

UC San Diego

Working Papers

Title

Mexican Policy and Mexico - U.S. Migration

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2sp27039>

Author

Latapí, Agustín Escobar

Publication Date

2017-10-18

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies
University of California, San Diego

CCIS

Mexican Policy and Mexico – U.S. Migration

Agustín Escobar Latapí
CIESAS Occidente

Note: Taken from Agustín Escobar and Susan Martin (coord.), Mexico - U.S. Migration Management: A Binational Approach, to be published in 2008 by Rowman-Littlefield under the Lexington Books imprint.

Working Paper 167
May 2008

Chapter Seven

Mexican Policy and Mexico – U.S. migration

Agustín Escobar Latapi¹
CIESAS Occidente

Introduction

Mexico – U.S. migration has gradually become one of the largest such flows in the world today. It is characterized by its extremely long history and persistence regardless of numerous policy changes in the United States, especially IRCA, new border enforcement strategies and acts of Congress, such as the immigration, welfare and anti-terrorism bills of 1996, massive growth in the U.S. Border Patrol staff and budget, or the Real ID act of 2005. This study emphasizes that, while U.S. policy could develop a much better approach to regulate this flow, reforms are likely to fail unless Mexico plays a role in two respects: Firstly, to contribute to the regular character of the flow, which would impact Mexican migrants in a very positive sense. Secondly, to enhance the internal developmental impact of emigration. I agree with Phil Martin (this volume) in the sense that development, not the export of labor, is and should be, to a much greater extent than today, Mexico's overriding goal and policy objective. To quote a well-known Mexican economist, Mexico urgently needs a *development policy* to guide, and make sense of, economic, social and decentralization efforts.² This chapter concentrates on Mexican policies relating to migration: their current nature, quality, and impacts, and their potential within a broad, articulated Mexican stance towards emigration.

Mexico has developed a number of policies that could contribute significantly to the regulation of migration. These policies and programs must be considerably strengthened and expanded, and some components must be added or perfected. These policies and programs, however, will not be of much consequence without three additional elements. The first is a *Mexican vision* of the role migration can play in Mexican development. This vision should serve to articulate the various components of this comprehensive policy, and the subsequent implementation of specific incentives for specific kinds of migration, together with appropriate dis-incentives for those deemed undesirable. The second is an *economic policy leading to sustained economic and employment growth*. The third is *U.S. collaboration*. The current two-sided U.S. policy, which favors some barriers to illegal entry and places increasing restrictions on social services and means of identification but, at the same time, fosters the employment of undocumented immigrants, will thwart any Mexican efforts to collaborate in the promotion of legal migration. Legal avenues for migration must be made available to migrants who know employers wish to hire them, and their cost/benefit assessments must unequivocally favor legal migration. At the same time, employers must be able to take advantage of these new and enhanced avenues for the employment of immigrants, and they must conclude that the employment of unauthorized workers is not worthwhile.

There are three main areas in which we believe Mexican policy should be developed to achieve the twin goals of regulation and enhanced development. The first is development. The second has to do with social policies that should reduce poverty and inequality in Mexico, and improve access to basic lifetime assets. The third, finally, consists of the development of migration management policies and programs, including those relating to the Mexican diaspora.

I. Mexican Development

This study has stressed that NAFTA did alter the dynamics of North American integration, and that it had a major impact on Mexico. This impact, however, is not leading to the social and economic convergence of Mexico with its trading partners (Alba, this volume), although some studies show that there has been a modest level of internal inter-municipal convergence in Per Capita Incomes³. Newer initiatives, such as the SPP (Security and Prosperity Partnership), on the other hand, have so far had a negligible impact on trade and the creation and development of enterprises in Mexico. SPP, admittedly, must be studied closely in coming years. The processes of integration triggered by GATT (now the WTO) in 1986, and by NAFTA in 1994, however, are moving ahead.

Mexico – U.S. migration is itself the most significant proof that the Mexican and U.S. labor markets are complementary and can benefit each other. During the last five years, approximately 500,000 Mexicans have moved every year from Mexico to the United States, and 2/3 of them have found jobs there that benefit themselves, their families and their employers.⁴ North American integration has proceeded rapidly not just in terms of trade and investment, but in labor markets also. This “third dimension” of integration, however, contrasts with trade and investment in at least two senses. First, it lacks a North American (or Mexico – U.S.) institutional framework for its regulation, and is to a large extent taking place illegally. Second, NAFTA envisioned a future in which labor complementarities would be developed by North American and other enterprises in Mexico, and not via the export of labor.

Between 1994 and 2000 (with the significant exception of a critical 1995), it seemed the Mexican government had developed a “NAFTA path” for North American integration that provided abundant new jobs for Mexicans in Mexico.⁵ Mexico created an unprecedented number of new formal jobs from 1996 to 2000 in all areas of the economy, and its exports swelled.⁶

This path, however, failed to become a viable form of development for three reasons. Firstly, Mexican in-bond export industries developed new and highly competitive labor organization patterns and made modest but significant advances towards research and technological development, but they failed to create the domestic provider networks that could have provided the thrust for sustained economic growth.⁷ In stark contrast to what happened in China, they remained a “thin” and enclave-style layer of industry scarcely articulated to the rest of the economy. There are significant exceptions, mostly in the automobile and I.T.

industries, but they account for a minority share of total exports. Second, the advent of China as a major competitor with a very low-paid labor force that in addition did possess industrial and technological policies assuring that exports provided up-stream growth was not foreseen, nor did it become the object of policies that could make Mexico equally competitive. As a result, Mexican exports have grown more slowly, and they are being consistently lost to Asia. Finally, U.S. employment growth significantly outpaced the growth of its own population of working age, which created unprecedented demand for immigrant workers. Mexico possessed the labor force reserve, as a result of sluggish economic growth in the eighties and early nineties and a restructuring of its agriculture undertaken since 1989, and this sparked very significant increases in migration flows. Demand became a significant driver of migration.

Mexico is not stagnant. Export growth is lower than China's, but still considerable. From 1994 to 2004, China's manufacturing exports to the U.S. grew by an average of 19.2% per year, and Mexico's by 12.7%.⁸ There is growth in a number of export and domestic industries. But this growth is taking place slowly, and it is not pervading the Mexican economy. In the medium and long terms, Mexico – U.S. migration will become manageable only if Mexico develops the policies yielding economic and employment growth. The Mexican executive and many observers have stressed that Mexican development is blocked by poor fiscal, energy and other structures that need urgent reform. Mexico needs these reforms, but the experience of the 1980's and early nineties shows that they can be ill-managed, and political support for them has waned. A fiscal reform reducing private expenditure will not spur growth unless heretofore in-existent economic policies do so. Reforming the energy, transportation and other sectors can equally back-fire unless they provide a truly competitive environment. Mexico's largest airlines failed when they were privatized. Privatized banks ran into trouble during the crisis of 1995, and the bail-out implemented at the time doubled Mexico's governmental debt. The benefits of the privatization and globalization of Mexican banks in terms of the provision of formal credit to Mexican households and small and medium-sized enterprises have been small.⁹ The privatization of Mexico's airports increased, rather than decreased, the cost of flying. Private Mexican roads also had to be bailed out by the government. Although some Mexicans are leery of reforms for ideological reasons, many fear them on the basis of these ill-fated experiences.

Any additional reforms must therefore lead to economic and employment growth, a truly competitive economic environment, and fairer conditions for ordinary citizens. Significant reasons for migrating include

the defenselessness of ordinary and poor citizens in Mexico, a cumbersome regulatory environment, and what they perceive as the unfair advantage of a well-connected few.¹⁰

Finally, one potent factor underlying current migration patterns is the break-down of the links that tied small rural producers to the market. These producers have fewer resources to produce, fewer price incentives, and very little access to credit. Whether the agrarian sector is restructured to motivate large, capitalist enterprise, small producers, or both, it is imperative that this population renew its connection to production. Otherwise, rural emigration to Mexican cities and abroad will continue, with downward effects on urban labor markets, and a large labor flow to the U.S.

But these reforms are not themselves sufficient. Growth must be sought. While this is the job of the Mexican government, it is an area in which collaboration can be particularly fruitful.

The following areas hold particular promise:

1.- Growth of maturing sectors and their suppliers: motor vehicles, I.T. and computer manufacturing. Mexico has performed reasonably well in these areas since NAFTA was signed, but massive government support is needed to keep them competitive. What has been gained can easily be lost.

2.- Growth of U.S. immigration – dependent industries in Mexico: Meatpacking, general assembly, furniture manufacturing, suppliers to U.S. construction. The underlying idea is to provide a context within which industries that rely on an immigrant workforce can further their competitiveness by employing those workers in Mexico.

3.- Agriculture. Mexico – U.S. collaboration for the production of staples and export fruit and horticulture has increased, but it still pales by comparison to the recent growth of comparable agricultural production in the U.S. Mexican emigration is far more frequent in rural areas, which account for roughly half the total flow and are currently losing about 1% of the total workforce in Mexico every year. Serious agricultural development is likely therefore to have a major impact on migration pressure *and eventually* on migration flows, provided demand in the U.S. comes under (labor and immigration) regulation. Large U.S. and other firms are set to compete still more intensely against Mexican agriculture, cattle and poultry in the near future. Similarly to the car parts, I.T and computer industries, those gains that can be observed in Mexican agriculture cannot be taken for granted in the near future.

4.- Personal services, health care and retirement communities. The expatriate and retirement communities in Jalisco, Guanajuato, Baja Sur and the Mexican Caribbean are taken to what can be achieved, if granted substantial support. A number of recent initiatives did not bear fruit. This support should include easing regulations for settlement, the provision of urban and personal services, agreements that guarantee that medical care can be provided in place, and the facilitation of legal immigration in Mexico. Importing clients for personal services is one of the strategies that can easily yield the largest employment multipliers. Schemes operating in India, by which European patients are flown in for non-emergency surgery are but one example of what could be done. In this last case, the service personnel delivering the services could earn far above the average local wage, but still provide the service at a lower cost than in the U.S.

5.- As our chapter on demography clearly shows, Mexico has become a significant exporter of skilled labor, with a large part of the total number of Mexicans holding M.A.s and Ph.D.s residing in the U.S. Facilitating the re-incorporation and employment of postgraduate Mexicans in Mexico is likely to provide the necessary synergy for a much more rapid increase in productivity throughout the economy. But currently, *Hacienda* (Revenue and Expenditure Secretariat) regulations make new hirings in the public (academic and research) sector virtually impossible, and provide no significant incentives for private enterprises to do so. Policies that support education, research and the employment of highly skilled Mexicans in Mexico can have a large impact on overall international competitiveness. Mexico still devotes a far smaller portion of its GDP to science and higher education than many comparable countries in Asia and Latin America. Special sectors (such as the above) could be specifically targeted.

In summary, Mexico must rebuild a vision to guide its own development in the near future, and implement it. This is the first, necessary condition for the gradual improvement in the legality and manageability of migration flows. Clearly, migration can serve this purpose, by targeting certain sectors and skills in which to train and attract Mexicans abroad. But the vision, the programs and the funding come first. Inaction may, in fact, worsen current conditions and increase emigration.

II.- Social policy

Most analysts and public officials agree that poverty is one of the major factors underlying emigration, together with labor demand in the U.S., geographical proximity, and the operation of transnational networks. The connection, however, is neither clear nor simple. The emigration rate among poor families is lower than among the non-poor. People who increase their incomes in Mexico often use them to finance their trip to the U.S. But there is an increasing connection between poverty and emigration. During the past 20 years, emigration has risen particularly rapidly in states with high poverty and marginality rates, and especially in the South (Oaxaca, Veracruz, Puebla, Campeche). Even when these states do not send migrants abroad, they send them to other, more dynamic Mexican states, thus crowding labor markets and triggering international migration. It is reasonable to expect that a substantial reduction in poverty should, eventually, increase purchasing power and help develop markets and opportunities wherever there are poor Mexicans today, thus lessening emigration (supply-side) pressure.

Mexico's social policy has shifted and evolved significantly over the past ten years. There has been a paradigm shift, but in addition there have also been significant technical and political changes. The paradigmatic shift consisted in the abandonment of a vision which relied on a highly regulated economy as the main instrument against poverty. State intervention in the pricing and distribution systems was meant to ensure that the poor drew particular benefits from state subsidies. Under this system and through prices, the federal government provided substantial subsidies to producers of staples, was in charge of mass distribution, and provided additional subsidies to consumers in the cities. Similar mechanisms were in place in the case of fuel, electricity, mass transit systems and others. Under this system, specific government actions targeted at the poor were few. A progressive tax-and pricing system was supposed to embody most of the pro-social action of the state. This has led some analysts to view this period as a "pre-history" of Mexican social policy.¹¹ The system was complex, highly segmented along corporate and political lines, and provided various "tiers" of quality and attention.¹² The health care and social security administrations, for example, were aimed almost exclusively at the workers of large enterprises and the public sector. The Health Ministry, which was in charge of health services to the population otherwise lacking them, had a much smaller per capita budget and was at pains to provide anything other than basic care. Rural anthropologists and sociologists unveiled the usual situation among poor Mexicans in the seventies. In the countryside, it was close to impossible for poor

individuals to access subsidized pricing schemes. A large part of the price subsidies benefited those with privileged connections and/or bribing government officials.

Mexico has a long tradition of successful nutrition programs aimed at the poor. These programs effectively reduced malnutrition. But recent analyses have shown that, until the early 1990's, the chances of poor, rural and indigenous children of benefiting from these programs were approximately 1/10 those of children in the capital city.¹³ These programs needed much better targeting.

The price-subsidy system provided significant support for the livelihood of the poor from 1950 to the mid 1980's, but it had significant shortcomings. From 1957 to 1977, the share of total household income captured by the lowest income decile fell from 2.3% to 1.1%.¹⁴ Poverty did not rise because GDP grew at such a pace that even this falling participation entailed stable or rising incomes, but one should not mistake the impact of growth and the impact of these policies. They were not as effective as once thought.

The system was abandoned in two phases during the 1980's. First, government intervention in wages and prices was abandoned. Second, its participation in the distribution system was ended, and import taxes and barriers were dismantled, which allowed low-price cereals and other staples in the Mexican market, but also led to rapidly rising prices for staples in Mexican cities, since the subsidized government distribution mechanism no longer operated. The new free-market system, therefore, hurt both poor producers and consumers.

Starting at that time, social policy was re-created along new lines. But a number of elements of the new approach had been tried since the seventies. In 1978, the government launched COPLAMAR, a federal commission aimed at special government intervention in poor rural areas. This system established the determination of state and municipal marginality indexes, which became the basis for targeted programs. At the same time, in urban centers the food distribution commission, or CONASUPO, launched a subsidiary (LICONSA) nutrition program aimed at poor urban children. COPLAMAR and CONASUPO were dismantled soon after, but LICONSA exists to this day. It is significant because it provides non-subsidized, half-price enriched milk to poor households. LICONSA was and remains virtually self-financing. In 1988-9, President Salinas launched a much more ambitious program called *Solidaridad*, which benefited from the restructuring of Mexico's foreign debt, carried out large, significant and diverse¹⁵ actions throughout Mexico, and channeled a large part of federal expenditure. This program was intended to embody "social liberalism", a

philosophy pushing for market-based reform together with specific actions for the reduction of poverty. In addition to *Solidaridad*, the Salinas government (1988-1994) devised two cash-subsidy programs for farmers. One provides small subsidies to rainfed-agriculture poor farmers who no longer had access to the agricultural bank, because of its restructuring. It was called “credit on your word.”¹⁶ The other is called PROCAMPO,¹⁷ and is intended to serve all farmers, large and small. Both programs subsist today.¹⁸ The few published analyses of *Solidaridad*, however, stress that it was biased towards states which were at risk of being lost to the official party while missing poorer states, and that within states it privileged metropolitan and large urban areas, to the exclusion of the poorest municipalities and communities. In addition to extremely poor or biased targeting, many analysts showed that the program was corrupt. It allowed officials to pocket significant shares of the budget, and funds recovered from productive investments were allowed to remain in the hands of local political bosses. There is no indication that *Solidaridad*, in general, had an impact on the reduction of poverty. Its only component successfully reducing income poverty was a program which granted scholarships to poor children.

The above experiences, nevertheless, were assessed when the government of Zedillo came to power in December 1994. The object was to design a program that was free from political biases, which reached Mexico’s poorest, and could be shown to reduce poverty. The result was *Progresa*, a program providing cash transfers, educational, nutrition and health services and nutrition supplements to poor rural families throughout (initially) rural Mexico, on the basis of “co-responsibility”:¹⁹ families and individuals have to attend school, comply with a health supervision program, and participate in health talks and community improvement efforts. Children receive scholarships to attend school, according to their sex and the grade they attend, and households receive an amount called “food support” to enable them to improve the quality of their meals. By the year 2000, the program included 2.6 million households, or close to 12 million people and it reached its planned target coverage in 2005, with 5 million households.²⁰ Targeting was extremely careful. Communities were chosen on the basis of their marginality levels, and households were selected after a community census showed who qualified on the basis of their weak asset base and other variables. *Progresa* was also original because it included, as part of its design, a quasi-experimental impact evaluation from its inception.

Progresa was transformed into *Oportunidades* in 2002. Scholarships, which were initially restricted to grades 3 – 9, now extend to 12th grade. Recruitment methods have changed. Now families can apply for inclusion in the program, which lessens the risk of going undetected by interviewers. Since 2001, on the other hand, it has expanded gradually to larger settlements, and it now operates in every Mexican city. Since the program requires beneficiaries to attend schools and clinics, it provides no coverage for the poor living in extremely isolated locations, who have no reasonable access to these institutions. A newer program (PAL, or *Programa de Apoyo Alimenticio*) serves this isolated population.

Progresa – Oportunidades can show, on the basis of evaluations performed by the International Food Policy Research Institute, the (Mexican) National Institute of Health, CIESAS, and other institutions, that it has reduced poverty levels among beneficiaries, increased their schooling levels, and improved their health, as measured by days lost to illness per year. It cannot yet show that it has improved the occupational status of “graduates” of the program, basically because the cohorts benefiting from the program since the 3rd grade have not entered the labor market, and because job generation in Mexico has been unsatisfactory recently, which is bound to diminish their success.

Progresa – Oportunidades is significant for various reasons. First, a program that significantly reduces poverty should, in the medium term, have an impact on emigration. Research on the micro-level effects of *Progresa – Oportunidades* on emigration have found several modest impacts. Our 2000 evaluation found small changes in opposite directions: First, low cash transfer amounts tended to increase the propensity of one or more household members to migrate. It seems this resulted from the provision of a secure basic (but insufficient) income, which frees the household to undertake risk. Higher cash transfer levels, which produce a more marked improvement in total income, tend to reduce emigration levels.²¹

Angelucci²² has found that participation in the program tends to lessen the migration of the young, because the program provides incentives for them to stay in school longer, but at the same time may increase the emigration of the adults, for the same reason stated above.

Escobar²³ has pointed out that the emigration patterns of the poor tend to reflect less planning and less contacts, possibly as a result of higher vulnerability to catastrophic events and lower social capital levels, and that participation in *Oportunidades* tends to improve these two aspects of the migration process, possibly

because it reduces catastrophic events thanks to the low but secure income provided through cash transfers. This could lead to more regular migration provided there were new opportunities to do so.

Extreme poverty has fallen significantly from 2000 to 2006, from 24% to 13.8%, as diagnosed by an independent group of experts (*Comité Técnico de Medición de la Pobreza*) and by the National Evaluation Council (CONEVAL). This reduction has been most significant in rural areas. More than half of all rural families benefit from *Oportunidades*, and their social policy transfers have increased markedly during this period. In rural communities, extreme poverty levels have fallen from 42.4% in 2000 to 24.5% during the same period. In very small rural settlements (those with less than 2,500 inhabitants and the highest *Oportunidades* coverage) levels have fallen even more rapidly, from 52.9% to 27.3%. Two main changes seem to underlie falling poverty levels: increasing real wages and government transfers²⁴. Also, however, remittances have increased, which to some extent also explains falling rural poverty (although the largest remittance amounts go to non-poor households). This position is supported by Unger²⁵ shows that Per Capita Income has risen faster than average in high emigration municipalities. The rise in rural wages is as yet unexplained but widely observed, and the lack of recent national farm production censuses is a major obstacle to explain it satisfactorily. But there are at least three factors, although their relative weight is unknown. One is diminishing labor supply due to emigration; the second is increasing labor demand by commercial producers. Finally, a fall in supply due to social policy transfers is also possible, particularly among teenagers, who receive scholarships to stay in school (up to \$70 dollars a month).

Thus, development of a successful social policy program can impact migration, provided jobs are created. But there may be additional connections between social policy and migration policy, particularly in the area of temporary worker programs. *Progres a – Oportunidades*, on the basis of its own databases and with the collaboration of the Education and Health Ministries and Mexican Banks and Telegraph services:²⁶

1. Controls a nationwide network of offices that can certify a person's presence in their community (co-responsibilities are certified every two months, to guarantee beneficiaries access to their cash transfers).
2. Channels personalized payment amounts to 5 million families and 7 million children and youths in schools in that network.

3. Routinely processes information on participants. This includes their compliance with rules, their migration experience and poverty levels.

The program performs the above functions efficiently and without corruption.²⁷

For these reasons, Escobar suggested that the *Progresa* program infrastructure could be extremely useful for the management of a large – scale temporary migrant program.²⁸ Today it is even more aptly suited to that task, because it has expanded from a coverage of high and very high marginality communities to include almost the entire country, and from a payroll of 2,6 million households to 5 million, in both rural and urban settings.

The program can be articulated with the Mexican task of managing a large temporary migration program because:

1. It already possesses information regarding the migration experience of individuals. This would allow program administrators to select regions, communities and households which have migration experience, to avoid creating new flows, on the basis of their poverty levels, thus ensuring a high poverty-alleviation impact of the migration program.

2. It possesses the service infrastructure which would allow it to refund taxes, program fees and other payments to migrants when they return home, on the basis of their certified presence in their hometowns, in order to provide significant incentives for return and a practical means of refunding them these payments.²⁹ This infrastructure would also allow the program to assess the health of migrant workers before and after their stay in the U.S.

3. Its database is large and comprehensive enough to allow the turnover of migrant workers, to maximize the distributional impact of remittances and savings. Currently, it is estimated that 73% of Mexico's poor families participate in the program, and the payroll is constantly being expanded, re-certified (to check for households that are no longer poor) and perfected.

4. The program is gradually increasing its agreements with state governments for the inclusion of participant families in the *Seguro Popular*, or Popular Health Insurance, which guarantees the coverage of medical treatment for members.³⁰ The *Seguro Popular* "borrows" targeting from *Oportunidades*, enrolling them free of charge. Other families pay a subsidized fee. This relatively

new development could respond to a much-stressed demand by migrant workers, who fear health emergencies will hurt their immediate relatives when they are away.

A question that must be addressed is the performance of recruiters. U.S. guestworker programs have relied extensively on private recruiters. Although recruiters are efficient in the sense that they provide the labor required by employers and do so at low cost, their recent performance in Mexico can be held responsible for:³¹

1. Opening new flows. Recruiters have an incentive to operate where the labor supply is ample, i.e., where emigration is not widespread. In so doing, they create new flows.
2. Increasing the cost of legal temporary migration. Once supply has been created, recruiters increase total *net* program entry fees, mainly through the employment of sub- or pre-recruiters, who charge illegal pre-recruitment fees.
3. Leading workers to abscond their legal temporary U.S. employment. Because undocumented workers have become increasingly easy to employ, H-2 programs tend to serve only those employers who cannot find these workers, and who provide extremely poor pay and difficult work conditions. Once legally-recruited workers arrive on site, experience the real work and pay conditions, and realize they may not be able to reach their saving or remittance targets, many abandon those jobs for better, if illegal, opportunities with other producers or in U.S. cities.

The Mexican government has the instruments to regulate the operation of recruiters, both from its extensive databases on population, poverty and migration, and its extensive network of health clinics that may serve to certify workers' return, to reimburse them various costs and taxes, and to gather information on the quality of the work of recruiters. Under performing and overcharging recruiters should be effectively banned, with the collaboration of the U.S. consulate general, and if necessary a system benefiting from social policy experience (that may include private recruitment firms) can be put into place.

Oportunidades is not the only social policy program that can achieve this. In poor urban areas, *Hábitat*, a new program developed in 2002, also has comprehensive databases including migration information, and also controls community centers which can fulfill the same role as rural health clinics. Its operation is intensive (it concentrates large investments in critical urban poverty areas) and limited to a few hundred urban areas,

however, and would need to be expanded if a temporary work program for *non*-agricultural workers is put into place.

Microrregiones, finally, is a program which provides infrastructure and basic services to hundreds of carefully selected “Strategic Microrregional Centers.” It covers, and has substantial information on, 1300 poor *municipios*, more than half of the total in Mexico. Its analyses can also be used to make sure that temporary migration programs are targeted to the right regions, and that they will have a developmental impact.

In summary, and in contrast to Mexican economic policy, social policy has advanced, since the late 90’s, and is far more effective than previously. But while social policy may be seen as a long-term investment and a basic government responsibility, it calls for a substantial portion of the government’s budget. It is unlikely that social policy will be able to do much more unless 1) state and federal authorities start working together to coordinate their policies, which are currently developed mostly independently of each other, and 2) sound economic and fiscal policies provide additional resources to social programs. The future of social policy therefore depends on better economic policy.

Social policy can work in coordination with migration policy. In the U.S. Congress, bills requiring sending country collaboration to participate in temporary worker programs have not been sufficiently specific on the role these governments should play. Collaboration must be more clearly defined, to allow migration policy to succeed in managing migration, and to help it become a key component of poverty reduction and development. Whether through the program itself or through a parallel institutional arrangement benefiting from *Oportunidades* infrastructure and information, this kind of collaboration is much more likely to succeed than one based exclusively on collaborative enforcement of returns.

III.- Policies specifically aimed at migration.

Remittances

The 1997 *Binational Study of Mexico – U.S. Migration* concluded, in parallel with a number of studies and governmental pronouncements, such as the Regional Conference on Migration or *Puebla Process*, that migration is, in general, positive for the migrants as well for sending and receiving governments. The Binational Study, the *Puebla Process*, the Global Commission on International Migration, however, have also stated that policies are necessary to regulate the flow in order to enhance its humanitarian, social and economic benefits. The main area of study in this regard is remittances. Although this author agrees with the above pronouncements, it is clear that, in the case of the impact of migration on Mexico, they must be backed up by recent findings regarding specific regions, periods and groups if they are to be regarded as serious scientific statements.

Experts agree that remittances have increased rapidly in Mexico to about 3.5% of GDP in 2005, although they differ on the total size of the flow:

Table 8.1 Remittances and means of transfer, 1995 – 2005, Percentages and total (in billions of Dollars)

Means of transfer	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Money	39.7	36.0	35.6	34.8	24.9	21.8	9.04	6.99	12.23	11.3	9.32
Orders											
Electr.	51.5	52.6	54.2	56.2	67.1	70.6	87.5	89.64	85.8	87.3	89.3
Pocket	8.1	9.6	8.6	7.9	7.1	7.4	3.35	3.26	1.92	1.4	1.4
Other	0.7	1.8	1.6	1.1	0.9	0.2	0.11	0.1	0.04	0.0	0.0
TOTAL (U.S. bn) %	(3.67)	(4.22)	(4.86)	(5.62)	(5.91)	(6.28)	(8.89)	(9.81)	(13.26)	(16.61)	(20.03)
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	99.9

Estimates for 1995 – 2001: Mario López E. “Remesas de mexicanos en el exterior y su vinculación con el desarrollo económico, social y cultural de sus regiones de origen,” *Estudios sobre migraciones Internacionales* 59 (Geneva: OIT /ILO, 2002); For 2002 - 2005: Banco de México, *Informe Anual*, México City, 2005/2006.

Remittances have recently been hailed as a remarkably positive phenomenon that reduces poverty, softens crises in sending regions and may unleash regional development. Recent studies, however, suggest that Mexico benefits much less than other countries from remittances, when the size of its diaspora and its per capita GDP are taken into account. Each Haitian, Brazilian and Bolivian migrant in the United States sent home remittances more than three times their countries' per capita GDP in 2003. Honduran, Colombian, Guatemalan, Ecuadorian, Peruvian and Salvadoran migrants sent home, on average, slightly less than the above, but their per capita remittances were still larger than their countries' per capita GDP. Mexican migrants in the United States, on the other hand, remitted an average of less than one quarter of Mexico's per capita GDP.³² Mexico's share of its working population in the U.S. is quite large: 17-18%, but remittances are equivalent to only 3.5% of Mexico's GDP.

It also seems that the impact of remittances on poverty alleviation may be smaller – in spite of their huge volume - than previously considered. When total household income (including remittances) is analyzed, the distribution of remittances is only modestly less unequal than total income distribution. Further, although poor households show the largest dependence on remittances (the proportion of poor households receiving remittances is larger than among other income groups and the degree of dependence of poor receiver households is greater), the total amounts received by non-poor income strata, and especially the highest, are greater. Thus, poor households receive *relatively* greater remittances in terms of their own income, but *absolutely* smaller amounts than the top groups.³³

If households are stratified on the basis of their Mexican (non-remittance) income, the absolute amounts added to their Mexican income are largest for the top strata, second largest for the poorest, and smallest for the middle strata.³⁴ The lowest income quintile is most dependent on remittances, with 19% of its total Mexican income supplemented by them,³⁵ and the highest proportion of households receiving remittances (6.4% in 2000). This contrasts with the highest quintile, in which only 2.7% of all households receive remittances, and total quintile income only increases by 0.77%. The income of households that do receive remittances is increased by 81% for those in the lowest quintile, and by only 22.8% for those at the top quintile.

Janssen and Escobar³⁶ have also analyzed the opportunity cost of migration and related it to income inequality in Mexico. Their analysis estimates migrants' stay-at-home income on the basis of the 2000 Mexican Census. It shows that remittances reduce income inequality, but if migrants had stayed in their municipality and worked there inequality would be even lower.

The above is confirmed by analyses of the Mexican census showing that while the *propensity to receive remittances* is greater than average among poor households, the determinants of the amount received disproportionately favor non-poor households. The largest available databases of poor households (the evaluation database for the *Oportunidades* program), show these migrants remit less frequently, and they send lower average amounts, than non-poor migrants. A large ethnographic study³⁷ of poor migrant households suggests that this should not be interpreted as an outcome of migrant intentions or weak family attachment, but rather of three factors: 1) the relative weakness of their social networks (the fact that they have fewer, poorer, and less well-connected network contacts in the U.S.), 2) their lower-than average human capital, and 3) the fact that their decision to migrate is often driven by family needs and emergencies, rather than the availability of good *coyotes* and employment opportunities for them in the United States. As a consequence of all the above, poor migrants tend to spend more on their border crossing, to fail to cross more often than others, to undergo longer periods of unemployment in the U.S., and to perform worse-than-average jobs. In that ethnographic study of 32 households in eight contrasting poor communities, only one in three individual migration cycles (measured from the outset to return) produced a net income for the household in excess of the migrant's average income prior to migration.

A different outcome is found, however, when regional change is analyzed. In this case, highly marginal regions receiving more remittances show more rapid improvements in their human development and economic variables than others.³⁸ While it cannot be concluded that the poorest households benefit the most, and the poorest municipalities do not, as a rule, receive higher remittances, there would seem to be an impact which should benefit them at least indirectly.

Analyses such as these have prompted a number of actors to promote specific policies aimed at remittances. Although international banks and the Mexico – U.S. agreement of 2002 that sparked the use of the Automated Clearing House (ACH) mechanism for money transfers have contributed significantly to the lower cost of transfers,³⁹ the Mexican government did play a role in 2001–2 to pressure banks and other

transfer companies to reduce commissions and exchange margins. This was also fostered from Mexico by the relative liberalization of the transfer market. Today, there are more companies, and the costs are lower. The promotion of the *matricula consular* (see below) also helped, since it allowed undocumented migrant workers to open bank accounts and thus lower their transfer fees. In addition, Mexican consulates have often provided information on transfer costs and cheaper and efficient transfer schemes. To a certain extent, therefore, cost reductions have been the outcome of a policy decision at the beginning of the Fox administration. Nothing guarantees, however, that costs will continue to fall or stay low. The costs to banks of the ACH are much lower than what they charge to their clients today, and there is therefore much room for cost reductions. The Mexican government could still negotiate, or foster, further reductions.

The other policy aspect of remittances is the one discussed above. Remittances are only relatively progressive, in the sense that dependence is highest among the poor, but the absolute amounts received by poor households are very low. The main reasons, of course, are the lower migration rates and the lower incomes of poorer migrants. But dis-economies are important also. Relative costs for \$100 dollar transfers are much higher than for 200 – 300 dollar transfers. While transaction costs are fixed, and Money Transfer Corporations (MTCs) therefore have a valid argument for higher relative costs at the lowest end of the market, analysts have suggested they could charge considerably less and still profit from the operation.

Other policies that could improve remittance levels among the poor have to do with the efficient regulation of migration. In order to achieve higher remittance levels among poor households, it would be necessary to manage migration to avoid wage depression at the lower levels of the U.S. labor market, and to use legal channels. Reducing supply would diminish the total number of households receiving remittances, but would make individual remittances higher. This would be a significant reason for Mexico – U.S. collaboration, if mechanisms such as those discussed above (for temporary migrant workers) were put into place.

Other programs

The “3 X 1 Citizen’s Initiative”⁴⁰ matches migrant Home Town Associations’ (HTA) community development funds. It started as a citizen initiative in Zacatecas but now operates nationwide. For every dollar contributed by the HTA, each level of Mexican government (municipal, state and federal) provides another. It funds public works and community improvements. It was substantially strengthened during the Fox

administration (to four times its 2000 budget), and new mechanisms are in place to facilitate approval of migrant initiatives and to oversee project completion. It is widely considered to be a best practice of migration management. Nevertheless, external evaluations and observers have criticized two aspects, namely 1) that it tends to flow mostly to non-marginal (and less poor) communities, and 2) that a significant part of the projects are not productive.⁴¹ Since the first criticism was put forward, a “quota” of marginal communities must be fulfilled, and this is one reason for the slow growth of the program in 2006. Since 2002, on the other hand, the government has tried to insist on productive investment, but this has not been successful (most productive ventures are private, so this would entail placing a collective investment in private hands). It still, however, represents a drop in the ocean of remittances. Its federal budget for 2006 was 10 million dollars, for a total of 40 million, assuming all other parties paid their parts in full.⁴² Its administration must be strengthened, and state planning boards must have an incentive to coordinate their work with migrant groups. Most Home-Town Associations still act on their own, with no incentives from their local governments or else on the basis of local agreements that bypass the program. A recent evaluation of the *Programa Paisano* (see below) revealed that 14% of migrants visiting Mexico for the Holiday Season reported having contributed to hometown improvements.

Mexico has other migration-specific programs: The *Grupo Beta* was created almost twenty years ago to protect migrants along the Mexico-U.S. border from criminals and corrupt authorities. The groups were expanded to the Southern border in the mid-90's. They were staffed mostly from the army, and they have remained free from the problems associated with Mexican police. They are also a good example of cooperation among the three levels of government. At the end of 2004, *Beta* groups along the Northern border included 105 persons, of which 2/3 were employed by the federal government, and the rest by municipalities and states, but they work together. The *Beta* groups along the Southern border were comprised of 41 individuals, with a relatively greater participation of municipal employees. Group leaders were, almost without exception, medical professionals. From 2002 and until 2006, the number of migrants rescued by these groups more than doubled, the number of migrants receiving medical attention roughly doubled, and most indicators show a marked rise, except that in 2006 a number of them fall, in accordance with an apparent fall in the number of migrants attempting to cross the border at the places where the groups operate.⁴³ They participate in approximately 500 to 600 bilateral collaborative operations per year. Nevertheless, *Beta* groups

are still few and dispersed, insufficiently equipped and dependent on municipal support, although they seem to be better trained and prepared than in the past. They cannot easily deploy to new illegal border crossing points unless they receive support from poorer municipalities along the border. Also, the recent dispersion of undocumented migrants and coyotes away from the Sásabe- Altar corridor, which had become the focal crossing point in 1999-2000, has meant that the groups may have become less effective, since they have tended to be deployed along the most frequented border crossings, and these account for an increasingly smaller share of total border crossings.

Programa Paisano is launched every year before the Christmas holidays. At this time, millions of Mexicans residing in the U.S. return to Mexico to spend time with their families. Extortion of these temporarily returning migrants by Mexican authorities was quite common. The program provides leaflets and other information to incoming migrants on their rights, their customs allowances, and the procedures necessary to intern and return their U.S. vehicles. Through an 800 number, it is also open to complaints against anybody abusing the migrants, and passes these complaints on to the corresponding authorities. In the winter of 2004, the program call center was poorly staffed, but it handled 3,000 calls from migrants per month. Most of the calls, according to the head of the program, had to do with complaints caused by lack of information on the part of the migrants before they departed their U.S. homes: mostly, they were bringing too much merchandise, gifts, or forbidden articles, which were confiscated. Another source of complications lay in the paperwork and the cost involved in the internment of U.S. vehicles. But the portion of calls reporting true abuses has diminished consistently over the years. This is an inexpensive program employing few staff and including volunteer workers. Over two-thirds of all returning migrants know about the program. Most first learned about it from special (Hispanic) T.V. advertisements, or from the leaflets distributed at consulates and at the border. The vast majority consider that the information provided by the program is useful, and, when they have resorted to complaints or requests for specific information, they are satisfied with it. A very clear problem, however, lies in the seventy-five percent of labor migrants, on average over the past 5 years, declaring that they were not familiar with the complex procedure involved in bringing a U.S. car into Mexico.⁴⁴

A small program was started by the National Finance Agency (NAFIN) and the Revenue and Expenditure Secretariat. It intends to co-finance return migrants' entrepreneurial initiatives. To this day, it cannot be considered more than a pilot. It would need to be implemented on a serious scale.

The Health Secretariat has just replaced its "Go healthy, return healthy" program (which was unknown to migrants and analysts alike) by a program providing health coverage to both migrants and their non-migrant family. It is far too early to diagnose this program, which was announced in late September 2005. If it succeeds, it would provide an answer to one of the two most frequent demands posed by migrants, and significantly enhance the positive impact of remittances. Today, some of the largest financial inflows to poor families from their relatives abroad are devoted to the payment of catastrophic illnesses, accidents and deaths. These flows are not only meaningless from the point of view of the receivers' acquisition of significant lifetime assets. They also drain migrants' incomes and projects in the U.S. President Calderón has just started a program intended to provide universal medical care for children from birth. This program could lower catastrophic expenses considerably, but it must be remembered that the older population typically face higher health expenses, and this calls for a strengthening of the *Seguro Popular*. So far, capacity to provide services in this program has trailed far behind membership.

Other laws could provide the basis for further Mexican regulation of migration. The 2000 by-laws of the National Population and Migration Law clearly state⁴⁵ that Interior Secretariat officials are in charge of ensuring that all entries *and exits* from Mexico are carried out according to existing legal provisions. This contradicts the popular notion that the Mexican government is legally interdicted from intervening in emigration. These by-laws, however, remain un-enforced. The cost of enforcement would be high, politically and financially. But a substantial U.S. immigration reform could call for Mexican enforcement, provided new legal avenues are open to migrant workers. Such an agreement would not require legal changes, but congressional approval of a specific budget would be necessary.

Pension Totalization

Although totalization is a bilateral policy, it is necessary to stress Mexican participation in it. In June, 2004, the Mexican and U.S. executive branches concluded a pension totalization agreement which has not gone into effect. It would enable workers to accumulate their pension contributions in both Mexico and the U.S. to arrive at retirement faster and receive larger pensions. The agreement concerns only those funds that have

already been paid into the system by interested workers, and does not therefore affect the contributions made by other workers. It does not involve payment from one government to another either. Unauthorized workers with legitimate Social Security numbers in the U.S. (a minority) would be eligible to accumulate their contributions, but only before January, 2004. It was then that the U.S. Congress passed a bill excluding unauthorized workers from pension benefits. Views forwarded in some U.S. media stating that a Social Security agreement would subsidize the Mexican government or the Mexican pension system are mistaken.

The Mexican government, and Mexicans in the U.S., should insist on totalization. It is, first of all, a system allowing workers to recover their own contributions from both systems. Workers who have divided their time between Mexico and the U.S. run the risk of always contributing but never having the ability to retire. Second, it would allow workers to retire with less than a lifetime's contribution to either system. They would not receive full pensions, but adding US and Mexico contributions would be very likely to allow them to retire in Mexico, at a lower cost, than in the U.S. This would trigger some return migration. But the agreement is also likely to increase the pensions of Mexicans wishing to stay in the U.S. This would lessen poverty levels of elderly Mexicans in that country. Easier retirement, on the other hand, is likely to create vacancies in the Mexican employment structure, which would be very beneficial for younger workers. One reason why the young are not being absorbed rapidly enough in Mexico is that older workers cannot retire. The agreement, finally, could also have a positive impact on the nature of migration. Since unauthorized workers are no longer eligible to benefit from their contributions to pension funds, totalization would provide an incentive to regular labor migration. Lack of an agreement on the contrary provides today equal treatment to authorized and unauthorized workers not qualifying on the sole basis of their U.S. contributions.

Voluntary Repatriation to the Mexican Interior: A Bilateral Pilot Experience

Starting in 2003, both governments have worked together to promote the return of apprehended undocumented Mexican immigrants from the U.S. side of the border to the interior of Mexico, and not simply to the closest Mexican city along the border. It was aimed at both diminishing repeat attempts to cross the border as well as at lowering the risk of death along the border during periods of extreme weather. It was concentrated on the Sonora – Arizona border, where undocumented flows had been growing and the risk of death in the desert is highest. Apprehended immigrants were asked whether they wanted to be returned to that

closest Mexican City or whether they would accept a plane-and-bus ticket to the closest city to their hometowns. It involved the U.S. DHS, the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Mexican Migration Institute. The term “voluntary repatriation” was initially derided by some Mexican media and congressmen, because apprehended migrants were repatriated regardless of their answer. The migrants’ choice was to be returned to the border or to the interior city closest to their hometown. The legal grounds for the program lay in the MOU signed by the above-mentioned institutions, through which both governments agree to promote the return of Mexican migrants, from high risk border areas and during periods of extreme weather conditions. The first MOU on this subject dates from the immediate post-NAFTA period (1995) marked by intense dialogue and a number of positive bilateral agreements.

The program peaked in 2005.⁴⁶ Fifty six thousand individuals were interviewed during the 113 days in which the program operated during the summer of 2005. Twenty thousand accepted the terms of voluntary repatriation to the closest city to their hometowns. Six hundred received medical assistance in the U.S., and a further 200 when they landed in Mexico City. During the program’s first four weeks, the premises did not guarantee confidentiality, but this was corrected. Candidates for the program were selected by the US Border Patrol, on the basis of their interest in the program or if the Border Patrol classified them as someone “at risk”. This includes the elderly, minors, pregnant women, and wounded or ill persons. Transport was wholly financed by the U.S. government, at a cost of roughly \$1,060 dollars per person. The Mexican government covers the cost of its dedicated personnel in the U.S., some meals, and support staff. NGOs and Mexican officials interviewed candidates for the program, and complaints were turned over to the appropriate authorities in each government.

Since there were 1,070,000 apprehensions of Mexicans along the Southern border of the U.S. in 2005, the program interviewed approximately 5.5% of all apprehended and transported approximately 2%. Program staff insist that the program significantly reduced the risk of death through dehydration. The risk of death through dehydration fell, roughly, from 1 per 2,000 apprehensions to 1 per 3,500 apprehensions. The program has only been implemented during the summer, on humanitarian grounds. During 2006 the program was scaled down somewhat. It transported 15,000 persons to the Mexican interior.

The Mexican government participated because the program was seen as primarily humanitarian, and migrants had a choice. Some in Arizona, however, called for the program to be implemented on a larger scale,

and to make repatriation to the interior mandatory. Since the number of attempts to cross the border has been rising steadily, it would seem the program could diminish successful undocumented crossings, as well as deaths. In the event of a U.S. immigration reform effectively increasing regular migration opportunities, this program could be implemented on a much larger scale, in other risky areas and times of the year, with stepped-up cooperation from the Mexican government.

Mexican Policies towards the diaspora

Although the origins of the Mexican diaspora have to do with the processes of national formation in both countries and the loss of Mexican territory after the U.S. – Mexican war of 1847, the political history of the Mexican diaspora can more clearly be traced to two internal conflicts: the Mexican Revolution and the “Cristiada”, the civil war that pitted religious, anti-agrarian forces against the Mexican post-revolutionary government. Both led to the creation of a large population of political and economic exiles. Mexican policy, during the 1920’s and 30’s, basically intended national reconciliation and the return of exiled and other Mexicans in the United States. In the context of the agrarian reform, for example, the government created several agrarian colonies intended to motivate Mexicans to return home. One early reason for the estrangement of the diaspora and the government lay in the cooperation of the Mexican and U.S. governments in fostering the often forced return of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, in the wake of the U.S. depression. Mexican cooperation with the *Bracero* program, intended to move Mexican workers only temporarily to the U.S., can also be understood within the larger national policy of allowing temporary legal migration, while promoting the return of Mexicans abroad. In 1954, for example, the Mexican government demanded that undocumented farm workers be returned to Mexico, and their employers punished⁴⁷. During this fairly long period extending from the Mexican Revolution to the 1960’s, therefore, the Mexican government viewed the diaspora as an anti-governmental group created by internal conflicts, and its policy towards it consisted in inviting it to return to Mexico. When the *Bracero* program ended in 1964, Mexico migration policy was notable only for its non-existence until 1990. This was partly due to mistrust in the U.S., but also, and probably mostly, to a marked distance between the government and the diaspora.

In order to develop a policy towards the diaspora, the government needed to assimilate the fact that a new, permanent Mexican and Mexican-American population had formed in the U.S. as a result of many

decades of labor, not political, movements, and that they needed to be approached as something other than potential return migrants.⁴⁸ Mexico's first major step came in 1990, when the Program for Mexican Communities Abroad was created in the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the consulate network in the U.S. was substantially expanded to 47 offices, and they began to contact existing organizations and to develop systematic exchanges. The creation of this program, and this period of increasing closeness to the diaspora can't be understood, however, unless account is taken of the widespread support received from the Mexican diaspora by the opposition presidential candidate, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, in 1988. The diaspora clearly proved at that time that it had become an influential force in Mexican politics. It is also no coincidence that the program for communities abroad was created in 1990, as President Salinas began to lobby for NAFTA. By 1995, the consulates had a list of 400 clubs and other organizations in the US cities with the largest Mexican populations (Los Angeles, Chicago, San Antonio, Houston and many others). They developed a contact and organization strategy: a local club of a few dozen could not be treated in the same way as a pan-ethnic federation of Oaxaca migrants, even if the consul discovered that "pan-ethnic" was something of a misnomer. Consulates viewed elections and the increasing diversification of the clubs' activities as a positive sign. Some consuls intervened openly in the organization of elections, to such an extent that a few were accused of orchestrating elections to favor government sympathizers.

The clubs were mostly sporting and cultural, organizing football (soccer) matches and various celebrations. Some were ethnic, most were of a local character. Consulates provided citizenship services for these Mexicans, as well as the *matricula consular* ID card. However, many organizations already had concerns that went beyond birth certificates, passports or a consular presence at a Cinco de Mayo celebration. The Mexican government sought their support in its attempts to improve the bilateral relationship. For their part, the Mexican clubs and organizations wanted the Mexican government both to recognize their rights as Mexicans and to help them become better organized in the US in order to acquire rights there.

Most of the time, however, most Mexicans in the US were not aware of the existence of these organizations, nor did they have time to participate in their activities. As Navarro⁴⁹ and Zamudio⁵⁰ showed, for most Mexican migrant workers the overwhelming concern was making ends meet and obtaining a legal work permit and the right to stay in the US. In this sense, the bulk of the diaspora was very much cut off from Mexico.

Provision of identity and the right to vote

From the early 1980s, the Mexican government started to provide a voter's card to all Mexicans aged 18 and over. By the mid-1990s, this had become the official identity document in Mexico and was required in all government, banking and higher education institutions. The only agency entitled to provide it, however, was the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), an autonomous agency that played a significant part in the creation of a democratic election system. Mexican embassies and consulates were not allowed to issue the cards. By 1992, however, it was clear that many Mexicans who had left Mexico without it did not have an identity document. Consulates were allowed to issue passports on the basis of an ever-growing list of documentary proof of birth, military service, citizenship and residence (birth certificates, previous passports, military service identity cards, etc.), which many migrants could not provide. However, the need for identification was growing, particularly among the undocumented Mexican population in the U.S. The Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded by renewing the *matricula consular*, a form of identification stating, in both English and Spanish, that the Mexican government recognized the individual's identity as a Mexican citizen and his / her address abroad.⁵¹ The *matricula* gained recognition in private and governmental US institutions. This was a "silent process" that enabled Mexican citizens to open banking accounts⁵², enroll in educational institutions, obtain driver licenses, provide one official means of identification when accessing a new job and, sometimes most importantly, return to Mexico voluntarily without being deported by US authorities or suffering various forms of extortion at the hands of local or federal police and other authorities in Mexico.⁵³ Once the mostly undocumented migrants used the *matricula* to obtain a driver's license or register with local and state authorities in the US, they gained access to some of the benefits provided by the welfare, education and health systems. The *matricula* was initially granted on the spot, with few if any background checks: the IFE card, a local birth certificate (whose reliability varied greatly) and even documents which had been accepted as proof of identity in Mexico in the early 1980s but had been phased out because of their unreliability were all accepted as proof of identity. *Matricula* requirements soon became tougher, however, and today it is a document backed by reliable official documents and is very difficult to forge. It is called "High-Security *Matricula*." It also has an expiration date. The *matricula* is proof of identity for the Mexican government in

the U.S. and for many U.S. government agencies and private institutions, but its usefulness to migrants is threatened by new Federal and state legislation in the U.S., such as the Real ID Act and others.

The *matricula* was not a basis for establishing legal residence in the US, nor did it allow expatriate Mexicans the right to vote in Mexican elections. In theory, they could vote, but only if they possessed the voting card, traveled to a special voting booth in Mexico during the elections and if those booths had a sufficient extra number of ballots to allow non-residents to vote.⁵⁴ Often, Mexicans traveled from Los Angeles, San Diego, San Antonio and other places to vote in Mexican cities just south of the border, only to find local officials either denied them the right to vote or said they did not have extra ballots.

In 1997, the Mexican constitution was modified to give expatriate Mexicans an explicit right to vote; a universal right to vote was already enshrined in the constitution⁵⁵ but had not been explicitly extended to expatriates because it remained unregulated. During 1998 and 1999, a special commission set up by the IFE, the Mexican Congress and the Executive deliberated on whether and how to implement this right in the federal (presidential and legislative) elections of 2000. The number of Mexican adults living in the US was estimated to reach 5.2 million by 2000, but this was the absolute ceiling for which a procedure could be implemented. There were estimated to be far fewer Mexicans - approximately 2 million - in possession of an IFE card (which does not expire) and a survey of their voting intentions found that most were not interested. On the other hand, a comprehensive voting procedure, one that would make it possible for 90% of these Mexicans to vote if they had a voting card, would cost more than the total budget of several social programs. And in any case time was rapidly running out to put in place a new procedure allowing the IFE to issue voting cards to those who did not have them. However, it was reckoned that installing voting booths in all Mexican consulates and in certain areas where Mexicans had recently settled could offer 70% of the target population an opportunity to vote without having to travel long distances.⁵⁶ By this time, however, it was impossible to register new voters, so the percentage able to vote would be much smaller. The commission concluded that it was too costly (and too late) to implement a full-scale voting procedure, and that a smaller-scale operation was not worthwhile. Consequently, expatriate Mexicans were unable to vote in the 2000 election.

Although implementation of the right to vote for expatriates would have required substantial resources in order to deal with a very large, dispersed population, the reason why it was not implemented may lie elsewhere. Voting preferences among potential diaspora voters were surveyed, and it was clear that most of

those wanting to vote intended to do so for the opposition, mostly for the left. According to some analysts, it was partisan interests that blocked the initiative.

However, the issue re-surfaced in time for the federal elections in 2006. This time, the debate received considerable public attention. Pressure from the diaspora was much stronger and much better organized, thanks partly to the intervention of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME: *see below*) as well as to the increasing political activism of other organizations, such as the World Association of Mexicans Abroad (AMME). The crucial stumbling block was the division within the major congressional party (the PRI). However, one day before the deadline, Congress finally passed a resolution that, for the first time, gave Mexican expatriates anywhere in the world the right to a postal vote. The procedure that was finally accepted was complex and demanded considerable attention from potential voters: they had to mail, months in advance, a copy of their voter's card. Then they received a ballot, and they had to vote using certified mail. The experience was disappointing: only 32,621 votes were tallied, of which 19,000 went to the National Action Party (conservative), 11,000 to the PRD-Trabajo-Convergencia coalition (center-left), and the rest to other parties. In retrospect, the reluctance of the PRI to ease the procedure seems to have been politically accurate. This party received only 4% of the vote of Mexicans abroad, far below its share of votes in Mexico.⁵⁷ It is safe to assume that those actually voting were literate, had access to the internet, and a particular interest in Mexican politics. The vast majority of Mexicans abroad did not vote. Nevertheless, it is significant that a procedure was implemented for the first time.

Building a legitimate organization for Mexicans abroad

The government elected in 2000 decided to nominate Juan Hernández, a charismatic man, as the “expatriates’ tsar.” His status was akin to that of a minister, but he was attached to the president’s office. He clashed with the ministries that had traditionally dealt with expatriates (Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and he lost his position. He was not replaced, and instead the government created an “Institute for Mexicans Abroad” (IME), to be located institutionally at the same office where the first program for the diaspora had operated. This time it was careful. Consulates organized caucuses in the US, and out of these caucuses a board of over one hundred representatives was elected. They in turn elected a president. The Institute also has an executive director and it is part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, although other

ministries are instructed to respond to its requests. It thus possesses both administrative and representative structures within the Mexican government. The aim, however, is not simply to provide a legitimate structure for the representation of the diaspora in Mexico. An additional gain could be that, through this new form of representation, Mexicans in the US might strengthen their representation and lobbying power within that country. The IME is the core of a three – part system, including the CNCME, or National Commission for Mexican Communities Abroad, which is a cabinet – level group meeting to receive and discuss migration issues; the Institute itself, and the Advisory Council, or CCIME.

The Advisory Council was first elected in 2003, and renewed and reorganized in 2006. In addition to the 105 representatives elected through five different authorized procedures, the 2006-2008 Council elected 10 additional members in a new category called “Merit and Trajectory”, basically representing large Mexican, Mexican-American and Latino organizations; 10 special advisors; and one representative from each state government and the Federal District. This move increases its legitimacy, improves relations with state governments and legislatures, and improves its technical skills. The new council also includes representatives of Mexicans in Canada. One of its first tasks was to review requests for the cancellation of elections in a few jurisdictions. Two were cancelled.

The Advisory Council is divided into six working commissions: Education, Health, Political Affairs, Legal Affairs, Border Issues, Economic and Business Affairs, and Communications and Outreach. Each commission meets separately, sometimes even at a sub-commission level. Each commission includes one official from the executive branch who is responsible for transmitting requests and for advising the commission on the institutionally and procedurally correct forms that are most likely to trigger positive responses from the various branches of government. The new council has insisted on a number of the themes pushed by the first, and has added new demands and concerns. A few among them include:

In the studies exploring the opinions of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, education has figured most prominently. They view educational advancement as the area in which most assistance is needed. These issues have consequently received special attention. They include: an evaluation of the operation of *plazas comunitarias*⁵⁸. They are basically booths that allow distance learning and provide Mexican certification to students approving each grade or level. The acquaintance of council members with

Enciclomedia, a combination computer-internet-blackboard technology introduced in Mexican elementary schools, and its piloting in the U.S., to assess its incorporation in Spanish-language education in the U.S.; the promotion of cultural exchange; ensuring there always is a representative of the Ministry of Education in the meetings of the education commission, together with the creation of a special office at the ministry of Education devoted to migrants; the training and hiring of specialized bilingual educational staff specializing in: K-12 teaching, career counseling, special education, and curricular development⁵⁹; mechanisms that ease the international transfer and recognition of studies from Mexico to the U.S. and vice versa; and the “IME Scholarships”, a fund consisting initially of one million dollars. This fund has grown modestly as a result of a private fund-raising effort. The scholarship program specializes in adult education in the U.S., although it also stimulates younger students to complete their High-School education. On the basis of an open competition, it transfers funds to educational institutions, which then provide scholarships. The fund is based at the University of California.

Since the major political parties agreed in 2006 to nominate a migrant to Congress in a must-elect position, the CCIME asked to meet with the new migrant congressmen, and it later asked Congress to coordinate the nominations in the future with the CCIME, to guarantee these migrant congressmen represent migrant groups and organizations. As an alternative, they proposed the creation of migrant (or foreign) jurisdictions in Congress.

On the aftermath of the poor results of the vote abroad, several commissions coincided in setting up a direct link to Congress to ensure that the Federal Election Law is modified. Their requests include easing the conditions for obtaining the voter’s card and facilitating the postal voting procedure. The federal election law has not changed, but some state election bodies have been far more sensitive. For the elections in Michoacán, for example, the state electoral body issued copy-enabled voter registration formats, allowed migrants the use of ordinary (not certified) mail for the forms and for the votes, started a “double” address list, which includes the migrant’s address abroad and in Michoacán, and stopped requiring proof of address abroad, which used to be a problem for migrants.

The Legal Affairs commission demanded that law-makers be invited to become co-sponsors of the legislation proposed by the CCIME. This has until now been a stumbling block for initiatives.

Political demands include: transforming IME into a ministry; increasing the budget for embassies and consulates; the revision of NAFTA; the collaboration of the Mexican and U.S. governments in immigration reform; and the incorporation of migrants in the presidential team.

Foreign (or bilateral) Affairs and demands have included asking the Mexican government to demand from the U.S. government that the widows and the children of returned migrants who are banned from the U.S. but have outstanding social security claims receive visas, in order to arrange payment of those claims. They also demand that the Mexican government provide Social Security to migrants' widows. They have reported discriminatory treatment when applying for TN or NAFTA visas, and asked the Mexican government to complain.⁶⁰

The Mexican government justifies the operation of the IME, and of the CCIME particularly, on two grounds⁶¹. First, it sees an imminent risk of what Portes calls “downward assimilation” of Mexicans in the U.S. Second-generation immigrants, according to a number of studies, are joining the underclass, not experiencing upward social mobility. Programs and policies that may revert that tendency are seen as an obligation. Secondly, it feels the need to train Mexican and Mexican – American leaders in the U.S. in general, but specifically in the nature, intentions and capabilities of the Mexican government. Insofar as these leaders learn to draw effective resources and synergies from work with the Mexican government that may effectively support their advancement in the U.S., the Mexican government will be seen as an ally. But even in a number of subjects on which council members either oppose the Mexican government or else they are divided as a council (the potential nature of immigration reform in the U.S. or the likelihood or convenience of a U.S. – Mexico migration agreement, for example), the assessment is that there will be a net gain from their inclusion as advisors on Mexican policy-making. The previous period of estrangement proved very negative for Mexico, when it tried to approach U.S. institutions and these organizations were by no means allies. On the other hand, some analysts see the IME as a fundamental platform for the political organization of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the U.S. According to Ayón⁶², the CCIME created a network of leaders who interact much more intensely and effectively as a result of their inclusion in the council, and this helps explain the effectiveness of country-wide demonstrations in the U.S. in 2006.

The operation of the Institute has so far been successful, and a number of its requests have been heeded, although no major new programs have been specially developed on the basis of its recommendations. The first council achieved one major success, namely the right to vote for expatriates. A scheme the council demanded forcefully, namely a binational health scheme, went into partial operation, but has not drawn significant attention from migrants themselves⁶³. But the bulk of its more than 200 demands either could not be implemented or were not suited to Mexican institutional and political arrangements. The transition from the first to the second councils was successful politically, and if anything its legitimacy has increased. However, it is apparent from the minutes of the meetings that the new generation of members joined the CCIME with the same lack of familiarity with Mexico as the first one. While this may be rephrased to say the first council ended its mandate on an altogether new level of expertise on Mexican issues, the executive branch of the IME will need to develop its training skills to reduce the amount of time which is spent on issues that can't be resolved, while maintaining a respectful distance from the substance of the council's recommendations. The new council is however starting at a somewhat higher point. It immediately demanded to work with the Mexican Congress, and it has very specific positions on the vote abroad and other issues. The second council also seems to be more cautious, in the sense that it has asked for evaluations and pilot studies for new programs. This may reflect the interaction of the experts with the elected members. It is possible that this second council, thanks to the changes introduced, will produce fewer demands and recommendations, but try to make them work more effectively.

Final remarks and recommendations

Mexico has recently come to realize that it is a country of emigration.⁶⁴ With 18% of its workforce abroad, and 50% of its annual labor force growth absorbed by emigration, it necessitates effective policies assuring that emigration benefits it, and to take proactive steps to regulate migration to ensure it meets national interests. If this transnational labor movement is a market, it has become a buyer's market, for two reasons. First, the illegal condition of millions of migrant worker renders them increasingly vulnerable and powerless. Second, Mexican policies have had no perceptible impact on market conditions. Mexican emigration policies must significantly impact market conditions in order to improve the conditions of migrants abroad.

Three objectives should guide the further development of Mexican migration-related policies and programs:

- One is to provide real incentives to returns. Although the schooling level of the average migrant is quite low, there is a growing consensus in the sense that migrants are more entrepreneurial, healthier and more prone to risk-taking than average. They can make a significant contribution to growth in Mexico. Economic policy, by creating jobs, would create the main magnet. But other specific policies (such as those outlined previously in this chapter for *Oportunidades*) can be important. *Oportunidades* only promotes schooling up to High-School level. Large scholarship programs and incentives for higher education are needed, but they must be coupled with demand for these higher-educated workers. Mexico's "first job" program, aimed at these young workers and pioneered in 2007, was substantially under-subscribed and must be re-designed and launched nationwide with much more significant government support. Similarly, support for the employment of returning migrants is a priority. One possible avenue is to create "one-window shops" for returning migrants, in order to ease their access to Mexican social programs. This scheme could be developed through cooperation by the National Migration Institute and the Social Development Secretariat.
- Secondly, easing Mexicans' access to lifetime and economic assets in Mexico would also eliminate incentives to initiate migration. This can be done on the basis of *household-level* (in addition to community level) fund-matching schemes, or by the provision of lower-cost credit and finance to poor families. The recent experience of *Elektra*, a large corporation providing finance to poor families, proves that lending to the poor can be financially sound. Interest rates charged by this corporation, however, are prohibitive and often counter-productive. Many families end up poorer as a result of *Elektra* loans. Whether through the massive use of microfinance mechanisms, or of banking and savings and loan institutions, effective provision of finance to the poor and the lower middle class is urgently needed. Savings and loans and popular savings cooperatives went bankrupt in the late nineties and more recently as a result of poor management, money laundering and legislative lobbying against them by major banks. Currently, their operating standards have been improved and they are under stricter government supervision. This low-end financial sector must be developed rapidly. The last component of a significant asset-development policy is pensions. The Mexican pension system is operating at a significant loss, thanks to an ill-managed rescue of Mexican banks in 1995-7, and the ageing of the Mexican population. New pension schemes are

necessary, particularly for low-income Mexicans. The labor market will not provide massive access to the young as long as older workers feel that they need to stay in work to survive.

- Finally, to provide policy instruments commensurate to the task: converting millions of migrants into agents for the development of their towns and regions will not be done on the basis of good but token programs, such as the 3 X 1 initiative. But for the Mexican government to commit large resources to this task, it must have 1) fiscal resources and 2) a positive outlook on Mexico's future, based itself partly on the positive role of remittances but mostly on an economic policy succeeding in providing growth. A comprehensive policy for migration purposes cannot be developed unless it is, simultaneously, a development policy. Schemes and programs that contribute both to migration objectives (returns, legal migration, investment by migrants), and social and economic development, need funding. There are two very large funds devoted to social and economic development that need to be realigned in the short-term in order to promote both objectives: *Ramo 33*, the collection of funds benefiting from expenditure decentralization since 1998, and the agricultural development funds in the Ministry of Agriculture. Both are very significant, and both are underachievers. They must be reformed

A comprehensive policy cannot be developed unless the various Mexican secretariats possess a mechanism that can 1) facilitate coordination and 2) guarantee the execution of their migrant-related agreements. Today, most secretariats develop their own policies, and coordination is carried out at a personal level between the secretariats and vice-secretariats. While all of the migrant-related agencies come together in the cabinet-level CNCME and the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME), within the Foreign Affairs Secretariat, the new, positive, institutional arrangement still lacks decision and implementation power.

Bilateral cooperation is necessary. As long as the U.S. job market remains open to undocumented workers and there are no legal avenues to take the place of illegal ones, Mexican efforts to regulate migration and to increase the developmental impact of emigration will have a limited impact.

A national intersecretariat coordination for migrant affairs with true decision and implementation powers is also absolutely necessary if a Mexico – U.S. comprehensive framework for administration and regulation of migration flows is ever to be developed. U.S. officials and representatives have complained of the lack of decision and implementation powers of their Mexican counterparts. Both countries must also realize that there

are a number of new actors in this field. State governments in both countries have become significant players in migration policy, and both congresses must play a role. In Mexico, Congress must participate in this coordination or commission not only through representatives of the population and migration commission of both houses, but also through a representative of the hacienda commission.

Notes

1. The author is grateful to Mexican authorities in the Social Development Secretariat, the Foreign Affairs Secretariat, the Mexican Embassy in Washington, the National Migration Institute, the Mexican Social Security Institute, the Institute for Mexicans Abroad, and several other public agencies, for the information provided for this chapter. All mistakes and opinions, however, are the author's sole responsibility.

2. Santiago Levy, personal communication.

³ Unger, Kurt, 2005, "Regional economic development and Mexican out-migration" NBER Working Paper Series, 11432, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w11432>

4. Approximately one-half of the women of working age, and children and the elderly, do not work. But the age distribution is strongly biased to persons of working age (see Chapter One).

5. Agustín Escobar and Eric Janssen, "Migration, The Diaspora and Development. The case of Mexico," ILS (ILO) Discussion Paper 167, Geneva, 2006.

6. An average of 740,000 formal registered jobs, or about ¾ of estimated growth of job demand.

7. León Bendesky, Enrique de la Garza, Javier Melgoza and Carlos Salas, *La industria maquiladora de exportación: mitos y realidades* (Mexico City: Instituto de Estudios Laborales, 2003).

8. China Statistical Yearbook, 2005, <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2005/html/R1804E.HTM>, and INEGI, "Banco de Información Económica," 2006. <http://dgcnesyp.inegi.gob.mx/>

9. The construction and sale of low and medium-income housing increased rapidly since 2000, but it did so by opening the funds already available to the federal government and to the workers' housing trust fund, and through developing new financial schemes (Sofoles, Sohif). Banks have so far risked very little capital in this effort.

10. Some wealthy Mexicans have also left during the last ten years. Their major complaint is insecurity. A number of them, or close members of their families, have been kidnapped.

11. Miguel Szekely, *Hacia una nueva generación de política social* (Mexico City: Sedesol, 2002).

12. Agustín Escobar Latapí and Bryan Roberts, "Urban stratification, the middle classes and economic change in Mexico," in *Social Responses to Mexico's Economic Crisis*, ed. Mercedes González de la Rocha and Agustín Escobar (La Jolla: Center for U.S.- Mexican Studies, U. of California San Diego, 1991), 91-113; Agustín Escobar Latapí and Bryan Roberts, "Mexican Social and Economic Policy and Emigration," in *At the crossroads: Mexico and U.S. Immigration Policy*, ed. Frank D. Bean, Rodolfo de la Garza, Bryan Roberts and Sidney Weintraub (Boston: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 47-78.

13. Lynnette Neufeld, Daniela Sotres A., Paul Gertler, Lizbeth Tolentino M., Jorge Jiménez R., Lia Fernald, Salvador Villalpando, Teresa Shamah, and Juan Rivera Dommarco. "Impacto de Oportunidades en el crecimiento y estado nutricional de niños en zonas rurales," Chapter I., in *Evaluación externa de impacto del Programa Oportunidades 2004, Vol. III Alimentación*, ed. Bernardo Hernández Prado and Mauricio Hernández Ávila (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública, 2005), 15-50.

14. Jesús Reyes Heróles, *Política macroeconómica y bienestar en México* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1983).

15. Solidaridad undertook the construction of public works such as dams and roads, the provision of electricity and water, the construction and staffing of schools and clinics, scholarships, as well as investment in "social" enterprises, women's cooperatives and other actions.

16. "Crédito a la palabra."

17. PROCAMPO distributed approximately 1.2 billion dollars to farmers in 2005.

18. These two programs have recently been joined by another, specifically aimed at subsidizing farmers in the case of falling prices. Its budget is approximately 800 million dollars.

19. Thanks to Oportunidades, PAL and others, nutrition efforts are today much better targeted to the rural poor, although LICONSA still serves a mostly urban population.

20. The reason why this is the planned growth target for the program is that this figure coincides with the total estimated number of households under the "capacidades" poverty line (those not able to pay for all basic needs including education and health), although there is a certain mismatch between the actual households in the program and those under that poverty line, due to differences in the estimation of poverty and program eligibility.

21. Enrique Martínez C., "Emigrar por desesperación: Progresá y la migración interna e internacional" in "Logros y retos: una evaluación cualitativa de Progresá en México," edited by Agustín Escobar and Mercedes González de la Rocha, 95-116 in *Progresá: Más oportunidades para las Familias Pobres. Evaluación de Resultados del programa de Educación, Salud y Alimentación. Impacto a nivel comunitario* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2000), 1-131.

22. Manuela Angelucci, "Aid and Migration: An Analysis of the Impact of *Progresá* on the Timing and Size of Labour Migration," IZA Discussion Paper no. 1187, (Bonn: Institut for the Study of labor, 2004).

23. Agustín Escobar Latapí, “Pobreza y migración internacional: propuestas conceptuales, primeros hallazgos,” in *Los rostros de la pobreza. El debate, Volume IV*, ed. Mónica Gendreau (Puebla: Universidad Iberoamericana, 2005), 97-128

²⁴ CONEVAL tabulations show that, among the rural poor, income grew 24.2% in real terms from 1992 to 2006. The main source of this change is wages. The second is government transfers. Remittances account for 20% of the increased income. At the same time, other sources are falling in importance: household production for subsistence, other income, and gifts.

²⁵ Unger, (Ibid.)

26. And the Mexican Institute of Social Security in some areas.

27. Isolated instances of corruption include: mayors sticking political party labels on food supplements, or stating that people receive benefits in their communities as a result of their efforts; a few beneficiary representatives charging for their services; one mayor reputedly charged a commission for the delivery of transfers to faraway communities. Escobar and González have carried out six evaluations of the program (see <http://evaluacion.oportunidades.gob.mx:8010/en/index.php>). The only instance of corruption we verified corresponded to a beneficiary representative charging for her services as beneficiaries received their transfers. She was not aware of her wrongdoing. The vast majority of beneficiaries state that payments arrive in full and no one demands or charges any commissions on that amount.

28. Agustín Escobar L., “Propuestas para la legalización del mercado de trabajo agrícola binacional,” in *Migración México – Estados Unidos. Opciones de política*, ed. Rodolfo Tuirán (Mexico City: CONAPO, 2000), 45-61.

29. Schemes aimed at refunding temporary migrants failed in the past.

30. We interviewed the first families participating in both *Oportunidades* and the *Seguro Popular* in 2003. They complained that the additional services and medicines had not been available to them. Since then, however, the Health Secretariat has improved its services to both the insured and the uninsured population.

31. H2-A recruiters were studied by Serrano in the state of Veracruz. Veracruz has increased its emigration rate much more rapidly than average during the past 15 years. Javier Serrano, “El sueño mexicano: El retorno imaginado en las migraciones internacionales de Tapalpa y Tlacotalpan,” (PhD diss. CIESAS, Guadalajara, 2006).

32. Author’s estimates on the basis of the U.S. Census bureau’s population estimates by country of birth, IADB remittance estimates to individual Latin American countries for 2003, and World Bank GDP per capita reports for 2004.

33. Escobar L., Agustín and Eric Janssen “Migration, the Diaspora and Development. The case of Mexico,” ILS (ILO) Discussion Paper 167 (Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2006).

34. Analyses ranking Mexican households according to their total income (Mexican and U.S.-based), on the contrary finds that remittances consist of a relatively flat portion (3-4%) of the income of each decile. Alejandro I. Canales, “Remesas, desarrollo y pobreza en México. Una visión crítica” (Guadalajara: Centro de Estudios de Población /Universidad de Guadalajara, Forthcoming).

35. Escobar and Janssen, “Migration, the Diaspora and Development.”

³⁶“Remesas y costo de oportunidad: el caso mexicano” in Escobar Latapí, A., *Pobreza y migración internacional*. (Mexico City: CIESAS – PREM, 2008), 353-373.

37. Escobar, “Pobreza y migración internacional.”

38. Rodolfo Tuirán, “Migración, remesas y desarrollo,” in *La situación demográfica de México 2002* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional de Población, 2002), 77-87; Kurt Unger, “El desarrollo de las regiones y la migración mexicana: origen, evolución y política pública,” in *Migración México-Estados Unidos, implicaciones y retos para ambos países*, ed. Elena Zúñiga H. et al. (Mexico City: CONAPO/ UDG/ CIESAS / Casa Juan Pablos/ COLMEX, 2006), 247-268.

39. Manuel Orozco, “Hometown associations and their present and future partnerships: new development opportunities?,” Report Commissioned by the U.S. Agency for International Development (Washington, DC: Inter-American Dialogue, 2003).

40. SEDESOL (Secretaría de Desarrollo Social), “Iniciativa Ciudadana 3 X 1. Cumplimiento de objetivos y metas,” 2004, http://www.sedesol.gob.mx/cuentas/reporte_cuarto_trimestre_2003/06IniciativaCiudadana.pdf; “Iniciativa Ciudadana 3 X 1. Cumplimiento de objetivos y metas,” 2005, http://www.sedesol.gob.mx/cuentas/reporte_tercer_trimestre_2004/05IniciativaCiudadana.pdf

41. UN/PNUD, *Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano México 2006*, (México City: Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2007).

42. In other words, total investment in 3 X 1 is equivalent to 0.2% of total remittances.

43. The number of mutilations was not recorded in 2002; by the end of 2006, however, they hovered at about 100 annually; also, the number of deaths recorded by the *Beta* groups on the Mexican side of the Northern and Southern borders is greater in the latter. Instituto Nacional de Migración, “Estadísticas Migratorias, 2004,” Secretaría de Gobernación, <http://www.inm.gob.mx/paginas/estadisticas/2004.htm>; “Estadísticas Migratorias, 2006,” Secretaría de Gobernación, <http://www.inm.gob.mx/paginas/estadisticas/2006.htm>.

⁴⁴ <http://www.paisano.gob.mx/evaluacion.php?>

45. Reglamento de la Ley General de Población, Article 91.B.a, *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, 14 de abril, Mexico City, 2000, www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/regley/Reg_LGP.doc.

46. SRE (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores), “Evaluación del Programa de Repatriaciones al Interior México-Estados Unidos 2005,” report (Mexico City: SRE, 2006), http://www.sre.gob.mx/servicios/documentos/eval_final05.doc. While in 2006 the program did not grow, it seemed set to surpass all previous levels by mid-July 2007.

⁴⁷ See Ayón, David R., 2006, “La política mexicana y la movilización de los migrantes mexicanos en Estados Unidos”, paper delivered at the meeting of the Latin American Studies Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico, March 15-18. The autor provides a thorough review of his own and other work on the political history of Mexican organizations abroad.

⁴⁸ Ayón, *Ibid.*

49. Alejandra Navarro S., “Mirando el sol: hacia una configuración del proceso migratorio hacia los Estados Unidos” (B.A. diss., ITESO, 1998).

50. Patricia Zamudio, “Huejuquillense Immigrants in Chicago: Culture, gender, and community in the shaping of consciousness” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1999)

51. The *matricula* had been issued before. The decision was to convert an old practice into a widely available means of identification.

⁵² By 2005, the *matricula* was accepted at more than seventy banks. Wells Fargo alone reported that it had accepted it to open 400,000 accounts from the end of 2001 to mid-2004: González Gutiérrez, Carlos, “Del acercamiento a la inclusión institucional: la experiencia del Instituto de los Mexicanos en el exterior” in Carlos González Gutiérrez (Ed.), *Relaciones Estado – Diáspora. Perspectivas de América Latina y el Caribe* (Mexico City, Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2006), 181-220.

53. Sometimes, undocumented Mexican citizens were deported to Central American countries, on the grounds that they could not prove they were Mexican citizens.

54. Up to and including the presidential elections of 1988, the number of ballot papers in any given voting booth was somewhat discretionary; there were often insufficient numbers of papers in opposition districts, while extra ballot papers were normally made available in pro-government districts (and votes for the government increased accordingly).

55. Mexican adults who were not allowed to vote included members of the clergy of any church, the mentally handicapped or ill and persons with specific kinds of a criminal record. In practice, however, most of them could vote, because the procedure for granting the voter’s card did not check for these conditions.

56. Jorge Durand, personal communication.

57. IFE, “Informe de los resultados de la votación emitida por los mexicanos residentes en el extranjero,” (Report, México City: Instituto Federal Electoral, 2006).

⁵⁸ Through these schemes, in 2005 10,000 persons were enrolled in adult education, 2,000 in senior High-School (bachillerato), and there were close to 700 locations at which the courses were provided with the support of the Mexican government.

⁵⁹ Mexicans in the U.S. have complained, for a number of years, that career councillors and advisors at the High-School level tend to point Mexicans in the direction of “easy” subjects that allow them to graduate from High-School, but do not provide the correct credits when applying to a university. They therefore insist that they need councilors who understand them and will provide the right advice.

60. IME (Instituto de los mexicanos en el exterior), “Recomendaciones de la I reunión ordinaria del CCIME,” 2003, <http://portal.sre.gob.mx/ime/index.php?option=displaypage&Itemid>; “Recomendaciones de la II reunión ordinaria del CCIME,” 2003, <http://portal.sre.gob.mx/ime/index.php?option=displaypage&Itemid>; “Recomendación del CC - IME.13/econ/sedesol ‘revisar reglas de operación del programa de atención a migrantes 3 X 1 y describir las principales razones por las cuales se rechazan los proyectos’,” 2003, http://portal.sre.gob.mx/ime/recomendaciones/cc_ime_i_13-con-sedesol.thm; “Recomendación del CC-IME 1.95/com/SSA ‘crear un seguro de salud binacional para mexicanos documentados e indocumentados’,” 2003, http://portal.sre.gob.mx/ime/recomendaciones/cc_ime_i_95_com_ssa.htm. http://www.ime.gob.mx/ccime/comisiones/asuntos_economicos.htm

⁶¹ González Gutiérrez (*Ibid.*).

⁶² Ayón (*Ibid.*).

⁶³ Through consular offices, migrants are able to register their families in Mexico for subsidized health care in the Mexican Social Security Institute, one significant tier above the basic services provided by the Ministry of Health.

64. Agustín Escobar Latapí, “Migración y seguridad en la política exterior mexicana,” *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior*, no. 70 (February 2004): 85-98.