

On The Other Side

Migrant citizenship and civic associations in border city San Diego



Jente Fabriek & Maïté Theze-Lassus

All photos are taken by the authors in San Diego during the fieldwork period in 2017



Utrecht University

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| Student | Jente Fabriek |
| Student number | 4089421 |
| E-mail | a.j.fabriek@students.uu.nl |
| Student | Maité Theze-Lassus |
| Student number | 4138694 |
| E-mail | m.theze-lassus@students.uu.nl |
| Supervisor | Kees Koonings |
| E-mail | c.g.koonings@uu.nl |
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“At a time, when so much of our politics is trying to manage a clash of cultures brought about by globalization, technology, and migration, the role of stories to unify - as opposed to divide, to engage rather than to marginalize - is more important than ever.”

Barack Obama, January 2017¹

¹ https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/16/books/obamas-secret-to-surviving-the-white-house-years-books.html?smid=fb-nytimes&smtyp=cur&_r=0

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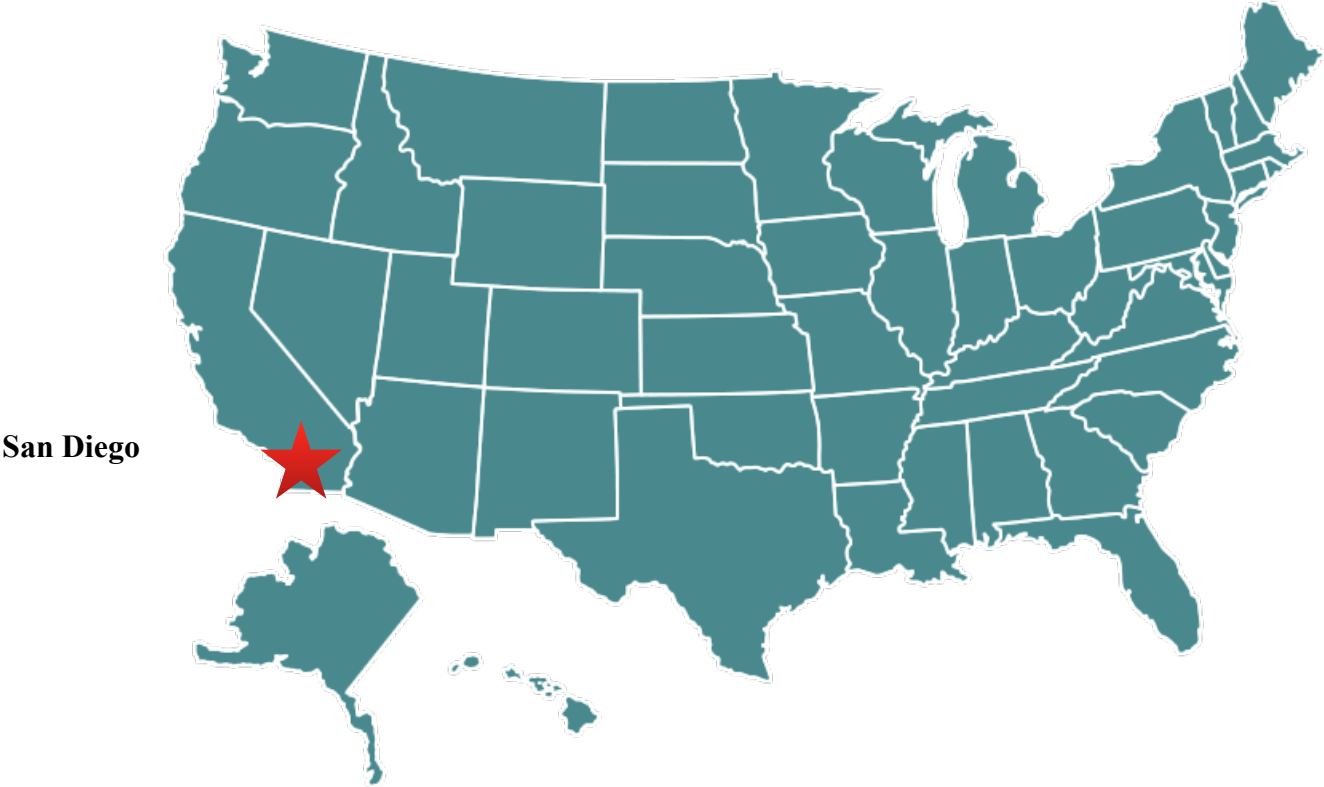
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Maps



Map of the United States

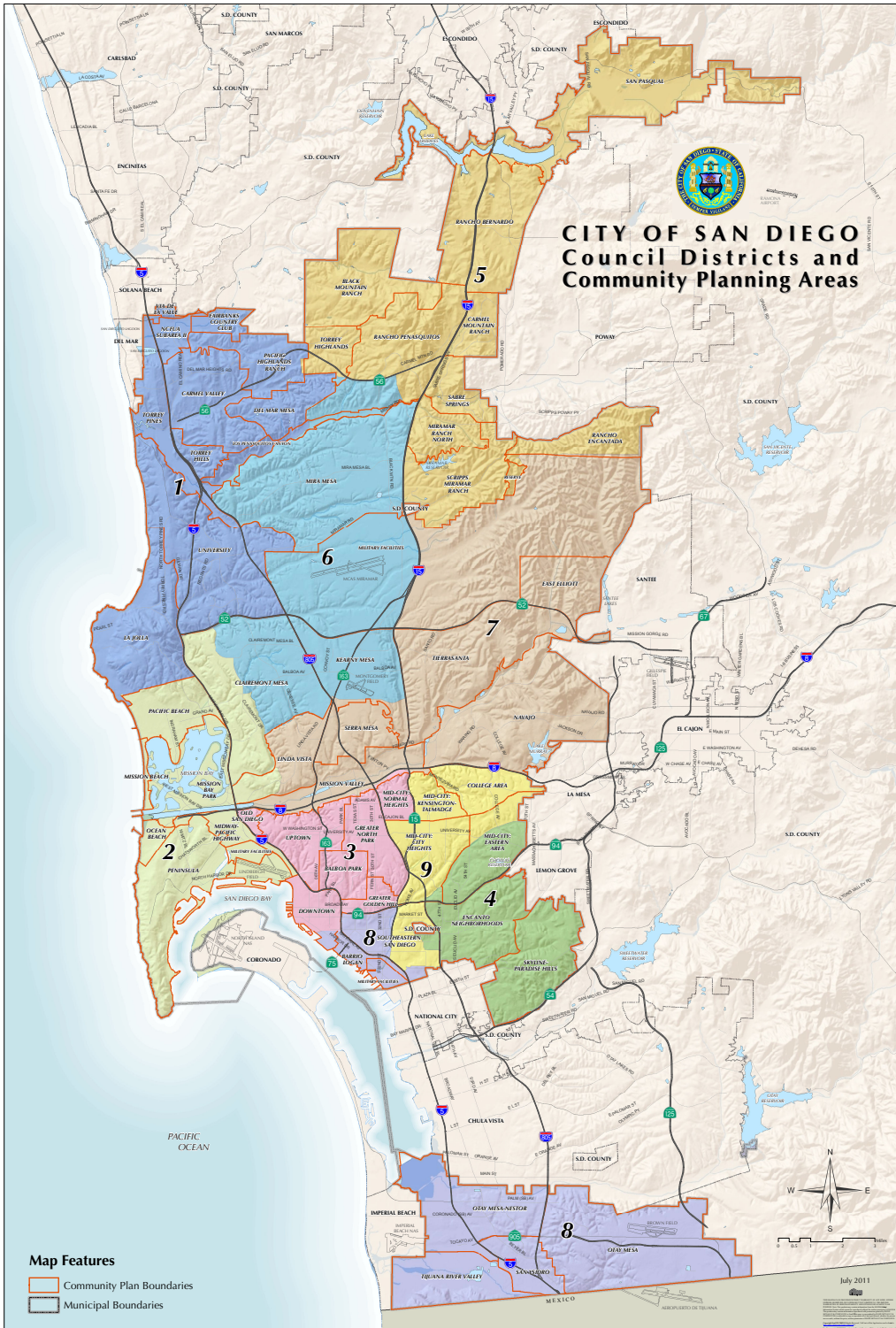
Figure 1: “Map of the United States”²



² http://www.phonydiploma.com/united_states_map/images/united_states.png

Map of San Diego city

Figure: "San Diego City"³



³<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/mapsua/map>

Acknowledgements

MURALISTAS MEXICANOS

OUR INHERITANCE
FROM CAVE PAINTINGS TO
PRE COLUMBIAN MURALS
OUR ARTISTAS MEXICANOS LEFT US
A LEGACY PARA EL FUTURO



Acknowledgments

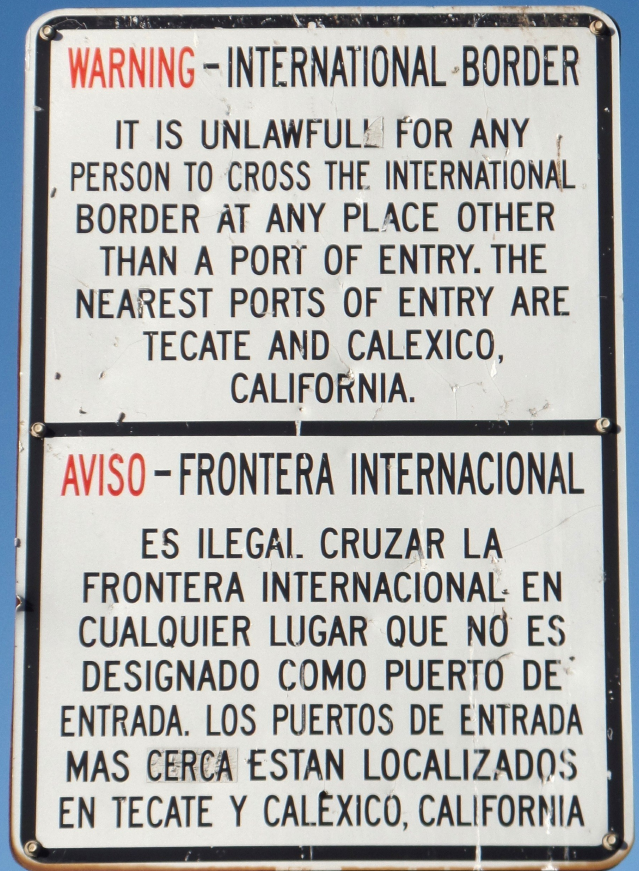
From the 30th of January until the 18th of April we have conducted qualitative research in the city of San Diego. Doing fieldwork and writing our thesis has marked a very valuable period of time within our Bachelor Studies of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Utrecht.

Firstly we would like to express our gratitude to everyone in the field. We want to thank all migrants that shared their personal stories with us. Their courage, strength, and journey has inspired us to write this thesis. Also all the people active within the network of migrant civil society associations have left an unremarkable impression on us. Their dedication to improve the lives of Mexican migrants in San Diego has truly showed us what helping others means.

We would in particular like to thank Enrique Morones, the founder of Border Angels, who has been a father figure to us during our time in San Diego. Through his broad network and extremely helpful personality we have been able to reach out and connect to the Mexican migrant community in a way we could not have hoped beforehand. Additionally, we would like to thank our best friends Osvaldo Ruiz, Javier Marquez, and Celeste Caton for spending time with us and making our fieldwork period unforgettable.

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Introduction



Introduction

It is a hot Friday morning and we are walking in no man's land surrounded by walls. On the left side we see the old border barrier, which consist out of rusty metal plates of about three meters high. Nowadays, these plates are used as the back walls of people's homes. Trash is dumped on the other side of the barrier and piles of garbage are formed in the 'grey' border zone. From where we are standing, we look right into one of the poorest neighbourhoods of Tijuana. On the other side, the green hills of San Diego are visible through the relatively new border fence. Surveillance cameras record every step we take. Border patrol agent Smith points at the repaired holes in the fence. "They cut holes into the mesh and then crawl to the other side. That is when they not just simply climb over." According to him hundreds of "illegal aliens" cross the border every day. He points at the hills further up. "One day I caught a mother with her two children just on top of that hill. She sprained her ankle and I carried her all the way down to the car. She was sent to the hospital and must have cost us about thirty thousand dollars before we could deport her and her kids back to Mexico."

Five days later we are in the Border Angels office⁴ eating tacos from the little stand around the corner. The office is a small room where the walls are covered with newspaper articles about Border Angels' events. In the corner a big wooden cross is surrounded by a pink children's shoe, ragged t-shirts, and empty water bottles. Out of these objects, which are found in the desert, an altar is formed. A woman enters and introduces herself as Carmen. She asks if the immigration attorney is present. Her next door neighbour told her about the free immigration consultation provided by Border Angels. Carmen looks at the altar and starts telling that twenty-one years ago, she and her sister crossed the desert in search for a better future. "I left my child behind and paid a hundred dollars to a truck driver to bring me to Tijuana. Then I crossed through the desert with the hope to make it to the other side."

Every day, migrants originating from Mexico and Latin American countries risk their lives by crossing the United States – Mexico border, following the 'American Dream'. The United States, as one of the most dominant economic and political nation-states in the world, has always drawn many migrants. In the era of globalisation migration flows from the poor South to the wealthier North have only increased more (Agnew 2008). These flows have put pressure on

⁴ A non profit organisation that advocates for humane immigration reform and other border related issues.

the immigration and security agenda of the United States. In order to maintain national security, the U.S. government has intensified immigration policies and has enforced its borders tremendously (Ackleson 2005). Securitisation and militarisation of the states borderlands has manifested in the use of highly intensified border control techniques and the construction of physical border walls (Eriksen 2007, 95; Adamson 2006, 180).

The United States and Mexico are separated by the approximately 3000 kilometre border of which a third is covered by a wall. This line was negotiated after the Mexican-American war in 1848. From then on millions of migrant workers from Mexico crossed the border for temporary jobs in the U.S. They would do seasonal work and would turn back afterwards. Because of the changed character of the border, crossing became more dangerous and difficult and what started as seasonal migration for Mexican has transformed into a predominately one-way migration flow to the United States. Nowadays for those who cross illegally, there is no turning back (Cano 2004). There are estimations, that at this moment a number of 11.1 million undocumented migrants are residing in the United States (Gonzales 2011, 602).

Who belongs inside and who belongs outside a state is regulated by the politics of citizenship. The notion of citizenship is principally tied to possessing nationality of a particular state. Because of strict migration politics there are many migrants who settle within the territorial boundaries of the United States without obtaining full citizenship. Nevertheless Mexican migrants participate within society and create a sense of belonging to the host country. Therefore, migrants challenge the traditional concept of citizenship, a political tool of nation-states to establish national belonging and a national identity (Oboler 2001, 116).

Relevance

We have decided to conduct our research in San Diego, located on the U.S.-Mexican border. Through this research we want to explore how Mexican migrants experience citizenship based on their sense of belonging. Therefore, we address the concept of ‘migrant citizenship’, characterised by a sense of belonging to the host country, instead of formal citizenship associated by rights and responsibilities. Complementary we shed light on bottom-up networks in San Diego that try to include Mexican migrants by addressing this migrant citizenship. We will explore these phenomena by answering the main question of our research:

“How do civic associations address migrant citizenship of Mexican migrants in border city San Diego, United States?”

Borderlands are ‘the perfect laboratories’ in which clashes of different cultures, divided by borderlines, can be examined (Alvarez 1995, 454). By choosing San Diego as our research location, we will contribute to the theory on how borderlands affect the lives of migrants. This because viewpoints of people living in these borderlands are largely absent within the debate on citizenship (ibid). The second theoretical purpose of this research is to contribute to the insights of the value that migrants attribute to membership in the host society. This is especially focused on how migrants manage to live in a state without obtaining formal membership. Our empirical research contributes to broaden the notion of the concept of citizenship. The final theoretical contribution concerns the exploration of how bottom-up structured civil society associations counterforce immigration policies. We do this by addressing how belonging and therefore migrant citizenship is addressed within actions of migrant civic associations in San Diego. The main social purpose of our research is to create awareness of the struggle of migrants in society and shed light on the noble task of civil society associations that include and empower them. Our findings should result in a holistic overview of migrant citizenship and civic associations in the borderlands of San Diego.

In the field

In order to collect our data, we have conducted fieldwork in the city of San Diego for about ten weeks, from the 30th of January until the 15th of April 2017. To collect our data, we have made use of the methods of participatory observation, hanging out, conversations and informal conversations, and interviews. These interviews have been of a structured and semi-structured nature. Right at the start of our fieldwork period we actively participated in different activities organised by the association, Border Angels to emerge in the field. The founder of Border Angels is a well-known public figure in San Diego, who introduced us to many different people in the field. This resulted in connecting to a dense network of associations, volunteers, and Mexican migrants in the first few weeks. Additionally, through our frequent presence and the use of ‘hanging out’ in the Sherman Heights Community Centre we became noticed as ‘the Dutchies’ within the Mexican migrant community. Through our presence and close connection with the founder of Border Angels we could create the necessary rapport with our research population.

Our research population has consisted of Mexican migrants and people active within migrant civil society associations. Within ethnographic fieldwork, the researcher is the central instrument of collecting data. Hence, all choices made in the field are influential. Within qualitative research the conscious selection of the research population is crucial. To research the lived experience of Mexican migrant citizenship we chose to connect with Mexican migrants who do not possess full citizenship. This group of Mexican migrants can be subdivided in permanent residents and undocumented migrants who reside in San Diego. In order to establish a holistic view of the lived experiences of migrant citizenship, we chose informants differing in citizen status and age. All informants were found through attaining the activities of the different civic associations. The second group of our research population consisted of employees, volunteers, and members of different migrant civil society associations in San Diego. Within the selection of what civil association had to be included in the research we have made use a framework of the different civil associations in San Diego. By reaching out to several key figures, we could expand our network with use of the snowball technique. In order to be sure to include all main associations, we verified our choices through speaking with informants, before expanding our network.

We we have conducted 31 semi-structured interviews, which were all recorded and transcribed. Furthermore, our data consist of countless observations and informal conversations saved in jot notes and expanded field notes. We have conducted this research in a complementary way and each of us focused on one sub aspect in the field. The interviews have been conducted individually. Because the migrant civil society associations addressed and facilitated Mexican migrants with several services, our fields were very much integrated. Therefore, we could broaden each other's networks and complement our findings. Because of the precarious statuses of several migrants and their personal stories about entering the United States unauthorised, we handle the collected data highly confidential. In order to guarantee full anonymity, all the names of the informants within this research are therefore fiction.

One of the ethical dilemma's we have faced in the field was the degree of involvement within the different civil associations. In order to establish a dense network within our research population, it was necessary to actively participate in as many events as possible. However, after establishing our network in the first few weeks, we started to be less active in attending different events. It was hard to find a balance between participating, maintaining contacts, and focussing

on conducting and transcribing interviews. Therefore, we tried to always be clear and transparent about our role as researchers and our motives about participating in events.

Another issue concerns social media and the way of approaching possible informants. During the fieldwork period we have used social media, in particular Facebook, to reach out to several organisations, to stay updated for upcoming events, and to stay in contact with several informants. This medium presents an easy and fast manner to contact informants, however it also has a personal and private character. Becoming friends on Facebook with informants could have influenced our position as researchers in the field. Using social media within anthropological research is not something that has been debated much in the fieldwork preparations. This has made it hard to reflect on ethically justified use of this medium. However we have found it very useful to include social media as a manner to collect data and to maintain contacts with our informants throughout our research.

In the upcoming chapter we will first elaborate on the theoretical foundation of our research. Here we will explore academic theories on migration, citizenship, transnationalism, managing migration, and the emergence of migrant civil society associations. In the context we will take a closer look at the history of boundary maintenance of the United States and the specific situation within the Border city of San Diego. In the following chapters we will present our empirical data. Firstly, we will address how migrant citizenship is experienced by Mexican migrants in San Diego. Secondly, we will demonstrate how the migrant civil society associations address migrant citizenship in the borderlands of San Diego. In the concluding remarks we will recapitulate the most important findings of our fieldwork research to come to an answer of our research question. This is followed by recommendations for further anthropological research.

Chapter I

Migration, Citizenship, and Civic Associations



Chapter I Migration, Citizenship, and Civic Associations

A borderless world

Maïté

In the contemporary world, globalisation processes are evident. Globalisation processes increase the interconnectedness between economic, political, and social activities beyond nation-state borders, which simultaneously leads to the fading of nation-state boundaries. (Levitt 2001, 202; Eriksen 2007, 8). The nation-state consists of a political entity that controls its clearly demarcated territory (state) with a national community sharing a common belonging, based on cultural and ethnic background (nation) (Castles and Davidson 2000, 12). The massive migration flow from the Global South to the advanced capitalistic North has therefore consequences for the existence of the nation-state. The growing human mobility challenges the concepts of citizenship and belonging, which are at the essence of a nation-state (ibid, 2). In this section, we will discuss the relation between migration and globalisation processes and identify how these processes influence the national state-borders. The concepts citizenship and belonging will be analysed in-depth in the next section.

Migration flows have grown extremely over the past 30 years. One of the prominent reasons to migrate is the search for a better future based on economic well-being. The increase of (illegal) labour migration serves as evidence to that argument (Agnew 2008). According to Appadurai (2006) a new industrial revolution has taken place as a result of the globalisation processes. For Western societies globalisation is a positive buzzword. It is related to innovation and continuous development. However, contemporary labour migration is about an unequal process that “leads to marginalisation, and exploitation of many migrants” (Appadurai 2006, 35; Castles 2010, 1568). Nonetheless, migration also has positive outcomes and is anything but individual. New communication technologies provide migrants with opportunities to maintain social, and economic connections with their home communities. New ideas, technological innovations and remittances may positively influence the circumstances of the place of origin (Castles 2010; Eriksen 2007). In short, social ties cross national boundaries and are part of a de-territorialisation process which makes borders less visible (Ackleson 2005; Levitt 2001; Adamson 2006). In the following section we will further elaborate on the concept of transnationalism.

According to Eriksen (2007) nation-states are partly victims of globalisation processes. The nation-state is questioned and contested by the increasing mobility of people because the

settlement of migrants contributes to a more heterogeneous population with cultural differences (Castles and Davidson 2000, vii). These differences often lead to social marginalisation of minorities and create disadvantaged and segregated positions in society (ibid, 8). (Illegal) migration flows cross state borders, and therefore challenges the national identity and endangers the sovereign power of nation-states. After the attack of 9/11 and the Arab Spring, migration is strongly depicted as a security and humanitarian problem within the Western political discourse. As a consequence, immigration policies apply most laws, and regulations, under the name of counterterrorism to control undesirable migration (Coleman 2007, 56; Ackleson 2005). The use of highly intensive border control, the construction of physical walls and fences are part of these national security policies. This has made the criteria for a right to move more discriminating than ever. Most migrants lack economical means or political rights to be able to move freely. To depict the 21st century as a world without borders is thus an exaggeration (Castles 2010, 1567).

Borders are seen as the boundary of states' sovereign power and territory. Their main feature is to maintain national security, to limit or control human mobility and regulate labour access (Martínez 1994; Adamson 2006). However, borders are more than just marks on the ground or simple lines on a map which separate states from one another. Border zones are places inhabited by people and sites where functional, social, economic and cultural interactions are taking place. The proximity of these urban places to the border creates new bicultural cities (Herzog 1990, 7). In sum, borders contain symbolic power and are questioned through political, social, and cultural practices and are therefore 'socio-territorial constructs' (Agnew 2008, 176-177).

Nowadays nations are losing control over their bounded territory in a transnational, globalised era. The end of the Cold War and the attacks of 9/11 reinforced the function of the national borders. Immediately after the attacks the immigration policies were intensified. The clearest change was the expansion in federal presence alongside the U.S. border (Ackleson 2005). Thus, the growing fear of the 'other', seeing migrants as potential terrorists, resulted in securitisation and militarisation of the borderlands through the use of new innovative surveillance technology (Paasi 2009, 216; Agnew 2008; Coleman 2007; Oboler 2007).

In conclusion, globalisation and migration processes have increasingly challenged the nation-state borders around the world. Human mobility does not only affect the borders, it also questions the traditional notion of citizenship established by the nation-state. In the following

section we will elaborate on the concepts of citizenship and belonging, and the position of migrants residing within the territorial boundaries of the nation-state. We will use the concept of 'migrant citizenship' in addition to the traditional notion of formal citizenship.

Citizenship

Citizenship is a dynamic and complex concept, its content is continuously questioned and therefore changing over time. According to Marshall (2006 of 1950), "Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community". All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed (Marshall in Pierson and Castles 2006, 34). In other words, citizenship is an overall encompassing national identity constructed by the nation-state within a framework of general rights and responsibilities based on equality (Holston and Appadurai 2003, 297). Citizenship therefore consists of a legal aspect (rights and responsibilities) and socio-cultural aspects in terms of belonging to the national identity (Castles and Davidson 2000; Ho 2008).

In an ideal world all citizens would belong to one particular nation-state that would include all individuals living within the territorial borders. This inclusion of citizens promoted by the nation-state constructs a shared feeling of solidarity and national belonging based on cultural homogeneity (Oboler 2001, 116; Plascencia 2012, 7). It is argued that this nationalistic feeling is an imagination (Anderson 1991). Nations are 'imagined communities', in a sense that it will never be possible to "meet, know, or even hear of your fellow-members", "yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 1991, 6). Plascencia (2012, 51) describes citizenship as 'socio-political glue' that connects citizens to one another and to the nation-state and strengthens the imagination of membership and belonging. Nevertheless, there are many people that have crossed the borders of the nation-states and reside in another country than their country of citizenship. These people, migrants, are living within the territorial boundaries of the nation-state without always obtaining formal citizenship. However, they do participate on socio-economic aspect in the host society (Rosaldo 1994). Therefore, migrants question the traditional notion of citizenship (Castles and Davidson 2000, preface).

I belong where I feel 'at home'

Citizenship is thus not only limited to rights and responsibilities, it also includes the idea of belonging. The term belonging is commonly used as a self-explanatory term that it is often left under-theorised (Antonsich 2010, 644). Hence, a distinction will be made in this research between the two analytical notions of belonging. The first dimension of belonging lies within the realm of politics. This is a 'formal structure of membership' that fosters socio-political inclusion and exclusion and is claimed, justified, and demonstrated in citizenship (Foster 2005; Yuval-Davis 2006; Antonsich 2010). The second dimension of belonging, according to Yuval-Davis (2006, 197), is related to the personal, emotional attachment of feeling 'at home' in a specific place created out of daily practices (Foster 2005, 222).

The political feeling of belonging is a tool of the nation-state to construct and sustain imagined solidarity based on shared ideas and common practices. Crowley (1999) defines the politics of belonging as "the dirty work of boundary maintenance" of the nation-state (Crowley 1999, 30 in Antonsich 2010, 649). This fosters a separation between 'us' and 'them'. Hence, the state influences the public opinion on who belongs and those who do not belong within the imaginary borderline of the nation (Antonsich 2010).

According to Hedetoft and Hjort (2002, vii), the sense of belonging refers to feeling at home. Home is namely "where we belong, territoriality, existentiality, culturally, where our community is, where our family and loves ones reside, and where we can identify our roots". In other words, the feeling of being 'at home' does not refer to a specific material place, rather it encompasses "familiarity, comfort, security, and emotional attachment" (Hooks 2009, 213) to a symbolic place which is created out of daily practices (Foster 2005, 222). This feeling of home can be examined based on five factors, which contributes to generate the sense of belonging towards the host country. The five factors consist of auto-biographical, legal, cultural, economic, and relational aspects (Antonisch 2010, 468). The factors are closely related and partly overlap one another. Firstly, the legal factor entails rights and responsibilities related to formal citizenship, which creates a secured position in society. Feeling secured is an integral part of establishing a feeling of 'at home'. Secondly, economic features affect and contribute to a stable material environment. Thirdly, the cultural aspect covers language, traditions, religion, norms and values that people identify with and generates belonging to an individual. Fourthly, the auto-biographical factor is about a persons history, which connects an individual to a specific place

based on memories, emotions, and personal experiences. Lastly, relational aspects refer to social interactions among close friends and families that improve the individual's life in a certain place. These five factors contribute to generating the sense of belonging. Nonetheless, establishing this feeling is not just an individual matter, but it is constructed out of social interactions and top-down governmental strategies (Antonisch 2010, 646-649; Hooks 2009).

Transnational belonging

The nation-state boundaries are eroding through the growing international human mobility and globalisation processes. However, the boundaries of the nation-state will never completely disappear because they are at the foundation of ensuring political stability in a modern democratic society (Antonsich 2010, 651). Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge the transnational processes that come along with the increasing migration flows. Migrants establish social fields that cross-geographic, cultural, and political borders (Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc 1992, 9). Migrants adapt to the new location, but still maintain ties with their home country and therefore establish a sense of belonging outside the national boundaries of the host country (Vertovec 2004, 973). From this perspective, migrants can belong to several communities in different places, belonging 'here' (host country) and 'there' (home country) (Nagel and Staeheli 2008; Hedetof and Hjort 2002). However, this should not be analysed as mutually exclusive, they can co-exist (Leitner and Ehrkamp 2006).

Migrant citizenship

Throughout the history the concept of citizenship has been widely analysed, theorised, and discussed. Multiple scholars have proven that there are minorities within the nation-state, who obtain formal citizenship, yet they are excluded from essential citizen's rights and therefore they are not capable to fully belong (Castes and Davidson, 2000; Holston and Appadurai 2003; Yuval-Davis 2006). There have been numerous studies that have focussed on the experiences of formal citizenship. However, little research has been done on the experiences of citizenship of migrants that do not obtain formal citizenship (Leitner and Ehrkamp 2006, 1616). Migrants participate in society in several ways: socially, economically, and culturally (Rosaldo, 1994) and therefore, even without full membership, migrants do experience a sense of belonging to the host country. Formal citizenship is a mechanism constructed by the nation-state, to define who belong and does not

belong within the national borders. The traditional concept of citizenship is contested because migrants cannot claim full citizenship but they experience a sense of belonging and therefore experience citizenship to a certain extent. Therefore, it is necessary to redefine, and expand the traditional concept of citizenship. Hence, we will make use of the concept of 'migrant citizenship' in our research. We conceptualise 'migrant citizenship' as citizenship that is more than a package of rights and responsibilities provided by the nation-state. It merely is about the lived experiences of migrants and their sense of belonging, whether or not they formally belong to the host country. Migrant citizenship is therefore examined based on the five aspects of belonging as discussed.

'Managing migration'

Jente

As mentioned before, migration puts democratic states to the test and governmentality of immigration has become a central issue within contemporary societies. Throughout history there has always been a variation of the ways in which migration control was applied and in what degree political action was put in place to address migration flows. 'Managing migration' is a term that is used for the disciplining of migration. This can range from the enforcement of immigration laws, to guest worker programs, or to border enforcement policies. Managing migration also implies that the flows of migration can be regulated from a top-down perspective (Rother 2013, 41). "Nation-states share the common feature of taking care of and defending above all the rights privileges and welfare benefits of their citizenry, and therefore of closing off important rights, privileges and entitlements against (potential) immigrants, their non-naturalised descendants and other non-citizens" (Geiger 2013, 17). This follows the trend of immigration policies driven by the concept of nativism. Nativism can be defined as the practice or policy of favouring native born citizens over perceived outsiders. This reflects in a growing distrust towards immigrants in a country and a strong desire to tighten laws that would keep others out (Alvarez and Butterfield 1997, 1). Within the managing of migration the forces of the state become visible within the instrument of citizenship that can exclude or include people in society. Within the politics of belonging, struggles for national self-determination are reflected within the boundaries of the political community. Within this political community top down boundaries are being set to who 'belongs' and who does not. (Yuval-Dayvis, Anthias, and Kofman 2006, 204) When

state power and top down politics do not facilitate the inclusiveness of certain groups in society, other calls for social inclusiveness arise. According to Ong (1996) the power of the state will never be absolute and therefore the civil society has the opportunity to re-construct the politics of belonging (Ong 1996, 737). The local community can contribute to civil inclusion of migrants who formally do not belong within the boundaries. For this reason, the civil society can be viewed as the foundation from which alternative, “more equitable forms of society” might arise when fundamental change or inclusion in politics does not appear (Cox 1999, 4). Hereby the civil society is able to contest and challenge the politics of belonging of hegemonic political powers by acting as an oppositional agent from below.

The civil society as counterforce to the nation-state

The concept of civil society has been present in democracy theories for quite a while. Currently it is a re-emerging concept summarised as the form of community and political action outside the operations of the state (Baker 2002, 1), but its existence has been used within many disciplines and in various shapes. The roots of this concept can be found in writings of the 18th century in the shadow of the Scottish enlightenment. Ferguson (1996) analysed the emergence of the modern commercial society in which civic and communal virtues were abandoned. He claimed that active citizenship could be exercised within the state to check the power of the state and to rediscover communal virtue. Within this concept the disjuncture of the formal state and the local humane sphere as two opposing entities emerged.

Marx (2002) however criticised this disjuncture. In his view the formal freedoms of civil society would not be enough and political freedom could only be achieved when the working class would take over state functions in accordance with the socialist thought. The activist version of civil society emerged when hundred years later democratic opposition movements within Central-Eastern countries developed. The idea of the civil society returned as an associational sphere in which willed action opposed to the state could be exercised. Habermas (1994, 8), stated that the civil society can not govern, but can only influence or stimulate the state through democratic will formation as catalyst of society. This rejected the idea of the civil society as an “unwilled, non-purposive arena of human interaction” (Baker 2002, 8).

Tocqueville (2002, 82) acknowledged this in his thought that the civil society has the capacity to counterbalance the state and is able to check the excessive power of government. He noticed the value of associations of citizens that were the ground of local self-government. This

type of civil society refers to active citizenship in which individual citizens can influence the conditions in which they live both directly through self-organisation and through political pressure (Kaldor 2007, 48). The neo-liberal view on the civil society is the view that civil society consist of associational life a non-profit sector that not only restrains power but also provides a substitute for functions that are not performed by the state. This version is also applicable to the global field in which Non-Governmental organisations (NGO's) can perform the function as a safety net for transnational welfare and security when national states fail to do this collectively (Kaldor 2003).

In this thesis we will use the notion of civil society that includes both the activist and the neo-liberal view of civil society. Within this activist notion, civil society opposes state powers and regulation by pressing claims through the use of the liberal civil society, which creates different associations that substitute the functions of the state. Political mobilisation can be formed by this kind of civil society through creating a union of people. Through alliances with other organisations these groups can put pressure on, and negotiate with, authorities to generate political influence. These processes of organisation may be a form of opposition against formal rules or strict laws that are formed and executed by formal politics of a state. Within all the emerged notions of the concept of civil society however, it is still not clearly stated which specific individuals of society are active in it. In the following paragraph I will introduce the concept of the migrant civil society in which new organisations have been established specifically to address the challenges faced by a growing migrant population and in which the migrant community itself plays a principal role.

Engagement of the migrant civil society

When minorities, like immigrants, are victims of structural violence, discrimination or ethnic discrimination, the migrant civil society can play its role in negotiating an equal position and press claims on the host society with their actions (Juris 2008, 158). For this reason, different associations have been established specifically to address the challenges faced by a growing migrant population. Together they represent a distinct segment of civil society. The term migrant civil society involves the construction of public places and representative social and civic associations in which issues of migrants are addressed an often migrants themselves are involved (Fox 2005, 4). Organisations exist from immigrant advocacy groups to labour unions, religious institutions, and NGO's. These kinds of associations have been playing an important role in providing socio-economic services to immigrants when the state is absent in facilitating these for

them (Graauw 2008, 323). That the state does not provide these services for migrants is often correlated to the fact these migrants do not possess the kind of citizenship that provides them with the set of rights and privileges that distribute these services. Besides providing socio-economic services, the political pressure from support organisations can also work very positively for migrants. “Community associations and social movements, unlike undocumented migrants, are typically seen as having standing and legitimacy to make claims on the state” (Theodore and Martin 2007, 272). In this way migrant civil society provides a mechanism for political incorporation without citizenship. Migrant civil society has entered these spaces of engagement, sometimes forcefully and at other times cautiously, to reshape policy agendas and ultimately to influence policy outcomes. Within the empowerment of minority groups through civic associations different strategies exist. In this section we will address three of them, which can be defined as strategies to engage and empower minorities in society. The first strategy that can be distinguished is the organisation of individuals. This can be an effective methodology of community engagement and creating a sense of community (Ganz 2008,1). Migrant civil society, particularly when founded through social movement activism, can provide the “free organised space” (Evans and Boyte, 1986, 184) in which collective identities can be forged and in which shared analyses of socio-political problems can be developed. Juris (2008) has shown how activists have also used the web to organise actions, share information, and coordinate ‘electronic civil disobedience’. The web has in these formations functioned as a virtual space for political and social movements where the struggle of their issues can be shared and made public to the wide world of the Internet (Anderson 1983). A second strategy of civic associations can be advocacy. Advocacy refers to the work of supporting a cause and getting others to support it as well. Organisations can speak up and draw attention to important issues when vulnerable groups of people cannot do this themselves. The primary goal of advocacy here is to get political leaders, and others in power, to notice an issue and to show them that policy should change to solve it (Fanestil, Rocha, and Silverthorn 2010, 25). Advocacy can mean the lobbying with officials and promoting legislative change or speaking out to change the public discourse on migrant issues. Through coalition building of different associations the migrant civil society can amplify its voice and pressurise action on political or social levels. A third strategy that can be distinguished is empowerment and inclusion through education. Through education migrants strive to get the capacity to reflect on their situation by acquiring knowledge, and information about their status and rights (Fox 2005, 3). This strategy also supports the recognition that immigrants are individuals competent to make decisions and take actions on themselves

(Sakamoto, 2007, 528)

The South-East border of the United States can be characterised as a place where top-down migration and border policies have been enforced. These policies have had great impact on certain minorities such as the Mexican migrant community living within U.S. state's borders either legally or illegally (Rother 2013, 41). By discussing the role of the migrant civil society in San Diego we will address how Mexican migrant civil society has been trying to oppose top-down politics through the organisation of a bottom-up collective framework in the border town of San Diego.

Chapter 2

Border City San Diego



Chapter 2 Border City San Diego

The U.S.-Mexican border

Jente

Tall brown metal posts arise from the sea like a line of upright matchsticks. They are three times the size of a human being and placed close together, forming a wall to block whatever, or whoever, wants to pass it. The beach is guarded by masked men on quads on this side, children are playing in the sand on the other. A hundred meters further inland a small patch of land is surrounded by another fence, it is called 'Friendship Park'. In this small bounded zone, guarded by armed Border Patrol agents, a maximum of twenty-five people at a time may gather to approach the wall to talk with people from Mexico on the other side of the border.

The Mexican side of this section of the wall is totally different. People are free to approach it without restrictions. The wall, colourfully painted, is surrounded by the sound of a Mariachi band which makes its way from Playas de Tijuana. Families buy their corn with melted butter at a local stand, children ride their bikes and, if lucky, one of the donkeys that walk around. Next to the wall a woman is sitting down in a small chair while her kids are playing with toy cars around her. She puts her head against the metal fence and is talking to somebody that is not visible. An extra metal mesh is attached to the wall so nothing but words is passed through. Reaching out to people in Friendship Park means putting your pinkie through one of the tiny holes in the mesh. The only things that make it to *'el otro lado'* are peoples' shadows shaped by the sun that shines in Mexico.

Friendship Park's contested existence has been facilitated by several advocacy groups from San Diego. After intense lobbying they were able to negotiate a space accessible for people to approach the wall. Since Donald Trump's presidency this accessibility however has become more limited. People have been asked to show their identity papers before entering the park and bi-national events at the park have been less often permitted. In Friendship Park, the top-down border enforcement of the United States is clearly visible. San Diego's location on the border dates back to the creation of the border itself, which has been stipulated in the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, signed in 1848 at the end of the US -Mexico War (Fanestil, Rocha and Silverthorn, 2010). The border, which reaches from the Pacific Ocean to the Mexican Gulf, is approximately 3000 kilometers long and has a great diversity in landscapes from urban areas to abandoned desert land (De León, Gokee and Schubert, 2015). A wall of more than 1000

kilometers physically marks the border between the two countries. The other parts are divided by natural obstacles: mountains, the desert or the river Rio Grande.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the border was considered as being ‘relatively open’, but this changed in 1986 when the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was approved by the U.S. congress. This legislation meant an easier pathway to ‘citizenship’ for undocumented migrants living in the United States but on the other hand it was countered by increasing border enforcement. This created the first base of ‘migration management’ towards migrants coming from south of the border. The ‘90s were marked by high levels of concern by ‘illegal’ immigration and drug trafficking (Purcell and Nevins 2005, 220). This triggered the intensification of the border enforcement by the federal government, which also has been called ‘militarization of the border’. This was accompanied by large investments in border infrastructure and the recruitment of border patrol employees.

After the terrorist attacks on 9/11 in 2001, the idea that the U.S. needed extra security was even more amplified. Securing the border became one of the priorities of the state and resulted in further border enforcement and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. This organisation became the head of four underlying agencies. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the U.S. Border Patrol (USBO) and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). All these agencies contribute to the enforcement of the policies on the U.S.-Mexican border.

Political situation in the United States

Maïté

What started as a border only divided by a piece of barbed wire grew into a border divided by fences and walls. The wall and the presence of extra border patrol agents have funnelled migrants into crossing the border through the dangerous remote desert. This has resulted in more than 6000 recovered dead bodies of migrants since the 1990s (Androff and Tavassoli 2012, 165). Additionally, the stricter immigration regulations have made it increasingly dangerous and expensive to travel back to Mexico due to the risk of not re-entering the United States (Ackleson 2005). This has resulted in a predominately one- way migration flow to the United States and more permanent undocumented settlers. There are estimations, that at this moment a number of 11.1 million undocumented migrants reside in the United States (Gonzales 2011, 602).

The re-enforcement of the immigration policies has also been central within the new political

situation. The new president of the United States, Donald Trump, has emphasised during the election campaign the need for stronger immigration policies and pledged to take different actions against (undocumented) migrants residing in the United States. President Trump suggested mass deportation of undocumented migrants, together with legal family members in order to prevent family separation.⁵ Additionally, Trump promised to expand the existing wall between the U.S. – Mexico in order to ‘protect’ the United States from undesirable people. This wall would in the future cover more than 1500 kilometers of the border, yet concrete plans are absent. Furthermore, Trump promised during the elections to “immediately terminate” the executive actions of the former president Obama, including the Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). This program, established in the year 2012, provides protection to undocumented migrants, who arrived under the age of sixteen, before June 15, 2012, from temporary removal and offers work authorisation.⁶ All these plans and suggestions for stricter immigration policies are predominantly focussed on Mexican migrants. As Getrich (2008, 540) states: “anti-migrant notions are in theory applicable to all migrants, people of Mexican descent have been particularly racially stigmatized in the public eye”. This is noticeable when for instance Trump described Mexican migrants as criminals, drug dealers, and rapists.⁷ Trump’s campaign and presidency have been hot topics during the ten weeks of fieldwork and all his plans to make the United States ‘greater again’ have increased fear within the Mexican migrant communities in San Diego.

Mexican migrant community

San Diego is a Californian city on the pacific coast of the United States. The city has an estimated population of 1.3 million inhabitants and is the eighth-largest city in the United States. Thirty percent of San Diego residents have been identified as ‘Hispanic’ and the majority have their ancestry in Mexico.⁸ As Martinez (1994, 20) describes, the U.S.-Mexican border zone is a world apart and “is not wholly American and not quite Mexican either”. Since the city is directly adjoined to the border of Mexico, San Diego is often described as an extension of Tijuana. There are a lot of

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jul/02/donald-trump-racist-claims-mexico-rapes>

⁶ https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/20/us/immigrants-donald-trump-daca.html?_r=0

⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jul/06/donald-trump-mexican-immigrants-tremendous-infectious-disease>

⁸ <https://www.sandiego.gov/economic-development/sandiego/population>

Mexican influences that are observable throughout the city. From street names and the use of bilingual signs, both English and Spanish, to the sales of Mexican food on every street corner. These Mexican influences are predominantly present within the Mexican communities. The communities are geographically located in four main working-class areas, San Ysidro, Barrio Logan, Sherman Heights, and Logan Heights in San Diego.⁹ The size of the Mexican migrant community in San Diego reflects the amount of civic initiatives supporting the migrant community. As a response to the top town immigration enforcement, civic initiatives are centred within a tight network of circa hundred organisations. These organisations mainly operate within a non-governmental and non-profit structure and have become even more prominent and well-known with the inauguration of the new president.

⁹<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/profiles>

Chapter 3

Experienced Migrant Citizenship

"Solo voy con mi pena

Sola va mi condena

Correr es mi destino

Para burlar la ley

Perdido en el corazón

De la grande Babylon

Me dicen el clandestino

Por no llevar papel

Pa' una ciudad del norte

Yo me fui a trabajar

Mi vida la dejé

Entre Ceuta y Gibraltar

Soy una raya en el mar

Fantasma en la ciudad

Mi vida va prohibida

Dice la autoridad"¹⁰

¹⁰ Manu Chao - Clandestino

Chapter 3 Experienced Migrant Citizenship

3.1 Living without formal citizenship

Maité

At some point, all Mexican migrants crossed the U.S. – Mexican border, alone or with family members in search for a better life on the other side. The way of entering the United States differs between migrants. Some have entered legally and others have crossed the border after a dangerous journey through the desert. The term ‘migrant’ refers to people who relocate in another country. Migrants can be divided into subgroups based on their political status in the receiving country. In our research we have examined two Mexican migrant groups in San Diego: undocumented migrants and permanent residents (Plascencia 2012). We will analyse in this chapter how both migrant groups experience migrant citizenship based on the five factors of belonging derived from Antonsich (2010; cf. chapter 1).

The first group, labelled as undocumented migrants, lives in the United States without any legal permission. There are three ways to ‘illegally’ reside in the U.S.: entering the country without governmental permission, residing with overstaying visas, or when legal status has been withdrawn. Therefore, undocumented migrants are not recognised as legal inhabitants and thus cannot claim general civil rights apart from the human rights as described in the U.S. Constitution and international treaties (*ibid*).

The second group is categorised as permanent residents, also known as ‘Green Card holders’. Permanent residents nearly have the same rights as citizens, except they are not allowed to vote in federal elections and they cannot leave the United States for more than six months at a time. On top of that, their life is not fully safeguarded since there is always the possibility of deportation back to Mexico if they do not behave as a ‘good moral citizen’. Both groups differ, based on their status. They are granted different associated rights and responsibilities. So, neither of them can claim full citizenship. Still, we will demonstrate below that in San Diego both migrant groups do experience a form of citizenship based on the five factors of belonging. Firstly, we will discuss the migrants’ situation and the fear of deportation. Thereafter, we will illustrate how the lives of Mexican migrants are affected by their status and how that influences their sense of belonging to the host country. Furthermore, we will analyse how the economic factors, the influences of relatives, the auto-biographical factors, and the cultural factors influence Mexican migrants’ sense of belonging in San Diego.

3.2 The fear of deportation

The new political situation has created tensions within the Mexican migrant community in San Diego. During the elections President Trump promised to organise a mass deportation of an estimated 11 million undocumented migrants. Such a statement has increased the fear of deportation, which has always been present within the Mexican migrant communities. The possibility of being deported back to Mexico is a real threat for undocumented migrants and to a lesser extent for permanent residents. Surprisingly, undocumented Mexican migrants do not really fear deportation itself. They are aware of their unauthorised position in society and accept the fact that deportation is a possibility.

“I am afraid but I say if I need to go to Mexico. I need to go. You know it is my country and I love San Diego I like the US. But I love Mexico too also. So I put in my mind, maybe one day I need to go.”¹¹

This corresponds to the claim of DeGenova (2002, 438), that the ‘deportability’ of undocumented migrants and not the deportation itself creates insecurity. During our research we found that the fear of deportation has more to do with the consequences for the people they leave behind than with deportation itself. Undocumented migrants have low-income, undeclared jobs and therefore have a precarious economic status (Negrón-Gonzales 2013). Consequently, migrants are mainly afraid of how the deportation would affect the economic situation of their family members who they support with their income. As explained by Gina:

“My dad [undocumented] he is worried too. [...] It is added stress to an already stressful life. They are already stressed about not making enough money and not being able to take the kids to the dentist appointment and stuff like that. It is just added stress and fear.”¹²

Furthermore, within Mexican migrant families there is a variety of residence statuses (Negrón-Gonzales 2013, 1287). In these families the fear of deportation fosters the anxiety of family separation. For example, Carla, who obtained DACA and arrived at a young age in the United States, describes:

¹¹ Maria, undocumented semi-structured interview 06-03-2017

¹² Gina, undocumented/DACA semi-structured 27-03-2017

“I do not think that I experience it [fear] myself. But I do experience it for my family because I do have family members, my mum is one of them, who is undocumented. So because we are so close to the border we always know that it was a real threat a real fear, that our family could be separated.”¹³

The proximity to the border and fragile status of family members does not positively affect one’s feeling of belonging, since security is an essential element of belonging. Ignatieff (1994, 25) describes it as “where you belong is where you are safe and where you are safe is where you belong”. Additionally, Antonsich (2010, 648) states that there is a negative correlation between the sense of belonging and someone’s uncertain status. In other words, not obtaining a formal status creates fear of deportation and family separation and consequently decreases the sense of belonging.

3.3 The legal position of migrants

3.3.1 *Undocumented migrants*

On a sunny Saturday morning twenty volunteers gathered for the Day Labourer Outreach at the Border Angels office. After a twenty minute drive we arrive at the big parking lot of the Home Depot in the north of San Diego, where more than twenty men are silently waiting in the shadow. Our goal is to inform them about their rights as day labourers. One of them is José¹⁴, an undocumented man of forty-two who lives in San Diego. Every morning before sunrise he waits in front of the Home Depot searching for work. The customers of the Home Depot are often looking for some extra hands around the house and offer one-day jobs to migrants such as José. Once, he and two other men were offered a job for three days to renovate a kitchen and to build an arbour. After three days of hard work they finished the job, and they were promised to receive cash after the work was done. However, they have never received a dollar, because the owner of the house threatened the day labourers with reporting them at the Immigration Custom Enforcement. Therefore they never argued with the owner, being too scared to be deported back to Mexico.

¹³ Carla, undocumented/DACA student semi-structured interview 24-03-2017

¹⁴ Jose, undocumented informal conversation 25-02-2017

Unfortunately, the story of José is not an uncommon one. Every day a labourer has the right to be paid, despite his or her status. However, undocumented Mexican migrants are often badly informed about their limited but protective rights and are therefore an easy target for exploitation. The way in which José is treated does not enlarge his sense of belonging. As explained in the theoretical framework, the feeling of being ‘at home’ is based on “familiarity, comfort, security, and emotional attachment” to a symbolic place (Hooks 2009, 213). The legal factor, which is related to rights and responsibilities, gives a secured position in the American society. The lack of obtaining civil rights influences the sense of belonging of the undocumented migrants. Nevertheless, the United States guarantees a basic set of formal rights and protection to all U.S. residents, whether or not they obtain a legal status. All U.S. inhabitants can claim workplace protection and public education (Gleeson and Gonzales 2012, 2). Under the law of the 14th Amendment of the Constitution “undocumented children cannot be denied access to public elementary and secondary education on the basis of their legal status” (Gonzales 2011, 617). Additionally, schools do not have the right to ask students about their immigration background nor share any information to the immigration authorities (ibid). In other words, undocumented children are thus legally ‘protected’ under the age of eighteen. There is even the possibility to attend college after graduating high school. However, undocumented migrants do not qualify for any federal financial aid, which resulted in many undocumented students not continuing their education since they could not afford the college fee (Keeken 2015). This is illustrated in the story of Enrique, who came to San Diego at the age of five on a tourist visa. Once it expired he and his family stayed in San Diego, becoming undocumented. At the moment he works undeclared in order to finance the last year of his study. Enrique explains how he feels living without legal documents and how this affected his life as a student:

“When you are an undocumented student your possibilities are kind of limited. We have programs were you can study abroad but it is like if you are not from here it is not a possibility for you. So you have to live within certain limits. You cannot leave the state and you cannot receive any funding. It feels like you have a small freedom. Even though, you come here for greater freedoms but then you find yourselves limited and surrounded by all these laws. [...] It is like the politics are holding me back. Not a war. There is no war going on but the politics and the laws are holding me back. So I would consider myself a political prisoner.”¹⁵

¹⁵ Enrique, undocumented semi-structured interview 07-03-2017

Enrique expresses that he feels restricted by the laws and that he experiences ‘small freedom’. According to Tully (2002, 170), citizens engender a sense of belonging to the nation-state where they have the freedom to participate in public life. He states: “Belonging is the by-product of democratic freedom” (Tully 2002, 175). Since undocumented migrants do not experience total freedom, their sense of belonging is restricted by their status.

There is one particular right in California State that enriches the freedom of undocumented migrants. Namely, all Californian inhabitants can apply for a driver’s license based on any legal identification documents, such as a Mexican passport or a birth certificate. According to Johnson (2004), the possibility for undocumented migrants to get a driver’s license increases the access to jobs and decreases the vulnerability of migrants to exploitation. This is supported by the story of Maria:

“Sometimes he is mad at me and says no I do not take you and then I say ok. I cry because I lost my job. I lost a lot of jobs because he did not give me a ride. [...] He talked to me very nice and that is not true. He is very devil, because he uses Mexican people and Filipino people for a lot of bad things. [...] So one day I take the bus and I am looking out the bus and I saw a car for sale. So I thought that is going to be my car. [...] I do not know how to drive. [...] Now we laugh but before it was hard. But if I did not have bought this car I was stuck.”¹⁶

The right to obtain a drivers license gave Maria the security of retaining her job. Additionally, it increased her individual mobility and independency in the city of San Diego. Furthermore, Johnson (2004, 239) states that the right to a drivers license contributes to the recognition of the presences and membership of undocumented migrants in society.

3.3.2 *Permanent residents*

Permanent residents obtain a legal status associated with rights and responsibilities, yet their rights are restricted. For instance, permanent residents are not allowed to vote in federal elections and therefore cannot participate in politics. According to Flores (2003, 296), “developing a sense of belonging to society is a key attribute of active citizenship. Those who feel excluded are less likely to participate in politics”. Contrariwise, this would mean not having

¹⁶ Maria, undocumented semi-structured interview 06-03-2017

the right to vote decreases the sense of belonging to society. Juan is a permanent resident desiring to become a naturalised citizen and expresses what the right to vote means to him:

“Because you can get a better life [after the naturalisation process]. I mean you get the right to vote. Look what happened [political situation]. That kind of make you, you are going to make a big difference for the community and for you, and for everybody. When you have the right to vote then you can do a lot of things. You can make a lot of changes. I believe that. You become somebody to be noticed, to be part of the community.”¹⁷

Thus, the right to vote would positively affect Juan’s position in the American society. As a result, the right to vote is one of the main motives of permanent residents to start with the naturalisation process to become a U.S. citizen. However, not all permanent residents are qualified for naturalisation. In order to be eligible, migrants have to be permanent residents for at least five years, or three years if married to a U.S. citizen. Additionally, as Juan expressed, the new political situation works as an extra motivator to apply for the process. Similarly, Carmen explains:

“I want to vote because there are many changes, many things that I do not agree on and I do not have a saying in it. This is my country, because I came here very young maybe ten I think. I feel it is my responsibility being here and I give so much to this country. [...] I have two kids here they are citizens. They are the ones that kind of pushing me ‘mum you have been here so long, it is time to do this’. They worry there are going to be changes and I can be affected by this. So they are like ‘mum just do it’. So I was ‘ok I am going to do this’.”¹⁸

As explained earlier, Mexican migrants are negatively stereotyped by the new presidency of Donald Trump. Donald Trump and his campaign have negatively influenced the public opinion about Mexican migrants and fuel a separation between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Antonsich 2010). Therefore, all permanent residents we met during our fieldwork and were eligible for naturalisation were in the process to become a U.S. citizen in order to be fully secured and to have a voice in the political discourse that concerns them.

Castaneda (2006) describes formal membership as recognition of belonging and therefore the legal factor is an essential factor in order to belong (Antonsich 2010). The significance of

¹⁷ Juan, permanent resident semi-structured interview 30-03-2017

¹⁸ Carmen, permanent resident semi-structured interview 29-03-2017

this legal factor is underlined in the following quotes. Acquiring a formal status, as Amalia explains, could increase this feeling of being ‘at home’:

“But here in the U.S. if I was given the opportunity to find a pathway to citizenship it would feel like I am finally welcomed in the home that I know is my home.”¹⁹

Sofia expressed the desire to obtain formal citizenship while she already has a sense of belonging to the host country:

“This is my country, I want to say this is my country. I want to say I belong here.”²⁰

To sum up, permanent residents and undocumented migrants differ based on their residence status but none of them acquire formal citizenship. However, even without the formal recognition of the nation-state, Mexican migrants still have a sense of belonging towards the American society based on other factors, which will be discussed below.

3.4 Economic factors

There is two-hour queue for the pedestrian border crossing from Tijuana to San Diego. The man waiting behind us wonders which language we speak and starts a conversation. Six nights a week he waits in the same line for several hours, in order to cross the border to work as a construction worker in the U.S. The amount of money he earns a day is more than a weeks income in Tijuana. The economic differences are nowhere so explicit as between these bordering countries (Alvarez 1995). Hence, the prime reason for migration is to improve the economic well-being (Agnew 2008). This is illustrated in the quote below from Carmen, a permanent resident:

“My mum and dad brought us here and I am very thankful to them. They were married very young, my father came over here to America to find a job to give us a better life. He came to work as a dishwasher. [...] My mum stayed behind and I remember little things about her struggling to take care of us. It was really hard back then for my dad to send money, to get that to my mum. [...] There was a small fence, not like it is big as now. I remember going there and my mum meeting up with my dad. They had a certain day of the month, once a

¹⁹ Amalia, undocumented/DACA unstructured interview 22-03-2017

²⁰ Sofia, permanent resident semi-structured interview 30-03-2017

month to meet at a certain time. So I remember I going there with my mum and than my mum cried when she saw my dad at the other side. My dad was able to give the money. It was supposed to hold us for a whole month. After a while my dad was able to get all the paper work done and to immigrate us. [...] I got a good life and I am really thankful for that.”²¹

All informants have a story similar to Carmen. They came to the United States in the hope to find a job and to guarantee a better future for themselves and their family members. All informants, permanent residents and undocumented migrants, obtain jobs in San Diego. However, as Castles (2010) states, the labour migration is an unequal process that often results in the exploitation of migrants, as illustrated in the story of José. In San Diego, most undocumented Mexican migrants have poorly paid, physically demanding and often undeclared jobs because of their precarious status. Nevertheless, undocumented migrants are content with their labour, like Maria explains:

“I am working hard, very hard. I work maybe sixteen or seventeen hours every day seven days a week. Because later people recommend me for cleaning houses, so in the morning I clean houses and at night time I clean offices. [...] Sometimes it is two or three o’clock in the morning and I am still working. But I am very happy here. My girl is born here and I have a lot of work here.”²²

Maria’s quote illustrates that even though the jobs are demanding and poorly paid, Mexican migrants are satisfied with their economic situation. Their economic situation is in most cases better than it was in Mexico. As one permanent resident explains: “There is nothing that I can do over there [Mexico], here you can still go and get a job”. The earnings create an economically stable situation for migrants and his or her family. However, Yuval-Davis and Kaptani (2008) argue that the sense of belonging is stronger when migrants obtain high-skilled jobs. In San Diego, permanent residents obtain legal jobs, however they are most likely to be low skilled (Milkman 2006). Both migrant groups work mainly in restaurants’ kitchens, house keeping or construction jobs. They know that they obtain the ‘shitty jobs’ but since their main reason was to improve their economic situation, they are happy in San Diego.

²¹ Carmen, permanent resident semi-structured interview 29-03-2017

²² Maria, undocumented semi-structured interview 06-03-2017

3.5 Relational factors

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, relational factors are social relations that enrich one's individual life in a particular place. These social ties are strong and emotional relations with family members or close friends who you can call 'family'. These ties "generate a sense of connectedness to others on which belonging relies" (Antonsich 2010, 647). According to Striffler (2007), Mexican migrants do not 'randomly scatter' around the U.S. Instead they reunite with family members, who have a central place within Mexican 'culture' (Keeken 2015). This is illustrated in the quote below:

"I feel like in Mexico the families are more united it is all about family and values and you know most people parents will live with the kids. Like my mum, she lives with me and my brother, and that is normal. [...] Right now my nephew is growing up and we try to teach him about our culture and how important family is. To be always united, it does not matter if you have differences you always have family and always have to be together."²³

Thus, family is important in Mexican culture and is an essential aspect in generating belonging (Keeken, 2015). For Mexican migrants the presence of family members in San Diego has a positive impact on their sense of belonging to the host country. This is well expressed in the quote of Teresa, a permanent resident:

"My family, my two daughters were born here, my husband was born here. This is where I have been most of my life. This is where I have a home and friends and family."²⁴

She explains that she is surrounded by family members in San Diego and therefore she feels 'at home'. Unfortunately, some family members are separated from each other because they are living on different sides of the border. This is mostly the result of the economic need to migrate from Mexico to the United States while other family members stay behind. It can also be due to deportation of migrated family members back to Mexico. It is a difficult choice between staying together or creating economic security (Keeken 2015). This is especially true for undocumented migrants, who, in comparison with permanent residents, do not have the possibility to travel

²³ Mariana, permanent resident semi-structured interview 07-03-2017

²⁴ Teresa, permanent resident semi-structured interview 03-04-2017

freely between both countries. Enrique lives unauthorised in San Diego together with his little brother and his mother. The rest of his family is still in Mexico:

“No, like since I cannot go back a part of me has always held a grudge against my mum because she is the one that brought me here. [...] I was not able to grow up with my family. I have a huge family but it felt like I had no family when I was here. It always felt like I was all by myself in this world that is coming down on you. But if you would have family at least you have somewhere to just like take refuge you know. If your family will be here, at least that brings you some type of comfort.”²⁵

This quote describes the importance of family in the host country in order to belong. Enrique explains that he would experience a type of comfort if his family would be around him in San Diego. This ‘comfort’ corresponds with the encompassing notion of belonging of Hooks (2009, 213). Sadly, Enrique does not have his family around and cannot travel back and fourth. Luckily, besides family and close friends, the Mexican community can also create a great comfort. As a permanent resident explained: “you feel most comfortable with your own community.” The Mexican migrant community can also foster a sense of belonging and serve as a place where the Mexican culture is celebrated. This will be discussed below in the section ‘Cultural factors’.

3.6 Auto-biographical factors

The auto-biographical factor is about a person’s history, which connects an individual to a specific place based on memories, emotions, and personal experiences. Childhood memories are crucial and therefore the place of birth and the place where someone has grown up often remain important in life (Antonsich 2010, 647; Fenster 2005). In general, people reside in their country of birth and thus experience a sense of belonging. However, a migrant’s personal history and memories are not attached to the country they reside in. This implies that Mexican migrants still partly belong to Mexico, their home country. Nevertheless, the relation with Mexico differs between the interviewees.

“When I can visit twice a year. But it is expensive right now. I wish I could go more often you know. [...] I still got my mum over there in Mexico and your roots are over there so you need to go over there you know. I which I could spend more time over there than here.”²⁶

²⁵ Enrique, undocumented semi-structured interview 07-03-2017

²⁶ Juan, permanent resident semi-structured interview 30-03-2017

Another example is provided by Sofia:

“In me I feel it, I am more American than Mexican. I guess because I feel more attached to America because they really gave me so many opportunities. America has given me opportunities to go to school, good education, a great job. I have been able to grow in my job. I have my kids here. Maybe that is why, because I was born over there but it is pretty much like the person who raised you. It is like when your parents get divorced. Say when you are really tiny and your biological father, you have one but he is never been there and then you get a stepfather and he has been there the whole time. Mexico is my biological country but America has done more for me.”²⁷

Both quotes illustrate the different ties to Mexico. It is important to note that permanent residents have the possibility to maintain and complement their memories. Undocumented migrants cannot physically go back to Mexico and can only rely on remained memories of their home country.

“In Tijuana I had a lot of friends and every afternoon right after school we would hang out and ride bicycles and play together till it got dark. [...] We all knew each other. We all lived in the same street. It was so cool!”²⁸

In contrast to Amalia, Carla does not remember a lot of their home country:

“I was born in Mexico City and I do not remember much. There are some vague memories, because I was only there until I was four years old. But I do not really remember you know the country or where I lived.”²⁹

According to the theory, blurred memories would consequently lead to a weaker emotional attachment to one's home country. Hence, the sense of belonging towards the host country becomes stronger. Nevertheless, even though the memories are vague, migrants still have a sense of belong outside the nation-state (Nagel and Steaheli 2008). Teresa explains how she is attached to both countries:

²⁷ Sofia, permanent resident semi-structured interview 30-03-2017

²⁸ Amalia, undocumented/DACA unstructured interview 22-03-2017

²⁹ Carla, undocumented/DACA student semi-structured interview 24-03-2017

“I would say Mexican-American. Because I have not lost my culture but I am really you know I am very involved in the American culture here.”³⁰

As this quote illustrates, Valeria belongs to several places and cultures (Hedeltot and Hjort, 2002). When talking about Mexico she refers to the Mexican culture, which is still important in her life. New places influenced by the Mexican culture are created in San Diego. The presence of cultural aspects in a new location is essential to create the auto-biographical sphere.

3.7 Cultural factors

“I would say there is definitely a big cultural difference between Mexico and the US, but at the same time I live in San Diego and we are a border community. I think that line is a little bit blurred and we kind of mixed both cultures in a way.”³¹

San Diego is a border city and often described as an extension of Tijuana. There are a lot of Mexican influences that are observable throughout the city. For instance, on every corner of the street, there is Mexican food for sale. Spanish is a regularly spoken language on the streets and an essential aspect of culture. According to Therborn (1991), language “stands for a particular way of constructing and conveying meaning, a certain way of interpreting and defining situations” (Therborn 1991 in Antonsich 2010, 648). Learning a new language is therefore one of the requisites for newcomers in order to adapt to the dominant group (Yuval-Davis 2006). In other words, language is used as an instrument to maintain the boundaries of belonging and separates ‘us’ from ‘them’. Different personal stories described that it was a difficult time to adapt to a new environment and especially learning a new language.

The story of Mariana³² clearly demonstrates the way language evokes division. Mariana, who is now a permanent resident, illegally entered the United States at the age of twelve. Under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution she immediately attended school after her arrival. “I was discriminated when I was younger, especially when I came to this country. I mean everything was new to me. I did not speak the language, I dressed differently, and probably behaved

³⁰ Teresa, permanent resident semi-structured interview 03-04-2017

³¹ Carla, undocumented/DACA student semi-structured interview 24-03-2017

³² Mariana, permanent resident semi-structured interview 07-03-2017

differently.” She was called “big burrito” and other kids screamed at her “Go back to Mexico!”. However, she did not understand what the kids were shouting at her because she barely spoke English, until one of her friends explained what they were saying. From that moment she improved her English in order to defend herself against the bullies and soon afterwards the bullying of her classmates stopped. Learning the English language created a better and more confident position in society. “I think it is important for people to learn the language, so that you can integrate in the culture and do not feel left out”.

Speaking the English language can thus contribute to a sense of belonging to the host country. On the other hand, language does not only create division it also fosters a sense of community, ‘a warm sensation’ to be among others who not simply speak the same language but also know the meaning of it (Ignatieff 1994, 7). The idea that others know what you mean reproduces the memories of the childhood, the auto-biographical sphere. Consequently, speaking the Spanish language can contribute to the sense of belonging (Antonsich 2010, 648). As one informant expresses:

“Even in school I feel I go straight to that little Mexican group and just speak Spanish. I mean even right now most of my friends are Mexicans. [...] And it is not that I like oh you are not Mexican so I am not going to talk to you but I think you can definitely relate a lot more. You feel a little bit more secure or you have like that little connection.”³³

This quote supports the theory that speaking your native language can foster a feeling of home in the host country. Thus language can divide and connect people and both are visible in San Diego.

Furthermore, as described above, Spanish is a commonly used language in San Diego. The majority of the Mexican migrants speak fluently Spanish on a regular basis. They speak predominantly Spanish at home, with family and friends or within the migrant community. These are the places where the Mexican culture is alive, practiced, and passed on to the next generation. Because the Mexican culture is still important in San Diego, they establish a sense of belonging outside the national boundaries of the host country (Schiller et al. 1992; Vertovec 2004). They culturally belong to multiple places, ‘here’ and ‘there’ (Nagel and Staeheli 2008). The ‘here’ and ‘there’ is viewed in San Diego between the public and private sphere.

³³ Amalia, undocumented/DACA unstructured interview 22-03-2017

“I have not lost my culture but I am really involved in the American culture here. I follow the politics and the things that are happening here. I went to school here, I have a lot of American friends. Right now that my nephew is growing up we try to teach him about our culture. When I go back to home, it is my family and when I am at home we are all Mexicans and talk in Spanish and watch Mexican channel and we participate in our culture.”³⁴

Another informant similarly expresses:

“I am being raised as a Mexican but in my own home.”³⁵

As illustrated in both quotes, the private sphere is where Mexican migrants are connected to the Mexican culture. The public sphere is where migrants participate in the American society and as Leitner and Ehrkamp (2006) argue both places of belonging can co-exist. Migrants who transgress boundaries are always questioned and doubted about their loyalty towards their ‘new’ country. However, migrants' transnational identities and practices do not present an obstacle to active citizenship or sense of belonging to the host country (Wong 2008, 97). It can even positively contribute to active citizenship, when both places of belonging can co-exist. This empirical description supports the idea of belonging to multiple places. Even though they do not cross-geographical borders, Mexican migrants have transnational feelings of belonging, due to the presence of the Mexican culture in the private sphere.

In conclusion, both migrant groups feel ‘at home’ in their host country, even though their statuses differ. The legal factor is an essential aspect of belonging and obtaining formal citizenship would acknowledge the sense of belonging. Most informants associate belonging with the legal status, although they participate in society and have created ‘a home’ in San Diego. The economical factor contributes to a relatively stable economic situation. Even though it is mostly hard work they are content with their situation in comparison to their experiences in Mexico. Additionally, family, close friends and the community generate a feeling of comfort and create places where the Mexican culture is practiced and hence resonates with someone’s autobiographical sphere. Both Mexican migrant groups are involved in the American society but they are still related to their Mexican roots and thus have created a Mexican home in San Diego. In

³⁴ Teresa, permanent resident semi-structured interview 03-04-2017

³⁵ Carla, undocumented/DACA student semi-structured interview 24-03-2017

sum, Mexican migrants who do not fully obtain formal citizenship do experience a sense of belonging based on the economic, relational, auto-biographical, and cultural factors towards the host country. Thus Mexican migrants do experience citizenship without and outside of the traditional concept of citizenship established by the nation-state.

Chapter 4

Migrant Civil Society

Associations



Chapter 4 Migrant Civil Society Associations

Jente

Borders are supposed to define who belong within or outside drawn lines. In this chapter, we will outline how the politics of belonging are visible in the border city of San Diego. First we will show how the border, besides being a physical manifestation, also is experienced and defined as a place of conflict by people living in its borderlands. Secondly, we will display how this has influenced efforts of Mexican migrant civil society associations who counterforce this manifestation. We will do this by reflecting on how migrant civic society associations address migrant citizenship, characterised by the legal, economic, social, auto-biographical, and cultural factors of belonging and therefore stimulate a different mechanism of incorporation outside the politics of the nation-state.

4.1 The battlefield of immigration

“I grew up here along the border I would call myself a *‘fronteriso’*, someone from the Border. My reality and lived experiences are from the border, so how I gage is from that vantage point. [...]. The border is as I mentioned a manifestation of policies that seek to divide communities so if we look at how border policies especially over the past for years have been developed they have been developed through policies of war. So that really has impacted on how people assimilate what is considered to be normal when you have BP agents, armed agents they are roaming the streets, questioning people based on how they look, on if they belong in this country or not. It is a process of low intensity warfare. Border Reality primates every aspect of my life I would say.”³⁶

Many people with Mexican roots living in the U.S.-Mexican borderlands define themselves as *fronterizos*: ‘border people’. Like Alvarez has stated (1995, 451), the impact of borders reaches into the most local of contexts and affect the everyday life of border folk. Carlos has been living in San Diego all of his life and is now working for the American Friends Service committee, an association that works on border and immigration issues. The borderlands are often experienced as places of conflict where immigration policies are battled. This is reflected in the way different informants referred to the borderlands as the ‘frontline’, ‘the ground zero of the battles of immigration’ or a place of ‘low intensity warfare’. The fortified U.S.–Mexican border clearly shapes and frames lives of border communities.

³⁶ Carlos, American Friends Service Committee semi-structured interview 10-04-2017

“We don’t have free mobility because of where we live, just because of geography. Depending on what you look like it is even worse. It is not just class it is not just immigration status. A lot of it just has to do with skin colour and race.”³⁷

Anna told me how the border and its enforcement has influence on her life in San Diego, but also how border enforcement is influenced by discrimination. In the United States, the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution protects inhabitants from random and arbitrary stops and searches by Homeland Security officers. The government has made an exception at border zones. Here, federal authorities own extra constitutional powers, specifically the Customs and Border Protection that operates within about 160 kilometers of any U.S. external boundary. Carlos told me that in practice, many border patrol agents seem to routinely ignore these limits. Extra surveillance, checkpoints, and immigration raids contribute to the fact that the borderlands are defined by people as the battlefield in which harsh immigration policies and discrimination towards migrants is an every-day presence. The following quote displays how this particular phenomenon has taken place in San Diego:

“We have seen the worst things occur here. All throughout the 80’s and 90’s there were shootings of migrants so all throughout San Diego county. There were a lot of incidents throughout the 90’s where migrants were attacked and beaten. There has just been a lot of violence that has occurred in San Diego county against migrants. So being down here immigration has been an issue you have to address.”³⁸

Sitting in his office on campus, surrounded by a Donald Trump *piñata* and big stacks of Chicano Studies books, Pedro Ruiz tells me about the Chicano Movement of the sixties in which individuals and organisations from within Mexican-American communities started to undertake action for social and political change. The the migrant community started to act collectively to respond to challenges that they were facing, with a core of appreciation for their culture and identity. Proximity to the border means proximity and visibility of the issues it generates. San Diego, as the battlefield of immigration, has therefore influenced the rise of a bottom-up institutionalised support system of migrant civil society associations that dedicate their work on improving the situation of Mexican migrants in San Diego.

³⁷ Anna, Employee Alliance San Diego semi-structured interview 24-03-2017

³⁸ Pedro, Professor Chicano of Studies and advisor of M.e.Ch.A semi-structured interview 22-03-2017

4.2 The Mexican migrant civil society

“Cesar Chavez said everybody has a responsibility to the community. And specially people living in border towns. It does not matter which colour you are. But even more as a Mexican or a Latino-American. Coming from that area you have a more created responsibility and something to do”³⁹

Besides Jesus, many other informants pointed out that being so close to the border has made people feel the responsibility to act and to solve issues that the Mexican migrant community face. People active within the associations related their motives to either their cultural background, responsibility for the migrant community or just to showing empathy and love for marginalised groups in society. Several informants expressed that the current political climate has influenced people to speak up. This proves that in times when people are not agreeing with actions of higher politics, the public comes together to create change themselves. The current president’s anti-immigrant politics has not only has made migrants ask for more help, it also has created a climate in which more people want to respond to political measures they do not support. The volunteer coordinator of Jewish Family Immigration Services drew a clear description on how she saw this appear.

“As of November 9th the morning after the election of Trump, I had like a handful of new volunteer applications in. The next morning even more. I would ask them why do you want to become a citizenship tutor? Why the Mexican community and what interests you? And I would say one hundred percent since November has said they have either said the elections they have either said Trump They have either said the executive orders or they have said our awful political climate. I have seen hope. People are responding and the community is saying you know this might be anything to chance policy [...] And so just to know these people are coming from the community saying ok. I do not know any of them. How can I know them? How can I converse with them? How can I use my time to show that I do in fact care about their situation?”⁴⁰

The migrant civil society exists of the construction of public places and representative social and civic associations in which issues of migrants are addressed an often migrants themselves are

³⁹ Jesus, volunteer Border Angels semi-structured 27-02-2017

⁴⁰Stella, volunteer coordinator Jewish Family Services semi-structured interview 23-02-2017

involved (Fox 2005, 4). With its actions the associations negotiate an equal position of migrants and press claims on the host society (Juris 2008, 158). The local community of San Diego therefore contributes to civil inclusion of migrants who formally are excluded within the boundaries of political belonging of the U.S. Cesar Martinez⁴¹ has been the director of a grassroots association that advocates for migrants on the border already for twenty years. He tells me that because of the proximity of the border many associations active in San Diego put their emphasis on the Mexican migrant communities: “In San Diego a third of the population is Mexican. When you hear somebody speaking Spanish there is a ninety percent chance that person will be Mexican.”

After participating in the field we noticed that the Mexican migrant civil society focusses on many different topics. Four major focus areas within the associations can be distinguished. Some associations focus more on civic engagement and migrant integration, some on migrant health and migrant workers. Others focus more on community organisation or are more identity based. The lines between these focus areas are fluid and many associations focus on several of them. The associations are often being operated by a small range of official employees ranging from two to thirty employees. Besides these employees many of the associations are reliant on volunteers. All the associations are Non Governmental, non-profit and only funded by companies or donations. An overview of all the different associations involved in our fieldwork can be found in the appendix. Many of the associations are united in coalitions, working in these coalitions is said to be used as an instrument to distribute one unified voice to empower the migrant community. This quote shows how this becomes visible within the landscape of civil society associations in San Diego:

“One of the ways we try to empower is through building coalitions, because one organisation cannot create change by itself. One of the coalitions that we convene is the San Diego migrant rights Consortium. That now is comprised of 43 members across San Diego county and they range from membership to grassroots organisations, student groups, labour unions, legal service providers, advocacy groups, faith leaders so they arrange all across those different things. Together they come together to fight for migrant and refugee rights.”⁴²

The main instruments that were reflected within the actions of the associations are organising, advocacy and education. The organisation feature of civic associations is recognised by Marshall

⁴¹ Cesar Martinez, founder of Border Angels unstructured interview 22-02-2017

⁴² Mia, Alliance San Diego semi-structured interview 24-03-2017

Ganz, who states that simply the organising of individuals can be an effective methodology of community engagement (2008, 1). The second strategy of advocacy refers to the work of associations supporting a cause and getting others to support it as well. Migrant civil society association can speak up and draw attention to issues since they have more standing than individual migrants. The last instrument, defined by Fox, is distributing information through education (2005, 3). He states that by acquiring knowledge, and information about their status and rights, migrants can empower themselves to stand up against top-down migration policies (2005, 3). We also noticed that the associations are active on the internet and on social media. They organise and share their events via Facebook and show pictures of their actions. Pedro, one of the volunteers at Border Angels, told me that since they get more attention from the media, more visibility has been created and people from the community stepped up and became involved. Juris acknowledged that the internet can be a fertile ground political and social movements (2008). It is a place where their issues can be shared and made public to the wide world of the web.

Through times, a migrant civil society in San Diego has emerged that exists out of representative social and civic associations in which issues of migrants are addressed and migrants themselves are involved (Fox 2005, 4). Together they produce a unified voice that counter forces top-down policies and include and empower Mexican migrants in San Diego's borderlands.

4.2.1 *A unified voice addressing migrant citizenship*

In the following section we will describe how the different civil society association address migrant citizenship by referring to the different organising, advocacy, and educational activities of the associations. Using the descriptions of informants that are involved within the associations ranging from founders, employees, members, and volunteers we will show how they address different factors of belonging, which are linked to migrant citizenship.

“Including people in the society can be within little things like when, you are informed that you actually have rights. You can live you whole life within the U.S., thinking that you were not human in the eyes of the law. But in fact you have very powerful constitutional rights.”⁴³

⁴³ Jerry, volunteer of Border Angels semi-structured interview 14-03-3017

As mentioned in the previous chapter, an essential element of migrant citizenship is that of legal rights. Undocumented migrants and permanent residents, are however restricted in these rights. When legal factors of citizenship do not apply, migrant civil society associations come into action. By advocating for migrant rights and through bottom-up structures, associations play an important role of producing more security for migrants in San Diego. Like noted in the theoretical structure at page ..., a goal of advocacy is to get political leaders and others in power to notice issues concerning the migrant community. Associations show them how policy should change to solve these issues (Fanestil, Rocha, and Silverthorn 2010, 25). Coalition building and lobbying with government officials are tactics of the different organisations to improve their ability to advocate. The following quote describes how the American Friends Committee advocates for the Mexican migrant community

“Policy impact is meeting with policy makers from the local level to the state level to the federal level. Reviewing policy proposals, making recommendations for how policies might change and how they might affect the migrant community. Then at the federal level we have done a lot of advocacy for federal legislation or against federal legislation depending on what is being considered. But we also do a lot of administrative advocacy. So when congress is not able to push forward favourable legislation then we meet with the administration to see how their policy can change.”⁴⁴

From Carlos’ statement becomes visible how migrant civil society associations are trying to influence top-down policies through the use of advocacy. The associations make sure the rights and voices of the community are valued, listened and projected too the larger framework of policy makers. By documenting the exploitation of migrants, they also try to publicly raise awareness about migrant issues and apply pressure to achieve more favourable legislation.

Migrants Rights Forum at the LGBT community Centre in San Diego

After eating from the free burrito, enchilada buffet, I sit down at one of the tables with a translation device in my ear. *Mobilizate!* ‘Mobilize yourself’, is written on the PowerPoint-slide projected on the white screen in front of the theatre. The presentation is in Spanish but every word gets translated for the few non-Spanish speakers in the audience. “The current administration is ruthless, prepare yourself and keep yourself informed. Make a family emergency plan what to do in case you are detained. Detention costs money so deportation has

⁴⁴ Carlos, American Friends Service Committee semi-structured interview 10-04-2017

priority.” Elisa Marquez, the immigration attorney of the Casa Cornelia law Centre, informs together with three other ladies of Unite Here and Alliance San Diego, the hundred people with precarious immigration statuses attending the gathering at the LGBT community centre in San Diego. With her words she informs the people how to minimise the chance of deportation and what to do when it does happen. “Watch every step you stake, obey the law, stop in front of every stop-sign you come across. Be aware that we live in uncertain times, but your human rights will always apply to you”. People are allowed to ask questions but are advised to make an appointment with an official immigration attorney if they have questions about their immigration case. Afterwards people can walk along the different stands to collect more information and flyers which display “Know your rights” cards and information about the different associations. A big applause announces the end of the gathering after a man stood up and yelled ‘¡Sí se puede!’, yes we can. It is not Barack Obama he is quoting. This was the slogan César Chávez used, the Mexican-American civil rights activist who founded the National Farm worker association, and who’s quote still sounds in times of struggle.

The migrants Rights Forum is a good example of how the distribution of information is another instrument which addresses Mexican migrant citizenship’s legal element of belonging. The awareness that the migrant population does have rights despite of their precarious statuses is very important. Many more associations provide free legal assistance and distribute information through several channels. Border Angels, for example, arranges a monthly event where they offer free legal immigration consultation to migrants. Besides this they also visit labour sites where they offer “Know your rights” cards to day labourers. Jewish Family Services and other agencies distribute citizenship classes, which are a form of education that also indirectly empowers Mexican migrants. These lessons will make it easier for them to go through their naturalisation process. The following quotes show how distribution of rights can play an important role in inclusion of Mexican migrants.

“People do not know these things and the organisation that I work with is a part of a network that does a lot of advocacy and education and outreach in informing the migrant community and informing the undocumented community. Also without being a citizen, these are the rights you get to exercise in the United States. And that has also been something powerful to be part of. To see people, get this knowledge. Cause you know that if they get arrested, they will know what to do and they might come out ok.”⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Stella, volunteer coordinator Jewish Family Services semi-structured interview 23-02-2017

As displayed here, there are many ways in which migrant civil society associations try to advocate for the Mexican migrant population. Through bottom-up coalitions, lobbying and distributing alternative policy measures they oppose U.S. policies that affect the Mexican migrant community. Besides that, education and information tools improve migrants' security in San Diego by informing them about the rights they do possess. This way they can experience more security despite their precarious status. The actions of the migrant civil society thus foster the sense of legal belonging correlated with migrant citizenship.

4.2.2 Addressing economic empowerment

As Antonsich stated, economic factors greatly matter to the lives of migrants and their families as they contribute to create a safe and stable material condition (2010, 648). Economical factors are affected by legal factors. The previous chapter showed through the case of day labourer Jose, that many undocumented Mexican migrants are often badly treated or badly informed about their limited but protected labour rights. This limits them in participating fully in the economy. Labour unions in San Diego as Unite Here, focus on defending and advocating for labour rights of migrants. These rights ensure that migrants are paid better and a place is organised where abuse can be reported and tackled.

Community centres in the United States often operate on a non-governmental basis. They serve as associations that work for the community and provide them with services which the community lacks. This correlates with the neoliberal view of the civil society in which an associational life of a non-profit sector exists, which substitutes functions that are not exercised by the state. Community centres in the predominantly migrant neighbourhoods of San Diego, supply economical services in Spanish. They offer income tax assistance and assistance with filling in medical or social security forms. Additionally, they also provide resume and job application assistance. Through these associations migrants can improve their economical position. In the following quote can be seen that civil society associations address the economical factor of migrant citizenship by playing an important role in providing socio-economic services to migrants (Graauw 2008, 323).

“I think one of the big ones also has been helping our families live a better quality of life through access to health and wellness programs and it is open to everyone. We have partners who provide free classes or classes that only have a very minimal cost and we are an

organisation that sustains itself through grants. We have offices on sight used by Border Angels and Healthy Steps they pay rent and that is a way the organisation sustains itself. Every year we serve about 11.000 people in the community. We have folks that come every week. People come here and just help each other out you know.”⁴⁶

Besides participating in the labour market, education can be a pathway towards a better economic future. Yuval-Davis and Kaptani argue that the sense of belonging is stronger when migrants obtain high-skilled jobs. However like noted in the last chapter, college going is very costly in the United States (2008). Lack of economical resources can be an obstacle for students from poorer, uneducated Mexican migrant families to stay in school. Often youth have to help provide for their families and attending college has not been a tradition in their families.

“A lot of the times they can apply for a financial aid, but they do not get a lot of money. They cannot afford to go to college and sometimes their parents cannot help to support them. Especially a lot of students that are on DACA they cannot apply for financial aid so they rely a lot on scholarships. The rest of it has to come out of their pockets. What M.E.Ch.A does is creating that sense of community, but it also helps in regard to like giving people resources. We have a scholarship page and also try to provide small scholarships to students in our chapter, but we also try to get students to know other resources or what other places give scholarships and what to do to earn money.”⁴⁷

Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán, often just named M.E.Ch.A, is a student based association that has originally been established by the Chicano Movement in the sixties. The association focuses on empowering and encouraging Mexican-American youth to study to improve their situation and also the situation of their parents. The idea is to reach out to communities and make sure they have the same rights and access to different educational institutions as other students in the U.S. By providing scholarships and directing students to other resources they try to offer support. Especially for D.A.C.A. students this is very important as they cannot apply for other kinds of financial aid.

Labour unions, community centres and student associations are segments of the migrant civil society in San Diego that contribute to the economical factors of migrant citizenship. By

⁴⁶ Neila, Director of the Sherman Heights community centre semi-structured interview 30-03-2017

⁴⁷ Gabriella, volunteer at Border Angels and M.E.Ch.A. member semi-structured interview 22-03-2017

informing migrants about their rights, providing socio-economical services and improving the pathway to education, migrants' economical futures are improved. Besides distributing services, associations also play an important role in providing a gathering place for the community. Gabriella is volunteer at Border Angels and also active within M.E.Ch.A. For her M.E.Ch.A is a place where she can take action with likeminded people and where also a sense of community is created.

“Well like it is a sense of community and it is a sense of being a brown student. I come from a white community so it is really hard to hold on to maintain that sense of identity within yourself. But within M.E.Ch.A it is more like a home away from home. Especially for students that are from out of the area. It is really community based and very family based. So that is what I found very cool to have a group of students that look like you and who strive for the same goals as you, which is getting a college degree.”⁴⁸

This proves that besides addressing the economical factor of migrant citizenship the associations also influence socio-cultural factors. Within the last section of this chapter we will turn to how migrant civil society associations foster the sense of home by addressing the autobiographical and socio-cultural aspects of migrant citizenship. In this section we will describe how different associations have come together to create spaces where the Mexican community can be organised. Their purpose is to create a space where people can come together, cultural identity can be celebrated and a feeling of home can be established.

4.2.3 *They will not build borders in our community*

“El Corazon del Pueblo”, is written on the big concrete arch that divides the predominantly Mexican suburbs Sherman Heights and Barrio Logan. We are in Chicano Park, where Cesar Martinez has taken us. “There is Barrio Logan, Sherman Heights and if you go even further south, the closer you get to the border, you are within the hearts of the Mexican communities” Cesar says. “You can feel it here. The ties to Mexico when residing in these areas are inescapable, they are evident in everything.” A neighbourhood that once reached all the way to the waterfront is now marked by the foundations of a highway. Above Chicano Park it turns into the Coronado bridge, which leads to one of the wealthiest areas of San Diego. Though in the shadows of this bridge, the foundations of this highway are what makes this park so special.

⁴⁸ Gabriella, volunteer at Border Angels and M.E.Ch.A. member semi-structured interview 22-03-2017

Every grey brick part of this structure is covered with colourfully painted murals. About twenty of these structures, some six meters and some fifteen meters high, form a very impressive museum of stories about Mexican migrants' struggle in the United States. By walking past a couple of the murals Cesar shows us how every piece shows a part of their history. We see paintings of migrants working on the fields and people holding the Aztec flag. The history of the park also becomes clear. Yellow bull dozers meant to turn it into a parking lot. However, the place was promised to become a park for the community of Logan Heights. With help of the Chicano student movement M.E.Ch.A., public protest of the community was able to withhold the local government of San Diego to seize the grounds. "La Tierra Mia" which means "my land" was reclaimed. Cesar tells us that because of its history, the Park has a kind of spiritual and sacred significance. It signifies a fight for freedom and peace that has been taken from Mexicans a long time ago. Nowadays it is a place where the community comes together. Weekly traditional ballet *folklorico* lessons are held, indigenous *quinceneras* are celebrated and families come together to picnic and play with their children.

Chicano Park is an embodied manifestation of a community that speaks up and is empowered through claiming a certain space. This reflects the activist notion of the civil society, in which willed action opposed to state forces can be exercised (Baker 2002, 9). The Mexican roots of the land are addressed, but it also functions as a place where the pride of the Mexican culture is portrayed through the numerous murals. Right in the heart of the Mexican communities a struggle is acknowledged, a collective identity is celebrated and socio-political problems have been battled. As noted in the theoretical frame: "Home is where we belong, territoriality, existentially, culturally, where our community is, where our family and loved ones reside. A place where people can identify their roots" (Hedetoft and Hjort 2002, vii). In this notion the relational, social and autobiographical factors of migrant citizenship are addressed. Besides Chicano Park, the community centres in San Diego also have proven to function as a gathering place for the community. The example of the Sherman Heights community centre shows how a bottom up initiative has made this possible.

"It was a group of moms and grandmas in the community who saw the need for creating something like a gathering place where families can come together and create community. The things that connect us are one, the language two the culture and celebration so I think this community centre is part of our vision. Which is kind of building partnerships, building

friendships, building community and bringing communities and generations together to have access to programs and resources that other communities were also having”⁴⁹

As stated before, the relational factors of belonging consist out of social relations and ties with family members or close friends. These relations generate a sense of connectedness which fosters a sense of belonging (Atonish 2010, 647). As told by Neila, in the community centres families from throughout the community can come together. Migrants can not go physically back to Mexico; however, there they can meet with other families that share the same cultural background. They can speak the same language and share the same cultural identity.

In order to belong, somebody should be able to express its identity of which, as we have noted earlier, language is an integral part (Sporton and Valentine 2009). Every day at around twelve o'clock a lady comes by at the Sherman Heights community centre. She yells: “Tamalèèèè”, and can be heard from a couple of blocks away. At the centre she sells her homemade Mexican corn snacks, which are wrapped up in banana leaves. San Diego is a city in which a lot of Mexican influences are present, however, when residing in the community centres, it feels a little a miniature Mexico. People speak Spanish and Mexican cultural celebrations are held. Just like in Chicano Park, Ballet Folklorico classes are held and *Dia de los muertos*, a Mexican traditional holiday, is celebrated every year. It is a place where cultural pride can be celebrated freely. Being in these spaces created by the migrant civil society, people’s history, personal experiences, relations, and roots that attach them still to Mexico are shared. In this sense one’s sense of feeling ‘at home’ can be addressed which is the core element of belonging (Antonsich 2010, 648).

In conclusion the border town of San Diego can be characterised as a place of conflict, a place where top-down border and migration policies are implemented and felt by border people living in its territory. Although these policies often result in separation, deportation and fear within the Mexican migrant community, this is also what unites them. The dense network of migrant civil society associations has created a set of instruments through which they collectively stand up for the community. Migrant citizenship is addressed by the associations that try to counter anti-immigration policies by lobbying, creating coalitions and advocating for Mexican migrant’s rights. Free immigration consultations are distributed and education is used to make migrants aware of the rights they do possess. Finally, the fundamental legal aspect of migrant citizenship is addressed by providing citizenship classes leading the way to formal U.S.

⁴⁹ Neila, Director of the Sherman Heights community centre semi-structured interview 30-03-2017

citizenship. To secure the economical situation of migrants as much as possible, labour rights are fought for, migrants are empowered to improve on the labour market and students are stimulated to study to improve their economical future. A new sense of home is fought for within the hearts of the Mexican communities of San Diego. Families unite within the community and celebrate their Mexican cultural roots. The socio-cultural and autobiographical roots of the Mexican migrant community are evident within the Mexican suburbs of San Diego. In times when harsh immigration policies are implied, people come together to speak up and create change themselves. Collectively they project one unified voice to include and empower Mexican migrants in the border city of San Diego.

Chapter 5

Conclusion



Conclusion

Mexican migrants live within the territorial boundaries of the nation-state, but not all them obtain formal citizenship. In this research we have addressed the concept 'migrant citizenship' in addition to the traditional notion of formal citizenship. The concept migrant citizenship is applicable to migrants that do not possess full citizenship but still experience a form of citizenship based on multiple factors of belonging. The essence of belonging is to feel 'at home' in the host country. The Mexican migrant civil society associations in San Diego play an important role in establishing this feeling of 'home'. As stated by Cox (1999), the civil society can contribute to the inclusion of migrants who cannot claim full membership in society. The term migrant civil society involves the construction of public places and representative social and civic associations in which issues of migrants are addressed and often migrants themselves are involved (Fox 2005, 4). The network of migrant civil society associations in San Diego addresses the elements of belonging which are inherent to migrant citizenship. Through a bottom-up structure they create and foster the feeling of being 'at home'. This qualitative research has aimed to answer how civic associations address migrant citizenship of Mexican migrants in the border city San Diego.

The city of San Diego is located on the U.S.-Mexican border in the south-west of the United States. Despite being positioned on the U.S. side; Mexican influences are still present in San Diego. Spanish street-names, Spanish signs in public places, and the existence of Mexican food restaurants are common. These influences can be partly related to the amount of Mexican migrants living in the city. A third of the population of San Diego is from Mexican origin. Besides being influenced by the Mexican culture, top-down migration policies and border enforcement also characterise the San Diegan borderlands. These processes have been set in order due to increased migration flows from the South and the influx of narcotics. A border wall has been placed to stop these flows and customized migration policies have been introduced. The immigration policies have become even more aggressive with the presence of the new president, Donald Trump. All these characteristics affect the daily lives of border people in San Diego

The interviewed undocumented migrants and permanent residents of Mexican origin have expressed to experience a sense of belonging towards the United States. The different factors however, have proven to have different effects on this experienced sense of belonging. The legal factor is what makes migrant citizenship most evidently differ from formal citizenship. The legal

factor is related to the rights and responsibilities associated to formal citizenship and create a secured position within the nation-state (Antonsich 2010). Undocumented migrants do obtain a basic set of rights, however they are often unaware and badly informed about them. Additionally, their precarious residence status does not guarantee a secured position in society, which results in the possibility to be deported back to Mexico. Permanent residents, do obtain a legal residence status. These migrants are eligible for the naturalisation process after they have possessed a 'Green Card' for at least five years or if married to a U.S. citizen, they are eligible after three years. Until then, just like the undocumented migrants, their position is not completely secured in society. Hence, both migrant groups do experience fear of deportation. As DeGenova (2002, 438) argues it is not about the deportation act itself, it is about the 'deportability'. The fear of deportation has more to do with the consequences for the persons, which the migrant leaves behind, than the personal fear of being deported. The legal factor, confirmed by informants, is a vital aspect in generating a sense of belonging (Castaneda 2006; Ignatieff 1994). However, our research has proven that even without the formal recognition of the nation-state, Mexican migrants can still establish a feeling of being 'at home', based on other factors.

One of the main reasons of migration is the improvement of the economic situation of migrants themselves and their family members (Agnew 2008). This was also the main motive of our informants to migrate. They all came to the United States to improve their socio-economic situation. Both migrant groups obtain jobs in San Diego and their earnings contribute to an economically stable situation for themselves and their family members. Undocumented Mexican migrants, based on the precarious status, often obtain badly paid, physically demanding, and often undeclared jobs. However, they do own labour rights, they are often not aware of them. This has the consequence that undocumented migrants are often exploited and not treated well in their working places. Permanent residents mainly obtain low-skilled jobs in restaurants, hotels or in construction. Nevertheless, both groups are content about their work and their economic situation, compared to their situation back in Mexico. Thus, the fact that all informants have jobs contributes to a stable and safe economic environment, which increases the sense of belonging towards the host country.

Dense social relations with family and close friends enrich someone's personal life in a certain place (Antonsich 2010, 647). In the Mexican culture, family plays an important part. According to different informants, the presence of family members and close friends creates comfort, which corresponds with the definition of belonging of Hooks (2009, 213). Luckily, the

majority of the informants have their family members around in San Diego, which fosters their feeling of being 'at home'. However, the deportability of migrants conflicts with their sense of belonging. Deportation would lead to family separation, which damages the relational factors of belonging. Informants mentioned that the Mexican migrant community in San Diego also generates comfort and establishes a feeling of home. For these reasons we argue that not merely family and close friends can contribute to the sense of belonging, but also the Mexican migrant community does (Antonsich 2010, 647).

The place of birth and childhood memories often remain important in life (Antonsich 2010, 647; Fenster 2005). For Mexican migrants these memories and experiences relate back to Mexico and the Mexican culture. The element of migrant citizenship that is connected to Mexican migrant roots is the auto-biographical factor. It relates to one's individual history and connects a person to a specific place, based on memories, emotions, and personal experiences. Undocumented migrants cannot legally travel between both countries and therefore rely on their remained memories of Mexico. The relation of permanent residents with the home country differs. Though permanent residents have the state's permission to cross the border and visit their home country, they rarely have been back to Mexico. However, some informants expressed preferably to spend more time in Mexico, they explained that they felt more related to the United States, because they had lived more years over there than in Mexico. Despite the different relations to Mexico, all informants speak Spanish and practice the Mexican culture in San Diego. The auto-biographical factor is therefore closely linked to the cultural factor of belonging.

The cultural factor is essential in establishing a feeling of 'home'. Mexican migrants adjust to the host country through involvement in the American society. However, they still relate to the Mexican culture as well. They establish therefore multiple places of belonging, 'here' and 'there' (Nagel and Staeheli 2008). 'Here' relates to the San Diego and 'there' relates to the sites where the Mexican culture is practiced. Cultural practices, traditions, habits, and expressions are most alive at migrants' homes or within the Mexican migrant community. These places of belonging should not be viewed as mutually exclusive, but rather as co-existent (Leitner and Ehrkamp 2006). Language is an essential feature of culture (Antonsich 2010). Language can divide and connect people. When Mexican migrants are not able to speak English, language can create a division between 'us' and 'them'. Contrariwise, speaking the Spanish language with others, can connect Mexican migrants and fosters a sense of belonging. Mexican migrants are free to speak the

Spanish language in San Diego, and therefore feel a strong sense of auto-biographical and cultural belonging.

In sum, Mexican migrants in San Diego who do not fully obtain formal citizenship, do experience a sense of belonging based on the economic, relational, auto-biographical, and cultural factors of belonging. Hence, Mexican migrants experience migrant citizenship, beyond the traditional concept of citizenship constructed by the nation-state. Establishing a sense of belonging is however not individual. It is created out of social interactions and top-down policies (Antonisch 2010, 646-649; Hooks 2009). Top down policies have, however created an environment in San Diego which has been defined as 'the battlefield of immigration'. The heavy enforced border and extra liberties of U.S. border officials have created an environment in which discrimination and threat of deportation is felt by 'fronterizos', borderfolk. The proximity of the border and the presence of a large group of Mexican migrants have made immigration issues more visible. This has resulted in a large bottom-up network of civic associations that strive for greater inclusion of migrants and reconstruct therefore the politics of belonging (Ong 1996, 737).

When top-down forces negatively influence the daily lives of marginalised communities, bottom-up structures from within society rise up to affect change. In San Diego representative social and civic associations are formed in which issues of Mexican migrants are addressed. As Juris (2008, 158) stated, migrant civil society associations negotiate an equal position of migrants in society and press political claims with their existence. A diverse range of associations has arisen in San Diego. They exist from grassroots community associations to student groups, labour unions or legal service providers. The migrant civil society focusses on different topics from civic engagement and migrant integration to improving migrant health and helping migrant workers. Others focus on community organisation or on nurturing the Mexican cultural identity. All the associations are Non Governmental, non-profit and only funded by companies or donations. The associations do not focus their work solely on Mexican migrants, however the size of the Mexican migrant population in San Diego has naturally put emphasis on this group. Mexican migrants themselves are also active within the associations. The current president's politics have not only created more fear for Mexican migrants, they also have created a climate in which more people want to respond to political measures they do not support. People within these associations feel the responsibility to aid the migrant community because of their own cultural background or for their sympathy with the situation of Mexican migrants.

By forming coalitions like the San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium. The associations create unified standing towards policies that negatively affect the Mexican migrant community. Besides creating coalitions, the associations use instruments as advocacy, education, and organising to include and empower Mexican migrants within the San Diegan society.

Migrant civil society associations advocate for migrants' rights in order to draw attention to the position of Mexican migrants in society. Because their precarious status, it is harder for Mexican migrants to stand up when injustices affect them. As Tocqueville (2002) stated, it is important that when people cannot speak up for themselves, others take action and responsibility to represent them in the public debate. This reflects the activist notion of the civil society, in which opposed actions to state forces can be advocated (Baker 2002, 9). The primary goal of advocacy is to inform political leaders about issues concerning the migrant community. They do this by lobbying and writing alternative immigration policies. Besides advocacy civil society associations educate and inform migrants of the limited but protective rights they possess. They for example provide free legal assistance of immigration attorneys and distribute 'know your rights cards'. Educating undocumented migrants about their rights increases their sense of security, which is an essential element of belonging (Hooks 2009; Ignatief 1994). The fundamental legal aspect of migrant citizenship is most strongly addressed by providing citizenship classes leading the way to formal U.S. citizenship. Hence migrant civil society associations also stimulate and motivate Mexican migrants to become U.S. citizens.

Economic factors also contribute to generate a sense of belonging because it creates a safe and stable situation for migrants and their families. This factor is however affected by the legal element of belonging. Without formal citizenship migrants have fewer labour rights and are therefore easier subjects of exploitation. The migrant civil society associations try to improve the situation of Mexican labourers by creating labour unions and educate labourers about their rights. While undocumented migrants do possess a frame of basic labour rights, they do not receive social services from the government. Therefore, the migrant civil society associations also try to provide affordable health care and other social services, which are not provided by the nation-state (Tsuda 2006). They also offer resume and job application services to help permanent residents to improve their position in the labour market. Additionally, they provide all their services in Spanish, which is not done by the state. This correlates with the neoliberal view of the civil society in which a non-profit sector exists, which substitutes functions that are not exercised by the state. Hence, the

migrant civil society associations in San Diego support migrant communities with their economical situation and contribute to generate their feeling of belonging.

Yuval Davis and Kaptani (2008) stated, when migrants obtain high-skilled jobs their sense of belonging to the host country would become stronger. Education is important to obtain high-skilled jobs. College going is very costly in the United States which creates an obstacle for students from poorer, uneducated Mexican migrant communities to stay in college. Luckily, there are different student associations like M.E.Ch.A., which aid students financially and exist to encourage students from Mexican migrant's communities to attain college. They do this in order to influence the future economic well-being of Mexican migrant communities.

The border town of San Diego is infused with many Mexican influences. The bicultural character of San Diego enforces the ability of associations to create a sense of home for Mexican migrants. Evans and Boyte (1986) distinguished that in the civil society 'free spaces' are created where collective identities can flourish and culture can be celebrated. Migrant civil associations in San Diego create spaces where communities and Mexican families can come together. These spaces are located in the predominantly Mexican hearts of the city like the suburbs of Barrio Logan, Logan Heights, Sherman Heights, and San Ysidro. Examples of these spaces are Chicano Park and the different community centres like Casa Familiar and the Sherman Heights community centre. The community is brought together, cultural self determination can be expressed and shared analyses of socio-political problems can be brought to light. The feeling 'of being at home' is based on "familiarity, comfort, security, and emotional attachment" (Hook 2009, 213). This feeling of home is enforced because Mexican migrants are surrounded by other Mexican families, Spanish is spoken, and Mexican cultural celebrations can be held. Through creating these spaces, the socio-cultural and auto-biographical roots of the Mexican migrant community are kept alive.

In times when harsh immigration policies are present, people come together to speak up and create change themselves. The civil society associations in San Diego address the economic, relational, auto-biographical, and cultural factors of belonging and hence influence migrant citizenship. Therefore, their network is able to facilitate a mechanism of incorporation based on the factors of belonging (Antonsich, 2010) Countering top-down forces, the civil society in San Diego collectively projects one unified voice to include and empower Mexican migrants from within society in the border city of San Diego.

Recommendations

After concluding our findings on how Mexican migrant citizenship is addressed by civil society associations in Border city San Diego, we would like to hand some suggestions for further research. Some questions have arisen after completing our research. Within our research we have addressed migrant citizenship of undocumented Mexican migrants and of Mexican migrants with permanent residency. All of our informant have lived in San Diego for over ten years. This supposedly has its effect on the sense of belonging of these migrants. Therefore, the first additional question arose how migrants, who have been living in the United States for less ten years, experience migrant citizenship based on the factors of belonging. Besides addressing the sense of belonging of only first generations of migrants', it could also be valuable to explore how second and third generations of Mexican migrant families, experience belonging towards the host country. Further research could focus on their relatedness towards the U.S. and to Mexico, where their cultural roots lay. It would be interesting to analyse how these generations are influenced by the cultural roots of their family and the migrant community in San Diego.

Related to the migrant civil society we noted that many people active within these societies have Mexican roots themselves. Therefore, it would be interesting to address the motives of these people and how their activities within the migrant civil society associations might affects their sense of belonging. Furthermore, we have noted that the migrant civil society has found their spaces on the Internet to raise a voice against oppression of migrant communities. These virtual spaces could also be an interesting area of research. Finally, it would be valuable to research how the characteristics of the border city do not only affect Mexican migrants or the civil associations affiliated with them, but also how it affects the life of U.S. citizens. Especially nowadays when the political climate in the U.S. is changing, this would be an interesting area of research.

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Appendix



Frame of migrant civil society associations

Civic Engagement & Immigrant integration

| Civic Engagement & Immigrant integration | Immigrant Health & Immigrant Workers | Identity Based | Place Based |
|---|---|---|----------------------------------|
| Border Angels | Jewish Family Immigration Services | Chicano Park | Casa Familiar |
| Jewish Family Immigration Services | Unite Here | M.E.Ch.A. Movimiento, Estudiantil Chicanex de Azatlan | Sherman Heights Community Centre |
| Alliance San Diego | Casa Familiar | Chicano Park | Friends of Friendship Park |
| San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium | Sherman Heights Community Centre | | Chicano Park |

