, a director of legal services as well as a director of education and advocacy. Lastly, one interview was with a scholar who researched the

reintegration experiences of deportees and returnees in Puebla, Mexico and Mexico City, and another with Phillip Ayoub, PhD Diplomacy and World Affairs Professor at Occidental College, who specializes in transnational social movements and activism. More information can be found on each group and interviewee in Table 4.

In Mexico, the organizations all generally aim to support and aid deportees and returnees during their reintegration experience, but their work varies in nature due to differences in their mission, structure, resources, etc. Each organization in Mexico was selected from initial background research identified from broad Google and Facebook searches that included “deportee organizations in Tijuana” and “deportee organizations in Mexico City”. Often, those initial searches would lead to myriad editorials which depicted the reintegration experience in Mexico and featured the leaders and founders of the organizations—many of whom are deportees or returnees themselves. Leaders were selected because they were the individuals who replied to the initial recruitment emails, Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp messages.

In the United States, the organizations vary more in scope. While some focus on providing direct legal services, others focus primarily on organizing and advocacy or community education. Nonetheless, each was selected because they all share a long-term goal of just immigration policies in the United States. Specific leaders were recruited as they have direct contact, or supervise others who have direct contact, to a population at risk of deportation—which was important because one of the underlying research questions focused on how transnational collaboration can help alleviate the hardships of deportees and returnees post deportation or return.

Questions for leaders in Mexico inquired about the immediate and long term goals of their groups, if they perceived their mission as being transnational, information on any

transnational ties, as well as: the nature of those ties, the benefits and challenges of working transnationally, obstacles that had hindered them from working transnationally, if they perceived transnational activism feasible and compatible with the realm of their work, and if they were interested engaging transnationally more in the future. Interviews with leaders in the U.S. also explored the nature of any transnational efforts, their perceptions on whether their mission was transnational, information on how they prepared their members facing or at risk of deportation (such as through education or resources), and if they expected to continue their existing or develop new transitional efforts in the future. Interviews with scholars were specific to their individual research and areas of study and inquired about their perceptions of and expert opinions on topics such as: the role of non-government organizations on the repatriation experience, past successful transnational social movements, and the nature of transnational activism tactics and tools.

Upon the completion of all interviews, the data was divided by country and codes were finalized by identifying common themes to the interview questions. Some codes involved a deductive approach and were expected to come up during interviews; however, the coding list as well as individual codes were still modified throughout the coding process as new interviews took place. Deductive codes were based on findings from background research, literature review, and personal experiences with the organizations and included topics such as the limitations created by insufficient time and resources, *Binational structures naturally result in transnational ties*, and *Organizations respond to transnational political issues by providing resources*. The process used to identify inductive codes was reviewing notes taken during the interviews as well as listening to the interviews again and taking additional notes—most interviewees gave consent to being audio-recorded. The inductive codes that emerged from the interviews include: *Long-*



*term organizational goals forge transnational ties, Visas grant mobility and open the door for transnational activism, and Deportation or return preparedness is incompatible with deportation defense.* Additionally, the codes were used to organize findings in the Findings and Analysis section of this text. Interviews with bi-national organizations—organizations with bi-national structure that formally operate in both the U.S. and Mexico included in the U.S. Findings and Analysis subsection because two of three of those interview were conducted with leaders working in the United States. The exception is Al Otro Lado, for which the interview was conducted in-person in Tijuana, and thus is discussed thoroughly in the Mexico subsection but is also included in the *Binational structures naturally result in transnational ties* subsection under the U.S. Findings and Analysis section.

Table 4: Interviewees and Immigrant-serving Groups

Location	Group	Interviewee	Description and Mission	Type
Tijuana, MX	Madres soñadoras Internacional/ DREAMers Moms Usa/Tijuana A.C.	Yolanda Barrona, <i>Director and Founder</i>	Organization of deported Mothers, with children that are American Citizens and DREAMers, who have been separated as a result of unjust immigration laws. They are fighting to return to their families in the United States and for changes in American laws. Founded in 2014.	Non-profit, NGO, Services, Advocacy
Tijuana, MX	Deported Veterans Support House	Hector Barajas Varela, <i>Director and Founder</i>	Support deported veterans on their path to self-sufficiency by providing assistance in the realms of food, clothing, shelter and resource centers as they adjust to life in their new country of residence. They advocate for political legislation which would	Non-profit, NGO, Services

			prohibit the deportation of United States service personnel, both former and current and repatriation to the country they were willing to die for. Founded in 2012.	
Tijuana, MX	Al Otro Lado	Luis Guerra, <i>Non-Profit Consultant, Border Rights Project Leader</i>	A bi-national, direct legal services organization serving indigent deportees, migrants, and refugees in Tijuana, Mexico. The bulk of the services are immigration-related. They also assist families with aspects of reunification in Mexico when it has been determined by U.S. authorities that it is in the best interest of the child to live with his or her parent in Mexico. They work with non-custodial deported parents to ensure their rights as parents are protected in the United States family court system. Founded in 2012.	Non-profit, NGO, Legal services
Mexico City, MX	Poch@ House/Otros Dreams en Accion (ODA)	Maggie Loreda, <i>Co-Founder and Co-Director</i>	An organization dedicated to mutual support and political action by and for young people who grew up in the US and are now in Mexico due to deportation or return. Founded in 2015.	Non-profit, NGO, Services, Advocacy
Mexico City, MX	Deportad@s Unidos en La Lucha	Ana Laura Lopez, <i>Founder</i>	Collective of people who have been deported and have decided to independently organize them self in order to fight for their right to be reunited with our families. Founded in 2016.	Worker Collective, Services
Mexico City, MX	Hola Code	Leni Alvarez, <i>Head of Recruitment</i>	A 5-month software engineering bootcamp focused	Social Enterprise

			on integrating returned or deported migrants and refugees in Mexico. Founded in 2017.	
Los Angeles, CA	Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)	Luis Perez, <i>Legal Services Director</i>  Melody Klingenfuss, <i>Statewide Organizer</i>	Organization that aims to achieve a just society fully inclusive of immigrants. CHIRLA organizes and serves individuals, institutions and coalitions to build power, transform public opinion, and change policies to achieve full human, civil and labor rights. Guided by the power, love, and vision of our community, CHIRLA embraces and drives progressive social change. Founded in 1986.	Services, Advocacy, Organizing
Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora, Mexico	Kino Border Initiative (KBI)	<i>Joanna Williams, Director of Education and Advocacy</i>	Binational organization that works in the area of migration and is located in Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora, Mexico. Its mission is to promote US/Mexico border and immigration policies that affirm the dignity of the human person and a spirit of bi-national solidarity through: Direct humanitarian assistance and accompaniment with migrants; Social and pastoral education with communities on both sides of the border; Participation in collaborative networks that engage in research and advocacy to transform local, regional, and national immigration policies. Founded in 2000.	Advocacy, Organizing

San Antonio, Texas	Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)	Barbara Pena, <i>Director of Strategic Partnerships</i>	A 501(c)(3) charity that promotes justice by providing free and low-cost legal services to immigrant children, refugees and families in Texas. Founded in 1986.	Legal Services, Advocacy
New Haven, Connecticut  San Francisco Tetlanohcan, Tlaxcala, MX	Instituto de Investigación y Práctica Social y Cultural (IIPSOCULTA)	Marco Castillo	Non-profit organization in the United States and Mexico with the mission of generating conditions for justice and equality in Latin-America and the U.S. through popular education, organizing, and solidarity work. Founded in 2001.	Advocacy, Organizing
Los Angeles, CA	Transnational Social Movements, Transnational LGBTQ	Phillip Ayoub, <i>PHD Diplomacy and World Affairs</i>	Studies international relations and comparative politics, engaging with literature on transnational politics, sexuality and gender, and the study of social movements. Focuses on how the transnational mobilization of marginalized peoples and international channels of visibility influence socio-legal change across states.	N/A
		<i>Mexican Reintegration Experience Scholar</i>	Studied the reintegration experience of deportees and returnees in Mexico City, MX and Puebla, MX from a multifaceted perspective.	N/A

# FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

Aware of the constant and heightened threats of deportation in the United States and inspired by the work of groups in Mexico, this study researched whether transnational activism currently exists between groups in the U.S. and Mexico and whether it helps improve conditions for deportees and returnees post deportation or return. In order to represent the role that transnational activism plays, this study highlights existing transnational ties established by groups on opposite ends of the border.

Findings show that for organization in both the United States and Mexico, there are various types of transnational ties that are influenced by factors including: mission, bi-national structures, and resources. Findings also shed light on some of the challenges and obstacles that have hindered groups from working more transnationally as well as the benefits and the ultimate goals of such efforts.

While all of the groups in Mexico have transnational ties that cross the border as their constituencies have emotional connections to the United State, personal ties do not necessarily translate into social or political change. Although those connections are important and greatly impact the personal experiences of deportees and returnees, the findings highlight the organizational ties that are intentionally created to advance a group's mission. Nonetheless, existing ties help groups in Mexico raise awareness, spread information, get resources—which altogether helps prevent others deportees and returnees from experiencing unnecessary hardships.

Transnational ties also exist for organizations present in the United States and like in Mexico are shaped by factors including: missions and structures. As the name suggests, the bi-

national organizations had inherent and natural transnational ties due to their physical and legal presence in both the United States and Mexico. Thus; Al Otro Lado, Instituto de Investigacion y Practica Social y Cultural (IIPSOCULTA), and Kino Border Initiative (KBI) were expected to have more transnational ties than the two other organizations without a bi-national structure. In fact, transnational ties for the two remaining U.S. organizations were more limited and circumstantial. Nonetheless, transnational ties created by all five organizations generally did not address the hardships of the experience post deportation or return. Instead, the bi-national organizations focused on issues of migration with a focus on issues faced by migrant entering the United States while the other two focused on the recent Migrant Exodus in Tijuana.

The findings and their analysis are organized under two overarching and broad sections: Mexico and The United States. The broad country categories are divided into subsections which are then divided into specific findings.

## Mexico: Tijuana, BC | Mexico City, MX

### Factors that Influence Types of Transnational Ties

#### *Long-term organizational goals forge transnational ties*

Most groups in Mexico meet the immediate needs of deportees and returnees post-deportation or return but also have longer-term goals of reuniting families and changing American policies, which have influenced the type of transnational ties that they have sought and established. Such as DREAMer Moms USA and Deported Veterans Support House, whose long-term goals are to achieve family reunification and influence immigration laws in the United States. As a result, both have established transnational connections to government officials that have the knowledge, platform, and power to influence public policy. Yolanda of DREAMer

Moms has been in contact with assembly and congress members including Nanette Barragan and Eloise Gomez Reyes. Similarly, Deported Veterans Support House has had four congressional visits and discussed bills and proposals with legislators. The mission of Deported Veterans Support House to cater to the deported veteran population has resulted in veteran-related ties and is another example of how long-term goals influence transnational ties. More specifically, veterans still file for benefits and must do so through the Department of Veteran Affairs in the United States. However, it is also one example of how not all transnational ties create social or political change, and are therefore not all examples of transnational activism.

Unlike DREAMer Moms USA and Deported Veterans Support House, Hola Code does not seek to influence policy in the United States or help their students go back to the United States, instead they meet their immediate needs and provide resources for them to build their new lives in Mexico. For instance, Hola Code equips deportees, returnees, and refugees with a high-paying skill (software engineering) that will broaden their opportunities to enter the workforce in Mexico. Different from all other Mexican groups in this study, Hola Code is a social enterprise—a company or tech startup with a social mission of helping develop agents of change. Additionally, Hola Code aims to create opportunities for deportees, returnees, and refugees in a city where they are limited due to discrimination, language barriers, and the mere fact that they are starting a new life in a different country.

Hola Code's primary transnational connection is to the tech industry and the company that provides the coding curriculum. Through those connections, Hola Code is able to equip students with a quality education and is also exploring the possibility of creating job opportunities with Silicon Valley companies. As a relatively new enterprise: Hola Code's transnational connections allow it to improve its existing structure by providing access to

resources such as top of the line software and job opportunities. Resources in the form of transnational funding is also an area Leni expressed they may explore in the future, in order to help the company become self-sustaining. Hola Code needs a lot of funding because they are recently established and provide students with a vast amount of resources at no cost.

Hola Code's transnational ties allow it to advance its mission and thus better serve deportees and returnees. However, it is complicated to determine whether those ties are a form of activism. When asked if she perceived Hola Code's work as a form of activism, Leni believed that while they are "activists at heart", they are not engaging in "hands-on activism". Hola Code's mission of reintegrating deportees, returnees, and refugees into Mexican society by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in the tech industry implies that they assume that their students will stay in Mexico. Thus, their mission does not call for protests and marches (as Leni mentioned) or transnational ties to other groups in the U.S. since their work focuses on improving conditions in Mexico, and less on helping folks return. Nonetheless, their social mission is an element of activism as it aims to create social change by creating economic opportunities for deportees, returnees, and refugees in a city where they are limited. However, creating other ties to immigrant serving groups in the United States and sharing success stories or being available as a contact could create relief for folks at risk of deportation by demonstrating that there is hope for anyone even if they are deported. Overall, Hola Code's tech specific mission has shaped its ties to the tech industry in the U.S., help it better serve its students, but falls short of transnational activism.

### *Visas grant mobility and open the door for transnational activism*

Visas prove to be an invaluable resource as they grant deportees transnational mobility and allow them to develop new ties in the United States. Leni of Hola Code voluntarily returned



to Mexico in 2009 and recently received a visa that allows her to travel to the United States. While it was not clear whether Leni's visa was granted through her work or her personal efforts, she leverages that privilege to raise awareness in the United States. During her visits she has introduced Hola Code to immigrant serving organizations and hopes that through her mobility she will be able to establish more formal transnational ties for Hola Code. Leaders of two other groups in Mexico were also recently granted mobility and use it as an opportunity to raise awareness by conducting informational talks in the U.S. (expanded on in *Returnees raise awareness by conducting educational talks at American colleges*). Hola Code was only founded in 2017 and Leni was only recently granted her visa; therefore, her individual efforts have not resulted in concrete transnational ties yet.

Overall, visa mobility proves to at least open doors to transnational collaboration. Additionally, being physically present in the United States helps overcome barriers that may discourage or hinder transnational activism, such as communication barrier; however, there can be limitations. Relying on visas to facilitate transnational activism is both unsustainable and impossible as not all leaders can or will be granted mobility. In fact, only returnees have that possibility as they are not barred from re-entering the United States and can be granted visas. Furthermore, visas are merely a resource that *facilitate* transnational ties and when available can be used to seek collaborative efforts as Leni has done.

Additional findings demonstrate that bi-national organizational structures shape transnational ties. The additional findings are represented below in Table 5 and are expanded on in the following sections: *Binational structures naturally result in transnational ties*.

Table 5: Factors that Influence the Types of Transnational Ties by Group in Mexico

Factors*	Group	Influence and Ties**
<b>Mission</b>		
	Hola Code	Long-term goal of helping deportees, returnees, refugees integrate into Mexican society by introducing them to software engineering's led to ties to the U.S.'s Silicon Valley tech industry.
	DREAMer Moms USA	Long-term goal of influencing American policies and family reunification led to connections with assembly and congress members.
	Deported Veterans Support House	Long-term goal of influencing American policies and eliminating the deportations of veterans
	Deported Veterans Support House	Mission centered around supporting Veterans who still receive VA benefits result in tie the United State and the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs.
<b>Resources</b>		
	Poch@ House/ODA	United through her work with <i>Los Otros Dreamers</i> and Maggie Loreda was able to get her joint B-1 business visit visa and B-2 tourist visa via an invitation to speak at UC Fullerton
	Hola Code	Lenni was recently granted her visa [unclear if it was facilitated through his work] that allows her to travel to the United States as an activist aiming to raise awareness on the post-deportation/return experience.
	Deported Veterans Support House	Hector was recently granted his citizenship and now engages in educational talks at colleges in the United States, in order to raise awareness.
<b>Bi-National Structure</b>		

	Al Otro Lado	Bi-national structure allows Al Otro Lado to understand both the U.S. and Mexican context of immigration, migration, and deportation.
	IIPSOCULTA	Bi-national structure allows Bi-national structure allows Al Otro Lado to understand both the U.S. and Mexican context of migration.
	KBI	Bi-national structure allows Bi-national structure allows Al Otro Lado to understand both the U.S. and Mexican context of migration. Conduct education and advocacy efforts in the U.S. and Mexico as an aim to garner allies and public support as well as direct resources for those in need in Mexico.

\*Some Factors included in the table are not included in this section but are addressed in later sections of Findings and Analysis.

\*\*Only ties mentioned in interviews are represented in the table, although others may exist.

## Types of Transnational Ties

### *Returnees raise awareness by conducting educational talks at American colleges*

By conducting educational talks and sharing their own experiences with deportation and return, leaders are able to raise awareness and share resources in the United States. Hector, founder of Deported Veterans Support Houses, was recently granted his citizenship and conducts educational talks at colleges. Similarly, through her work as co-founder of ODA/Poch@ House, Maggie Loredó was recently granted a B-1 business visit visa and B-2 tourist visa via an invitation to speak at UC Fullerton. She now holds informational talks at colleges with co-founder, Jill Anderson, in states including California, Minnesota, North Carolina, New York, and Washington D.C. As Yolanda of DREAMer Moms mentioned in another instance, speaking to youth is important because they can be inspired and have the power to mobilize to create change. Thus, colleges demonstrate to be important locations for educational lectures as they can reach

young people who are at the age of defining their careers and may be interested in becoming involved.

Both Hector and Maggie raise awareness by sharing their own stories and humanizing the deportee and returnee experiences. Their efforts are facilitated by the transnational mobility that they've gained through visas and citizenship status. In these cases, transnational activism demonstrates to be a tool used to raise awareness on the obstacles of deportees and returnees post deportation or return. Loredó emphasized:

It is very important for us to co-host events with organizations that are doing the work there [the United States]. To talk with the community about what happens in the aftermath of deportation and how we can support them once they are on this side.

By traveling across borders and sharing their story with people in the U.S., activists are able to make their experiences known and demonstrate that there are many challenges that deportees and returnees experience. By hearing the stories from folks that have experienced reintegration first hand, audience members are compelled to learn more and possibly even become involved.

Stories of the undocumented fight to stay in the U.S. are often told and heard in the U.S., but activists like Hector and Maggie open the doors to talk about what is often a dreaded, yet very real, topic: deportation and voluntary return. Nonetheless, audience members that are at risk of deportation may be relieved to hear that in the case of deportation or voluntary return, they can be received and supported by groups like *Hola Code*, *Deported Veterans Support House*, and *ODA/Poch@ House*. At the same time, their informational talks serve as a call to action. As Maggie explained, she uses those spaces in the U.S. to make demands and emphasize that there is a need for collaboration across nations in order to create change.

As a result of their existing transnational ties, including the educational talks at colleges, *ODA/Poch@ House* has made connections with different groups in the United States. Those connections vary from participating in research that the Migration Policy Institute has conducted

on the reintegration experiences of deportees and returnees, to connecting with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in Denver who may ask them to accompany a deportee/returnee upon their arrival in Mexico City. ODA/Poch@ House has developed other connections with the Oakland-based "67 Sueños Collective", Black Lives Matter co-founder Patrisse Cullors, Frente Indígena Binacional de Oaxaca in Los Angeles, and Mexicanos En El Exilio's Family Reunification Program in El Paso, Texas.

*Leaders use social media to disseminate information and share resources*

The internet and social media platforms—including Skype, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter amongst others—are tools used by activists to develop instant transnational connections. For instance, Hector of Deported Veterans referred to social media as a tool that helps raise awareness and allows organizations like his become known to deportees or returnees as well as those at risk of deportation. He further emphasized that since resources and information are not provided at detention centers, it is part of his job to be accessible and become known to veterans at risk of deportation or who have already been deported.

Social media is a particularly important tool for leaders that do not have the ability to travel beyond the border. Yolanda, leader and founder of DREAMER Moms who was deported in 2011, has ties to churches, schools, and as well as other organizations in the United States. She also holds informational Skype meetings with folks that are at risk of deportation. For instance, she talks with other DREAMER parents and tells them about her own experience and provides information that would prepare them in the case of deportation. In fact, she provides advice, resources, and general information in order to help prevent them going through what she and other women have gone through post-deportation or return.

*Trabajamos con ellos con ellos primero por contandoles porque estamos aqui. Que pasa si te deportan. Como pueden no pasar por las mismas cosas que nosotras pasamos.*

We work with them with them first by telling them why we are here. What happens if you are deported? How can they avoid going through the same things we did?

She also provides advice on what to do before deportation (if they are at risk of deportation), how to talk about it with their children, who to leave their children with as well as how to do a power of attorney. Lastly, Yolanda provides information—including contact information—about DREAMER Moms and assures other mothers still in the U.S., that if they were to be deported they would be welcome there.

Leaders of organizations in Mexico focus a lot on what they can do to prevent others from experiencing hardships when they are deported or returned, and often use social media to prepare deportees and returnees for those experiences. Social media is a low-cost tool that reaches international audiences, is fast to use, and can lead to immediate results. While there are no signs of a formal transnational network, online connections seem to have facilitated the creation of an informal network in Mexico of organizations that support folks post deportation or return. During interviews, several leaders of organizations in Tijuana mentioned activists that I would later speak with in Mexico City—and vice versa. Additionally, most groups follow each other on social media, re-post each other's posts, and sometimes attend the same events—such as a book release panel that featured leaders from both IIPSOCULTA and Otros Dreams en Acción. In the future, this existing informal network can be further developed by giving it a name and a formal mission.

Social media is an efficient tool; however, there are limitations to relying on social media related transnational ties. For instance, it can help with create immediate transnational connections, but social media is not accessible to everyone. In fact, while deportees may have been exposed to online information before being detained—as Hector hopes—immigrants in

detention centers who are facing deportation would not have access to it once they are under the custody of ICE. Yolanda also highlighted that in rural areas of Mexico many people do not have internet access, and for that reason generally has a hard time reaching them. Additionally, social media can be a tool to help garner support and spread knowledge, but may not be as effective in achieving some of the groups' long-term goals—such as influencing American policy for instance. Nonetheless, social media is a transnational tool that reaches large audiences, creates immediate transnational connections and is used to raise awareness, disseminate information, and in turn helps prevent deportees and returnees be better prepared for deportation or return.

*Word of mouth connections help meet immediate needs and garner resources*

Due to the inability of some leaders to engage in in-person collaboration, word of mouth connections become very important to meeting the immediate needs of people being deported or returned. For instance, Yolanda of DREAMer Moms mentions:

*Es como interactuamos. Ellas nos avisan, 'hay tal persona que tiene peligro de deportación. Te voy a mandar una fotografía por si la deportan, tu la puedes recibir en la línea.*

It's how we interact. They warn us, 'there is this person who is in danger of deportation. I'll send you a photograph in case they are deported, so you can receive them at the crossing

Through such connections, Yolanda is able to meet and accompany folks that are facing deportation or return and therefore prevent them from facing unnecessary hardships. Several other groups—including DREAMer Moms, Deportados Unidos en la Lucha, and ODA/Poch@House—have similar experiences of using word of mouth as a method to reach out to other activists whose geographical location may allow them to better support a deportee or returnee.

DREAMer Moms' transnational collaborative efforts have existed for three years and are made possible by having “representatives” in various locations—allies that are activists but aren't from a formal organizations or groups. Their allies are in different countries and different

parts of Mexico, such as Ciudad Juarez, Nogales, and Tijuana. Thus, transnational collaboration has allowed for DREAMer Moms to develop its own informal transnational network and therefore support women in various parts of the world.

Similarly, Al Otro Lado's Border Rights Project is dependent on the work of volunteers from the United States and has been able maintain a large influx of them through word of mouth interactions. Luis Guerra, leader of the project mentioned: "There was one social media post in early November, and everything else as of now has been word of mouth". Word of mouth interactions have allowed Al Otro Lado to reach volunteers transnationally, and thus continue their work. Upon the arrival of the Migrant Exodus in Tijuana last fall, Al Otro Lado has been organizing individual volunteers as well as organizations, such as CHIRLA and RAICES, that have offered their support. On one hand, word of mouth ties to volunteers in the United States have facilitated recruitment work for Al Otro Lado's leaders. However, while the influx of volunteers may not have stopped yet, it may be an unsustainable method to gather the necessary labor and skills. Nonetheless, in this case, transnational ties have made the work of Al Otro Lado possible.

Word of mouth connections have allowed activists, who may not be transnationally mobile: reach transnational audiences, support more deportees and returnees, and garner human and material resources for their groups. Overall, informal word of mouth connections allow groups in Mexico to reach and better support deportees and returnees.



**Table 6: Types of Transnational Ties in Mexico by Group**

Transnational Tie*	Goal	Group
Connections to Silicon Valley tech companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gain access to top of the line Silicon Valley engineering software and curriculum</li> <li>increase job opportunities for students of Hola Code</li> <li>hope to open the door for transnational funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hola Code</li> </ul>
Collaboration with American government officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>influence American policies</li> <li>family reunification</li> <li>get rid of bans on deportees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DREAMer Moms USA</li> <li>Deported Veterans Support House</li> </ul>
Educational and Awareness Lectures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humanize the deportee and returnee experience</li> <li>Raise awareness</li> <li>Disseminate knowledge that will help prevent other from going through similar hardships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deported Veterans Support House</li> <li>Hola Code</li> <li>Poch@ House/ODA</li> </ul>
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate knowledge that will help prevent other from going through similar hardships, if they are at risk of deportation or facing deportation</li> <li>Present themselves as a contact, resource, or place to go to if they are deported</li> <li>Reach and recruit volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DREAMer Moms USA</li> </ul>
Word of Mouth Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find support and resources for individual deportees or returnees who are facing deportation or return</li> <li>Informal network of available resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DREAMer Moms</li> <li>Deportados Unidos en la Lucha</li> <li>ODA/Poch@ House</li> </ul>

\*Only ties mentioned in interviews are represented in the table, although others may exist.

## Benefits of Transnational Activism

*Transnational ties reach a broader audience and create more power*

Leaders of immigrant serving groups in Mexico expressed myriad benefits that have resulted from their transnational efforts, including the ability to reach a large audience and in turn help more deportees and returnees. For instance, Yolanda expressed that transnational word of mouth connections have allowed her to reach more mothers and prevent them from going through what she did.

*Los beneficios son grandes porque nosotras como mujeres deportadas/madres separadas de nuestros hijos sabemos el sufrimiento que ya lo experimentamos, y no queremos que más mujeres lleguen a la frontera desprotegidas como nosotras llegamos, sin nadie que nos ayude, sin saber a donde ir... Es una tranquilidad saber que otras mujeres no van a pasar por lo que nosotros pasamos.*

The benefits are huge because as deported mothers and mothers separated from our children, we have already experience that pain, and we don't want more women to arrive at the border unprotected like we did— without anyone to help us, without knowing where to go... it is relieving to know that more women won't go through what we did".

Without her transnational engagement through social media and allies abroad, Yolanda would not be able to help all the mothers that she does.

Along the same lines, Leni of Hola Code expressed that transnational collaboration could help actors on both ends of the border gain more power. She said, “*Unidos somos mas fuertes*” or “Together we are more powerful”. In fact, she was specifically referring to the power behind gaining an international perspective and context. While on both sides there is a *lucha* or fight going on for the immigrant community, together they could better address the bi-national issue of immigration.

*Transnational ties lead to material and human resources*

Transnational ties help groups gain access to material and human resources. Yolanda talked about material resources and how allies often visit them in Tijuana and donate clothes and

hygiene products which are essential donations to meet the immediate needs of deportees and returnees. Similarly, Hector of Deported veterans and Luis Guerra of Al Otro Lado expressed the need for transnational collaboration because without it, their work would not be possible. Their transnational visibility has allowed Deported Veterans to receive visits and legal support from attorneys from the U.S., including help from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Al Otro Lado also requires the work of all their volunteers as well as the expertise of other organizations in the United States in order to better aid the diverse population of people in need, “If we don’t collaborate, we won’t be efficient and won’t be able to maximize our services”. Overall, transnational ties have helped groups in Mexico garner both material and human resources that are necessary for their work and help them better serve their constituencies.

## Barriers that Prevent Transnational Activism

### *Invisibility in the United States*

A majority of the groups that serve deportees and returnees in Tijuana and Mexico expressed that one of the primary obstacles that has hindered them from engaging in transnational activism and collaboration is that immigrant serving organizations and activists in the United States do not take the post deportation and return experience into account. In fact some sentiments demonstrate a sense of being invisible and forgotten by activism in the United States. Despite their own interests and efforts in developing closer transnational ties to organizations in the U.S., groups in Mexico feel that those interests are not reciprocated. Maggie Loredó from Poch@ House/ODA said:

The topic is really in the shadows and invisible. Both the Mexican government, obviously the U.S. government, and even organizations in the U.S., did not really, and *still* do not acknowledge the presence of returned and deported people... and what happens in the aftermath of return and deportation...

Ana Laura from *Deportados Unid@s en la Lucha* that corroborates Maggie's concern and asserted that U.S. groups and activists fail to see immigration as a bi-national issue and thus exclude deportees and returnees from activism emphasized:

*Es un tema binacional y olvidado por ambos países. Ni a Estados Unidos ni a México le importa... En Estados Unidos suena mucho de parar las deportaciones, pero no se habla de que se hace cuando una familia ya está separada, eso es el problema... No hay seguimiento. Y aunque hay varias movilizaciones siempre en estados unidos por la lucha del migrante, pero en el tema de los deportados noy hay. Es como 'pues ya estan aya, pues ya que. No pues allá que se las arreglen'... Eso a sido un reto también, el que la gente voltee a ver que si es un problema... Noy hay ese puente para que nos sigan incluyendo en las lucha que se llevan de al otro lado.*

It's a binational issue forgotten about by both countries. Neither the United States nor Mexico cares [about deportees/returnees]. In the United States, you hear a lot about stopping deportations, but there aren't conversations about what to do when a family has already been separated—that's the problem... There's no follow-up. Even though there are always various mobilizations in the U.S. for immigrants, there are none for deportees. It's like 'well they're already over there [Mexico], there's nothing left to do. They can figure it out on their own over there'... that has been a challenge too, making people turn around and realize that this is a problem... There doesn't exist a bridge that allows us to remain involved in the movement on the other side of the border.

Hector from *Deported Veterans Support House* made a similar comment and explained that there is less interest by groups and activists as well as the general public to become involved with activism by deportees and returnees. He mentioned a perception that several other leaders in Mexico shared and highlighted the idea that upon deportation or return, deportees and returnees are seen as a lost cause. Hector mentioned:

When you're in the United States it's easy to fight for somebody and people really get into it, but once you get deported, that's it, there's no movement to return anybody home... we're fighting for the DREAMers, we're fighting for the 11 million that are undocumented, but there's really no fight to bring back the ones that were deported.

While there are activism efforts on the Mexican side to help returnees return to their home in the United States, similar efforts are non-existent in the United States. Addressing the lack of deportee and returnee awareness in the U.S. Maggie explained:

We've been knocking on doors and finding ways to look at it from a transnational perspective. Not only Mexico, not only the undocumented community fighting to stay. But there needs to be a way to collaborate, definitely, in concrete ways

Beyond being invisible within activism in the U.S., leaders in Mexico tend to believe that immigration is not seen as a bi-national issue—which is an issue they are trying to mend by

increasing transnational visibility. They also often believe that activists and organizations in the U.S. perceive deportation or return as a lost battle and as a result give up on them.

Frustration by leaders of groups in Mexico demonstrates that they feel forgotten, ignored, and misunderstood by their counterparts in the United States upon deportation or return. Leni of Hola Code suggested that there is little dialogue about deportation and return in the United States and may be due to “fear of deportation, or it not being present as a reality”. However, their concerns reveal that they at least *feel* that activists, leaders, and organizations in the U.S. do not see immigration activism as a binational issue. Perhaps because they are so focused on keeping undocumented folks safe, and in the United States, that it is frightening and even momentum killing to talk about deportation. Although one leader mentioned that they hadn’t been rejected to develop transnational ties in the U.S., such conclusion may come from their personal experience as returnees as well as other experiences in their work. For instance, one researcher recalled:

It was very hard for migrants in the U.S., like dreamers in the U.S. to listen to what reality in Mexico is. Very much what happens is they come [to Mexico] and they just say ‘I don’t want to get involved in this’.

Nonetheless, not talking about deportation as a reality in the United States exacerbates the challenges faced by deportees and returnees because they often do not have access to the knowledge or resources necessary upon their arrival in Mexico. At the same time, those sentiments may discourage groups in Mexico from engaging in and further developing their transnational ties.

# United States: Los Angeles, CA | New Haven, CT | San Antonio, Texas | Nogales, AZ

## Types of Transnational Ties

*Organizations respond to transnational political issues by providing resources*

Both Barbara of RAICES and Luis of CHIRLA perceived their missions as being transnational, but mentioned that their work had fallen short of existing transnationally up until recently when they responded to a pressing political issue—the Migrant Exodus. Speaking of CHIRLA, Luis mentioned that when the organization was founded in 1986, it was not contemplated that the work would go beyond the city of Los Angeles, and much less beyond the nation. Although CHIRLA’s work exists at a national level today, he explained:

The work itself exists because of transnational phenomena, because of people from other countries coming to the United States. That within itself is related to transnationalism. But the majority of the work has been in the United States.

Similarly, Barbara mentioned that RAICES’ recent transnational efforts unfolded a unique conversation that influenced her to believe that the organization’s mission is transnational. She mentioned them aiding migrants seeking asylum in Tijuana was simply a way to help prevent them from becoming a part of the “detention machine”. In other words, their work is transnational because whether in Tijuana or Texas, they were meeting the same goal.

Up until the arrival of thousands of Central American migrants with Migrant Exodus in November of last year, neither organizations had engaged in work across the border. Upon hearing about the first caravan making its way north to the Tijuana border, both RAICES and CHIRLA sent legal teams to Mexico City where they would meet approximately 7,000 migrants. Both leaders emphasized that meeting migrants in Mexico City gave them the opportunity to prepare migrants on what to expect when they got to the border, prepare them for their credible

fear interviews, and do everything they could to help build strong cases. However, upon arrival to Mexico City RAICES leaders realized that there was a group of LGBT migrants, known as *La Comunidad*, that was facing heightened discrimination. In response RAICES prioritized helping *La Comunidad* and hired buses that would take them to Tijuana as well as secure housing for them. Similarly, since CHIRLA first heard of the Exodus, they have sent four delegations of attorneys to Tijuana, which has allowed their legal experts to understand the reasons and conditions for why the migrants were traveling as well as provide consultations and direct legal services.

While a Haitian Caravan arrived to Tijuana in 2016, Luis expressed there being a lot media attention on the Central American Exodus and thus pressure to act. Additionally, CHIRLA's associate director was in Mexico City for an international migration conference when the caravan arrived to Mexico City, and added additional pressure for a response by the organization. Similarly, Barbara explained that the Exodus was an opportunity that presented itself for RAICES to act transnationally and the ultimate decision was influenced by the alarming rhetoric that was coming from the White House at that time. In fact, she emphasized that in the past RAICES had been unable to work across the border as they are limited by their capacity and the constant busy work in detention centers.

Both RAICES and CHIRLA immediately responded with transnational activism to the urgent need for legal aid and resources when the Migrant Exodus arrived to Tijuana and Mexico City. While the decision to act was a response to pressure, CHIRLA Luis emphasized that humanitarian crisis has not gone away and has actually worsened. He emphasized that it simply "didn't make sense" for them to pull away their resources when the need for them had grown. Aware that the problem could not be fixed with over a weekend, CHIRLA made their first

transnational hire. The organization has temporarily hired someone to follow the caravan and send weekly reports on how many people are in need of resources, how they're treated in different cities, and when they will need the CHIRLA attorneys from at the border.

*Binational organizational structures naturally result in transnational ties*

Some organizations foster transnational ties that result from their explicit bi-national, missions and structures, such as: Al Otro Lado, IIPSOCULTA, and KBI. Al Otro Lado is a, “bi-national, direct legal services organization serving indigent deportees, migrants, and refugees in Tijuana, Mexico”. IIPSOCULTA’s mission is to generate conditions for “justice and equality in Latin-America and the United States through popular education, organizing, and solidarity work”. Lastly, the Kino Border Initiative (KBI) is a binational organization that focuses on the area of migration and is located in Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora, Mexico with a mission of: promoting “US/Mexico border and immigration policies that affirm the dignity of the human person and a spirit of bi-national solidarity” by direct humanitarian assistance, education, and participation in collaborative networks. By explicitly expressing that their mission is to create change in more than one country, transnational organizations set the stage for efforts of transnational activism.

With physical offices in Los Angeles and Tijuana, Al Otro Lado has a transnational perspective on immigrant and refugee issues. As a result, when U.S.-based organizations visit Tijuana they generally check in with Al Otro Lado and as Luis Guerra mentioned, they often have to retrain volunteers on the law in order to give them context. Al Otro Lado has a transnational structure that naturally facilitates transnational activism and allows it to be a leader due to the dual-understanding of issues that transcend borders. Nonetheless, Guerra emphasizes that their work would not be possible without collaboration.



Present in both New Haven, CT and San Francisco Tetlanohcan, Tlaxcala, MX, IIPSOCULTA is able to simultaneously address the root causes of forced migration in Mexico and the consequences of forced migration in the United States. In fact, Marco Castillo of IIPSOCULTA emphasized that globalization has formed a transnational community and that the United States and Mexico should therefore not be seen as separate countries, but as a region where people should be able to travel through freely without borders. As a result of transnational organizing IIPSOCULTA has a yearly New Yorktlan Festival—a project that reunite families who have been separated for over 20 years, showcases the culture language and traditions of contemporary indigenous migrants living and working in NYC, and simultaneously showcases the culture of women from Tlaxcala.

Similarly, when Kino Border Initiative was founded it was founded as bi-national because its leader saw it as a really critical component of working at the border, especially since they aim to build solidarity across borders. Existing as two legal entities on either side of the border has had bureaucratic impacts as well as other implications for their work and means of communication. For instance, it has pushed them to adjust to different styles of working such as holding meetings without being physically together as well as considering different people's cultures and style of work. In terms of funding, KBI gains funding on both sides of the border and then distributes it since a large portion comes from American donations. Some challenges have imbalanced power dynamics and privileges, which they acknowledge and address.

Nonetheless for KBI, a bi-national structure has allowed it to build bi-national solidarity. In fact, the bi-national structure serves as a reminder of their commitment to working together across the border. Joanna mentioned:

In order to address the challenges of migration we need to work between the two countries. We use the word solidarity as a commitment to working together.

Their bi-national commitment has resulted in several efforts to improve conditions on both ends of the border. In Mexico, KBI offers humanitarian aid, has an aid center where they offer meals as well as other resources and services, as well as a women's shelter. In both the U.S. and Mexico they lead various educational and advocacy efforts that together work to address migration issues by humanizing (and increasing understanding) of the migration experience and then dedicating resources to address those issues. In fact, the target audience for educational efforts in the United States are allies. Through such efforts they aim to humanize, accompany, complicate—help people understand the migration experience, give them the opportunity to accompany migrants, and help them understand the complexity of migration policy. They hope their efforts will encourage allies to share stories, amplify the voices of people at the border, and continue to accompany people in their own local communities, as well as defend policy changes.

Its presence in both the United States and Mexico has allowed KBI to develop and become a part of several types of transnational as well as local networks. In terms of advocacy, KBI is a part of national specific networks such as a network of organizations that work on asylum issues in the U.S., another network of organizations that works on Mexican policy, as well as a Jesuit Migration Network that spans from Canada to Panama. It's participation in a humanitarian aid network has invited other organizations to offer services from their own aid center in Mexico.

Table 7: Types of Transnational Ties in the United States by Group

Transnational Tie*	Goal	Group
Legal Services for Migrant Exodus	Help prepare migrants seeking asylum for their credible fear interviews and general resources to help build strong cases for asylum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CHIRLA</li> <li>• RAICES</li> </ul>
Collaboration with Mexican Consulate Offices	Increase funding to provide legal services, consultations, and DACA renewals for Mexican immigrants in the United States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CHIRLA</li> </ul>
Bi-national structure	Address bi-national issues such as migration and create bi-national solidarity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IIPSOCULTA</li> <li>• KBI</li> <li>• Al Otro Lado</li> </ul>
Word of Mouth	Informal effort used in one case to secure shelter and resources in Mexico for migrants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RAICES</li> </ul>

\*Only ties mentioned in interviews are represented in the table, although others may exist.

## Barriers that Prevent Transnational Activism

*Limited energy, resources, and time prevent deportee and returnee visibility in the U.S.*

In Mexico, leaders of several groups as well as the researcher who studied the reintegration experience expressed that organizations in the United States fail to address life post deportation or return and thus thus don't seek collaborations and other transnational ties. Findings in the U.S. both contradict and confirm that conclusion. Findings demonstrate that leaders actually do see immigration as a bi-national issue, but also confirm that transnational ties are limited and that deportation experience is generally not addressed.

Two of the primary challenges that Melody mentioned that have prevented the possibility of engaging in more transnational efforts were time constraints and lack of sufficient resources. Resources they lack included the expertise to work with new groups (deportees and returnees) and an organizer constraint (each new group of members would ideally have an organizer dedicated to them). Additionally, as organizers are typically overworked and extremely busy—as is the case for Melody—she mentioned:

We have transnational efforts, but it's not super intentional. I definitely think that we can be more inclusive, but we need more resources and more time and more energy... As an organizer, we give these members the tools to protect them from deportation as much as we can. But once it happens, I really think that we've also lacked a lot of training to prepare for those situations.

Thus, both time constraints and their demanding work have held CHIRLA organizers back from engaging more transnationally and helping members prepare for deportation. While they recently embarked on transnational efforts and now dedicate resources to support refugees and people seeking asylum, the efforts are primarily geared toward people aiming to enter the U.S.—not deportees or returnees.

*Protection from deportation eliminates the need for dialogue about deportation and return*

Melody's specific experience has been largely shaped by her own identity as a DACA recipient and her position as a youth organizer that works with college students that are primarily DACA recipients. When asked about how she responds to and talks about deportation, she mentioned that her experience with *thinking* about deportation is very different and limited, because she has protection from deportation through DACA. She additionally emphasized that the time when she was introduced to the movement has largely shaped that experience. She became an organizer in 2015 when Trump was rising to power and fear of deportation was virtually everywhere. Having protection from deportation, she and her members as well as fellow

organizers and activists “made a pact to not use and to not continue giving that work more traction and more platform”. As a result, deportation became a very “limited” topic for her and she virtually wouldn't think about deportation at all. While the youth she directly works with haven't faced deportation, some of their family members have recently—which has pushed Melody to both think about deportation and understand that there is a need for such conversations.

*Deportation or return preparedness is seen as incompatible with deportation defense*

Similar to the limitations that Melody has faced as an organizer, Luis and Barbara both described their work of deportation defense as being less compatible with talking about and preparing for deportation. Luis mentioned:

We focus so much on preventing the deportation, that when we lose we spend all of our energy fighting that deportation that we didn't do much to prepare them for the actual deportation... When somebody gets deported the first thing we think about is, 'Okay, how do we get them back?'. As opposed to, 'How do we transition them to accept their new life in this other country'. It's almost difficult for those of us here in the U.S., and it almost feels like this privilege to say, 'Well, when you go over there you speak English so you'll can get a job'... It feels bad to think about somebody who wants to stay here, somebody who you're promising to do your best to help them stay, fight the deportation, if you start talking about, 'Well, let's prepare for you losing'. That that almost doesn't seem like the right conversation for attorneys to be having because you're pretty much almost accepting defeat before that decision is made.

While various groups in Mexico actually do address the same question of “how do we get them back?” and lead extensive advocacy efforts to make that a possibility, Luis's comment demonstrates that legal work is also much about prevention. In fact, efforts by groups in Mexico are more about how to make the traumatic deportation experience less difficult (by meeting immediate needs first) and *then* focusing on what they can do to address family reunification and influencing policies. Nonetheless, as much of the work legal work in the U.S. is prevention and building strong cases for immigrants to *stay* in the U.S., preparing them for deportation seems to be perceived as accepting defeat. In other words, preparing deportees for deportation is perceived as antithetical to legal work. In fact, Luis further expressed seeing legal work as incompatible

with deportation preparation by explaining that it is actually not legal work and would not be that place of an attorney to do so. He mentioned that community education would lead such efforts, and (referring to Know Your Rights education) mentioned that CHIRLA's community education leaders currently do prepare people on “what to do if you get picked up”.

While Luis also mentioned that it would be difficult to prepare deportees once the decision is made—as they are in detention centers and generally cannot contact them at that point—he seemed to perceive groups in Mexico incompatible with legal work because he doesn't think they should be telling clients how to “adapt” if they get deported. Thus, beyond some sentiments that see deportation/return preparedness as incompatible with legal work, there are legal barriers (detention centers) that make such conversations virtually impossible *after* being detained. In the future, however, widespread deportation awareness could eliminate such a barrier. Barbara made a similar comment about their removal defense work and its preventative nature. However, while she corroborated the fact that it is difficult to contact clients once their deportation decision is made, in the past they have worked and assisted clients as best they could even up until the very last possible minute—even though deportation was not the outcome they wanted.

## The Future of Transnational Ties

### *Deportation Defense and Legal Services*

The future of transnational ties is uncertain for both CHIRLA and RAICES. In terms of the existing ties to the migrant exodus in Tijuana, CHIRLA seems to expect to continue working with them until the crisis at least stops growing. Their international hire thus is expected to continue his work. In terms of those ties that would help prepare deportees and returnees for

deportation, both seem to be pessimistic about them. When asked if RAICES may establish more formal connections in the future Barbara recalled one instance of an informal and loose tie with a shelter that ultimately seemed unsustainable. Concerned about the lack of organizations of a shelter network, she seemed more optimistic about transnational ties that helped sharing information and resources.

### *Organizing*

In terms of organizing, Melody seemed very interested in creating the opportunity to develop transnational ties as well as starting to conduct deported preparedness efforts. Three recent instances where CHIRLA's youth members have had family member face deportation, Melody explained that she didn't know exactly how to address the situation and explained:

We're really good at creating material to prevent deportations, it's all about prevention, but I don't have know what to do after.

In fact, she hopes to be able to learn from the recent events with her members and will ask them, "What would you have wanted from me... in what ways could i have emotionally supported you better, or even your family?". Moreover, she hopes to develop material and curriculum for workshops on deportation preparedness. Ideally, that material would be accessible in different languages and would be ready before the primaries in 2020—when CHIRLA's work will be hectic. After creating such material organizers would be trained to deliver workshops and then train members to deliver them—a snowball effect to spread information. She thinks that such workshops are crucial because even under a friendly administration, their members can still face threats of deportation—such as with Obama, the Deportation Machine. In terms of developing transnational ties directly to existing organizations in Mexico, Melody explained that she would "love" to work with them. However, she mentioned: "If those opportunities were to come, I would to take them knowing that I wouldn't be able to travel". Although Melody doesn't know

what that collaboration would look like she asserts that she has the energy for it, and will hopes to have time with the primaries next year.

## DISCUSSION

Existing literature demonstrates that transnational activism has the potential to reap myriad benefits including advancing social and political missions. While immigrant serving organizations in the United States exert many efforts and resources to protecting the rights of immigrants, there are still the extensive and consistent threats of deportation targeted against undocumented Mexican immigrants. Existing literature highlights that after deportation or return, deportees and returnees face severe hardships. Findings confirm that their circumstances are worsened by their lack of knowledge on how to navigate bureaucratic space, language barriers, lack of contacts in Mexico, and general lack of information on what they would need upon deportation. In response, groups including grassroots non-government organizations and a tech startup have emerged in Tijuana and Mexico City and aim to alleviate those hardships and prevent future deportees and returnees from going through experiences similar to their own.

As immigrant serving organizations in the United States have direct contact to people at risk of deportation and groups in Mexico receive deportees and returnees, findings help evaluate whether existing transnational ties serve to alleviate the reintegration experience—or whether they have the potential to do so. Findings indicate that Mexican groups generally expressed more interest in engaging transnational and have exerted more efforts to develop transnational ties. However, those ties vary and are still generally informal. Nonetheless, even underdeveloped ties such as word of mouth connections, social media advocacy and educational efforts serve to disseminate information, raise awareness, and help individual deportees or returnees.



Various groups in Mexico have made a general assumption that organizations and activists in the United States are less interested in collaborating, findings confirm that less transnational efforts have been exerted in the U.S. While most concrete examples of transnational activism come from bi-national organizations, which inherently have transnational ties, there is some interest from the other organizations in learning how to respond to cases of deportation.

One limitation of this study is the small sample size which has resulted in concrete findings but may not be representative of all types of existing transnational ties. Especially in the United States, where three of the five organizations had a bi-national structure and thus have inherent transnational ties, the same size may not truly reflect the types of transnational efforts by organizations without bi-national structures. In the future, a larger and more diverse sample size should be used.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Widespread dissemination of information and available resources*

Transnational activism can be a tool to help disseminate information about the needs of deportees and returnees upon their arrival. The most difficult time in a deportee or returnee's experience is immediately after they arrive in Mexico. They are the most vulnerable at this time and may be exhausted, traumatized, and even in shock. Those emotions are further exacerbated when they don't have any contacts in Mexico, don't know the language, don't have money or a cellphone, don't have an ID, don't have anywhere or anyone to go to. Thus, transnational collaboration should continue to serve as a tool for activists in Mexico to spread information

about conditions and updates to activists in the United States—in order to better prepare and equip folks at risk of deportation.

While some organizations in Los Angeles currently conduct “Know Your Rights” presentations and disseminate similar information, they typically only tend to prepare undocumented folks on what to do if they encounter ICE. Such examples of community education also advise folks on how to be prepared for those instances—such as having all their documents in one safe space and having someone designated to care for their children. However, they don’t cover information on what they need in case they are deported, i.e. money, cellphone, contact information of someone in Mexico, etc.

Community education in the United States, as well as transnational ties and collaboration between the countries should serve to disseminate information, elevate deportee experiences (perhaps by sharing their stories or hosting them to share their stories), and share contact information. By taking the first steps and simply sharing a list of available resources, immigrant serving organizations in the U.S. can contribute to the preventative efforts that exist in Mexico and help ease the experiences of deportees and returnees. In the future, mainstreaming information deportation and return preparedness (as much as Know Your Rights knowledge is in the U.S.) can help overcome existing bureaucratic and legal barriers. For instance, turning preparedness information into a household topic would help even deportees or returnees that don’t have access to the internet or any resources (such as those in detention centers).

While this example of “first steps” doesn’t require in-person collaboration and can be as easy as posting a resource list online or handing out resource cards (similar to existing Know Your Rights Cards), collaboration can take activism even further. For instance, creating a bi-national network could foster a greater sense of community and may even downplay fear of

deportation. At the same time, many of the groups in both the U.S. and Mexico have *very* similar or even *identical* goals, such as family reunification and just immigration law in the United State. Thus, these first steps truly would open the door to long-term collaborative efforts and thus long-term and concrete changes.

Table 5: Resource List

Group	Location	Contact
Madres soñadoras Internacional/ DREAMers Moms USA/Tijuana A.C.	Tijuana, MX	Phone: 66 4130 6144 Email: <a href="mailto:yol.var@hotmail.com">yol.var@hotmail.com</a> Website: <a href="https://dreamer-moms.org/?fbclid=IwAR3n9EgMWaE3K2YRBYtjbElrYk-IFBXzhHKnWXXN2ky-7tGxW_GcU2s6hvM">https://dreamer-moms.org/?fbclid=IwAR3n9EgMWaE3K2YRBYtjbElrYk-IFBXzhHKnWXXN2ky-7tGxW_GcU2s6hvM</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/Madres-soñadoras-Internacional-DREAMers-Moms-UsaTijuana-AC-756563004375991/">https://www.facebook.com/Madres-soñadoras-Internacional-DREAMers-Moms-UsaTijuana-AC-756563004375991/</a>
Deported Veterans Support House	Tijuana, MX	Website: <a href="http://deportedveteranssupporthouse.org">http://deportedveteranssupporthouse.org</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/pg/DeportedVeteransSupportHouseP/age/about/?ref=page_internal">https://www.facebook.com/pg/DeportedVeteransSupportHouseP/age/about/?ref=page_internal</a>
Al Otro Lado	Tijuana, MX Los Angeles, CA	Phone: 323-238-9935, 664-208-8994, 619-786-4866 Email: <a href="mailto:info@alotrolado.org">info@alotrolado.org</a> Website: <a href="https://alotrolado.org">https://alotrolado.org</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/AlOtroLadoOrg/">https://www.facebook.com/AlOtroLadoOrg/</a> Address: The Wellness Center 1200 N. State St., #1008 Los Angeles, CA 90033
Poch@ House/Otros Dreams en Accion (ODA)	Mexico City, MX	Phone: +52 (55) 5926 9389 Email: <a href="mailto:info@odamexico.org">info@odamexico.org</a> Website: <a href="http://odamexico.info">http://odamexico.info</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/OtrosDreams/">https://www.facebook.com/OtrosDreams/</a>
Deportad@s Unidos en La Lucha	Mexico City, MX	Phone: +52 (55) 7828 3480 Email: <a href="mailto:deportadosunidosenlalucha@gmail.com">deportadosunidosenlalucha@gmail.com</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/deportadosunidos/">https://www.facebook.com/deportadosunidos/</a>
Hola Code	Mexico City, MX	Phone: +52 228 120 7876 Email: <a href="mailto:hola@holacode.com">hola@holacode.com</a>

		Website: <a href="https://holacode.com/contact">https://holacode.com/contact</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/Holacode1/">https://www.facebook.com/Holacode1/</a> Address: Toledo 39, Juarez 06600 Ciudad de Mexico, CDMX
Kino Border Initiative (KBI)	Nogales, Arizona  Nogales, Sonora, Mexico	Phone: (520) 287-2370, 011-52 (631) 316-2086 Email: <a href="mailto:ifuentes@kinoborderinitiative.org">ifuentes@kinoborderinitiative.org</a> Website: <a href="https://www.kinoborderinitiative.org/?fbclid=IwAR3bk3ay6kb5l13XYQ-b9sD3LMVEmueu3KxJgq2qKzDAjPz0sXNWWUH3oFE">https://www.kinoborderinitiative.org/?fbclid=IwAR3bk3ay6kb5l13XYQ-b9sD3LMVEmueu3KxJgq2qKzDAjPz0sXNWWUH3oFE</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/Kino.Border.Initiative/?epa=SEARCH_BOX">https://www.facebook.com/Kino.Border.Initiative/?epa=SEARCH_BOX</a> U.S. Address: P.O. Box 159 Nogales, AZ 85628-0159 MX Address: Edificio 3, Dept. 401 Colonia Fovissste II, C.P. 84020 Nogles, Sonora
Instituto de Investigación y Práctica Social y Cultural (IIPSOCULTA)	New Haven, Connecticut  San Francisco Tetlanohcan, Tlaxcala, MX	Phone: (55) 7038 4843 Email: <a href="mailto:iipsoculta@yahoo.com">iipsoculta@yahoo.com</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/IIPSOCULTA/">https://www.facebook.com/IIPSOCULTA/</a>

*Talking more about deportation and sharing lived deportee and returnee experiences*

All Mexican groups, whether they had any transnational connections or not, expressed that transnational ties are necessary for their work and missions. Transnational activism therefore has the potential to be a tool to help alleviate the challenges faced by deportees and returnees post deportation or return. Elevating the voices of deportees and returnees, and creating the space for them to share their stories on an international platform can help create a transnational community or network that will collectively protect the interests of people at risk of or facing deportation. While not all undocumented immigrants in the United States are involved with immigrant serving groups, sharing personal experiences of deportees and returnees can contribute to easing future reintegration experiences by de-stigmatizing deportation. Deportation

isn't a secret and shouldn't be treated as so. The stigmatization of deportation as a dreaded experiences takes away from the fact that it is not just a fear, but a reality for many. In fact, it is best to be prepare for that reality that many will face.

Since activists and organizations in the United States do not tend to have conversations about the lived experiences of deportees/returnees, talking about them may help transcend anxiety around deportation. Although separation from their family and lives in the United States will still be difficult, creating awareness will help those facing deportation be prepared and avoid additional difficulties and obstacles. At the same time, demonstrating that *if* they face deportation, they will *not* be alone may help to ease some fears and anxieties. Thus, addressing fear of deportation by talking about deportation, may help to eliminate the main barrier that seems to hinder transnational collaboration from occurring currently. In fact, talking more about the realities of deportation can build a bridge between activists on both countries and create a transnational network or community—where deportees/returnees would no longer feel forgotten or excluded. At the same time, elevating those lived experiences of deportees and returnees can serve as examples and help better prepare those at risk of deportation in order to make their reintegration experiences easier for them.

### *Establishing bi-national organizations for deportees and returnees*

The bi-national structure of organizations such as Al Otro Lado, IIPSOCULTA, and the Kino Border Initiative (KBI) demonstrate to be effective structures in addressing the bi-national phenomenon of migration. In fact, the organizations understand the bi-national context and implement it to their work, combine their bi-national efforts to create greater change, and build bi-national solidarity. The border is a means of meeting as much as it is of dividing, and as a result bi-national organizations have been able to emphasize the reality that migration *is* a bi-

national issue. Thus, an organization with a bi-national structure to address the issue of immigration would be ideal in this case. In the United States it could raise awareness and spread preventative information, and then in Mexico it could help support deportees and returnees. An existing group in Mexico can also explore the possibility of expanding their work bi-nationally and establishing themselves legally and physically in the United States—which would be a way to work around the existing obstacles that hinder strong transnational ties.

*Formalizing the network and movement of immigrant organizations in Mexico*

The existing, but informal, network of organizations in Mexico should be named in order to create greater visibility both nationally and internationally. Formalizing the network can also help facilitate the process of naming the movement in Mexico. While the movement in Mexico differs from the Immigrant Rights Movement in the U.S., naming it can pave the path for collaboration with activists across the border. In fact, as both groups in Mexico and the U.S. have similar long-term goals, establishing the movement and its mission can create more visibility for the groups in Mexico and demonstrate that the movements *are* very similar and they *should* therefore work together more. Beyond demonstrating that transnational collaboration is in the greater interest of both movements, naming the movement transcends the *Invisibility in the United States* obstacle and can help the movement grow and gain more support—in both Mexico and the United States.

# CONCLUSION

In Tijuana and Mexico City, groups that serve deportees and returnees have developed varying types of transnational ties as efforts to meet their goals of facilitating the reintegration experience and preventing others from experiencing severe hardships post deportation or return. However, similar efforts are generally not reciprocated by organizations in the United States unless they have a bi-national structure. In other words, unless they have established themselves physically and legally in both countries, organizations in the United States generally do not tend to engage transnationally. At the same time, there are little efforts by organizations in the U.S. to prepare folks at risk of deportation for deportation. Nonetheless, on both sides there is at least some energy and interest in engaging in transnational activism as a means to better support their own members or clients. As groups that serve populations affected by the same bi-national issue, immigration, there is the potential to work together, especially in a time with heightened risk of deportation. Existing transnational ties, both formal and informal and of varying degrees prove to change lives. Thus, even small steps such as sharing a contact, reposting on Facebook, or sharing a story can help create a safety network that will provide relief to those at risk of deportation and soften the landing of those facing deportation.

# APPENDIX

## Appendix A: Key Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Activism	An umbrella term for organizing, advocacy, and services. The goal of activism is to achieve political or social change.
Bi-national organization	An organization that formally (physically and legally) operates in both the United States and Mexico.
Deportees	Immigrants that were legally deported through removal, which involved a formal court order. Upon deportation, deportees are subject to a bar from seeking admittance at a port of entry.
Deportee and returnee serving groups	Groups in Mexico that support and aid deportees and returnees in Mexico. “Group” includes NGO’s, a collective, and a tech company. Also referred to as immigrant serving groups.
Immigrant	A person who leaves their country of birth to live permanently in a foreign country.
Immigrant Rights Movement	The movement that responds to anti-immigrant sentiments in the United States and leads extensive organizing, service provision, and advocacy efforts.
Immigrant-serving organization	Organizations or groups, in the United States and Mexico that offer services to, advocate for, and organize immigrants/deportees/returnees.
Migrant	A person who moves from one country to another, especially in order to find work or better living conditions. This text primarily focuses on the experiences of immigrants who did not intend to return to Mexico but were forced to return.
Removal by ICE	When immigrants are legally removed from the U.S. and sent to their home country. This process involves a formal court order. A “formal” deportation.
Returnees	Immigrants that “voluntarily” returned to their home country, but may have been forced to do so by pressuring conditions. In cases of “voluntary returns”, there is always an open door and possibility for returnees to go



	back to the U.S. legally because returns do not involve a court order and they are not barred from ports of entry. However, returns can never truly be “voluntary”.
Returns by ICE	An “informal” deportation that does not involved a court order. Returnees can arrange their departure without being under the control of an immigration agent.
Reintegration/Repatriation	The experiences and processes of returning to one’s country of birth post deportation or “voluntary” return.
Repatriation point	The cities where the United States deports undocumented Mexican immigrants to. In Mexico there are 11 repatriation points. Two of the most popular are Tijuana and Mexico City.
Transnational	Formal and informal ties between the United States and Mexico.
Transnational Activism	Encompasses activism efforts that transcend borders and are made possible through collaboration between immigrant serving organizations in the United States and Mexico.
Transnational Tie	Any tie between immigrant servings groups in Mexico and United States. Some, but not all, transnational ties translate into transnational activism
Voluntary return	An “informal” deportation that does not involved a court order. See “Returns by ICE”

## Appendix B: Impact of Trump’s Crackdown on Immigrants

Immigration Policy	Estimated Number of Immigrants Affected
Average number of daily immigration arrests under Trump between February 2017 and September 2018, including immigrants with and without criminal records	436
Average daily population of people in ICE custody, as of October 20, 2018.	44,631
Official count of children separated from their families under the Trump administration’s “zero tolerance” policy, who were in government custody as of July 2018.	2,737

Number of unaccompanied minors in government custody as of November 16, 2018.	14,056
Average length of stay in custody for an unaccompanied minor before being placed with a sponsor as of September 14, 2018	56
Number of immigrants with temporary protection from deportation under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, as of August 31, 2018, whose protections and work permits depend on the outcome of a Supreme Court battle.	699,350
Number of immigrants whose legal status under the Temporary Protected Status program (TPS) is dependent on the outcome of an ongoing court case	328,386
Number of TPS holders from El Salvador, all of whom have been in the US since March 2001 or earlier, originally set to lose their legal status in September 2019.	263,282
Number of TPS holders from Haiti, all of whom have been in the US since January 2011 or earlier, originally set to lose their legal status in July 2019.	58,706
Number of TPS holders from Honduras whose TPS is currently set to expire on January 5, 2020.	~57,000
Applications for green cards/visas/other legal immigrant status rejected in fiscal year 2018	620,311
Drop in immigrant visas given to people from countries covered by the Trump administration's travel ban (which applies to applicants for immigrant visas from Iran, Libya, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen) from March–June 2017	86%
The maximum number of refugees the US is agreeing to settle in FY 2019.	30,000
The number of refugees resettled in the US in FY 2018 — not even half of the 44,000 cap the US set for the year.	22,491
The number of refugees resettled in the US in FY 2018, the US set a 44,000 cap for the year.	22,491
The drop in refugee resettlement from FY 2016 to FY 2018.	73.5%

The number of refugees who had applied for resettlement in the US and were awaiting processing as of summer 2018	260,000
Hispanics who say they worry a lot that they, a family member, or a close friend could be deported (up from 47% in January 2017)	55%
Share of Hispanics who are not citizens or legal permanent residents who worry that they, a family member, or a close friend could be deported (up from 67% in January 2017).	78%

*Note.* By the numbers: how 2 years of Trump's policies have affected immigrants, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/1/19/18123891/state-of-the-union-2019-immigration-facts>

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