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The Impact of U.S. Remittances on Non-Transnational Families In Mexico, During AMLO's Presidency

Sebastián Barreto
Bard College

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Sebastián Barreto

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Dedicaciones

Para mi hermana, Eli Sofia Barreto. Todo esto es por ti.

Para mis padres, Flor Eli Londaiz y Alfredo Barreto. Gracias por todo lo que me han dado, y todo lo que me han enseñado.

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Introduction

Remittances are typically defined as a transfer of money, often by a foreign worker (a migrant) to their family and friends in their home country.[1] The general idea/perception around remittances speaks of it in a positive light more often than not, as they can "lift all boats".[2] In other words, because this type of monetary exchange has been studied and thus seen as a tool that can help reduce types of inequality it is often viewed as an instrument used for positive changes/results.[3] These positive results tend to be emphasized in developing economies where the remittance-receivers are often lower/middle class, and would greatly benefit from additional income.[4]

However, this common wisdom is not complete, as there does not appear to be an inclusive discourse focusing on the experiences of non-transnational families. Those who lack access to (in this case) international migration, would not be eligible to receive this benefit from remittances (additional income). This study attempts to qualify the common wisdom of remittances by further investigating the effects of not receiving remittances and arrives at conclusion of there being negative effects on those who do not receive remittances (whether it be socially, economically, politically, or a combination of either).

This research will focus on two countries: Mexico (as the country where people are migrating from) and the U.S. (as the country that Mexicans are migrating to). The time frame this study focuses on is Mexico's current presidency under Andrés Manuel López Obrador, from 2018-2024. From the current information available within the discourse of non-remittance

[1] Eswaramurthi, Abinaya, et al. Remittance - History and Present State of the Industry. https://www.latentview.com/whitepaper/remittance-history-and-present-state-of-the-industry/
[2] Sayeh, Antoinette, and Ralph Chami. "Lifelines in Danger." IMF, June 2020, https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2020/06/COVID19-pandemic-impact-on-remittance-flows-sayeh.
[3] Song, Yuegang, et al. "The Effect of Remittances and FDI Inflows on Income Distribution in Developing Economies." Economic Analysis and Policy, vol. 72, Dec. 2021, pp. 255–67. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eap.2021.08.011.
[4] Song, Yuegang, et al. "The Effect of Remittances and FDI Inflows on Income Distribution in Developing Economies." Economic Analysis and Policy, vol. 72, Dec. 2021, pp. 255–67. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eap.2021.08.011.

receiving populations in Mexico, there is a possibility that not being able to migrate internationally (nor having a family member/friend who can) and thus not having access to remittances can cause an increase in inequality within those communities.[5]

With full transparency, this research does pose its limits, as there is a lack of available data when it comes to more information on who these non-transnational families might be, and where they are most likely to live. Thus, in certain categories where this data is absent, there will be studies used that do not directly pertain to Mexico but have a supportive relevance to it.

[5] Kunz, Rahel, and Brenda Ramírez. "'Cambiando El Chip': The Gendered Constellation of Subjectivities of the Financialisation of Remittances in Mexico." Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space, vol. 54, no. 4, June 2022, pp. 779–99. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X211006110.

Chapter 1

1.1 History of migration

The US-Mexico border currently extends across three American states and six Mexican states, at an impressive distance of 1,954 miles long.[6] The American states which make up the northern side of the border include California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. On the other side, the Mexican states which make up the southern part of the border are Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, Sonora, and Tamaulipas. Prior to 1848, all of the American states mentioned above which touch the U.S.-Mexico border, were Mexican states. In 1846 the U.S. Senate voted "40-2" to go to war with Mexico, leading to the Mexican-American War, lasting from 1846-1848.[7] At the end, the U.S. defeated the Mexican army in 1848. The war was brought to an end, with the signing of The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), leading to Mexico ceding fifty-five percent of its territory. The Mexican states which were now part of the U.S. included the present-day states of California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, most of Arizona and Colorado, and parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Wyoming.[8] Within an instant many Mexican citizens who resided in these new-American states were giving the choice to become U.S. citizens. Thus, "Mexico did not cross the border; the border crossed Mexico". The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is a crucial piece of history, as it completely changed the power dynamic between the United States and Mexico. It also shaped the US-Mexican border we know today.

The United States has been one of the most desirable countries to migrate to for decades.[9] These mass flow of people coming into the country have been controlled and filtered by several

[6] This Is What the US-Mexico Border Looks Like. https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2018/12/politics/border-wall-cnnphotos/.
[7] "The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo." National Archives, 15 Aug. 2016, https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/guadalupe-hidalgo.
[8] Mexican Braceros and US Farm Workers | Wilson Center. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/mexican-braceros-and-us-farm-workers.
[9] America's Great Migrations. https://depts.washington.edu/moving1/.

laws and, of course, by different kinds of borders. One of these borders, is the U.S. and Mexico border. Although migrants from many countries other than Mexico come to the U.S., it is Mexican immigrants who are in the spotlight. The word spotlight might have positive connotation, but that is not the reality here. The spotlight being shined on Mexican migrants has been a dark and negative one, painting them as individuals who should not be welcomed into the United States. It must also be acknowledged that Mexicans are not the only ones who have received this xenophobic spotlight here; American xenophobia has been practiced throughout U.S. history against different migrant groups.

This sentiment began to grow in the second post-Bracero Program era, mid1960s and upward, and exploded after 1994 (hence the increase in Mexican migration since that year). The U.S. Customs and Border Protection, only document those who are detained from crossing the border in two sections: Mexican and OTM (Other Than Mexican).[10] Since crossing the border officially became criminalized after Prevention Through Deterrence in 1993[11], those who cross illegally are considered criminals by law and can even live in the shadows of fear of being criminalized

More often than not, crossing the US-Mexico border is not a choice but a need. To risk one's life by making the trek through a landscape that is used a weapon of deterrence because one usually *has* to.[12] Many who have tried crossing the weapon-like terrain that is the U.S. and Mexico border have died and suffered physical injuries, trauma, and other unnamable experiences. Archeologist Jason De Leon summarizes his experience of attempting to cross the

[10] De León, Jason, and Michael Wells. The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail. Edited by Robert Borofsky, 1st ed., vol. 36, University of California Press, 2015. JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctv1xxvch.
[11] "Background." Undocumented Migration Project, https://www.undocumentedmigrationproject.org/background.
[12] De León, Jason, and Michael Wells. The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail. Edited by Robert Borofsky, 1st ed., vol. 36, University of California Press, 2015. JSTOR,

border with the constant image that surrounded him: "All I remember are those goddamn flies".[13] So why do many do it?

More often than not, crossing the US-Mexico border is not a choice but a need. One does not risk their own life by making the trek through a landscape that is used a without it being a necessity.[14] Many who have tried crossing the weapon-like terrain that is the U.S. and Mexico border have died, and survivors suffer physical injuries, trauma, and other life-threatening experiences. Archeologist Jason De León summarizes his experience of attempting to cross the border with the constant image that surrounded him: "All I remember are those goddamn flies". So why do so many Mexicans keep attempting to cross? To find this answer, one must look back at the early history between these two countries, starting in the early 20th century.

[13] De León, Jason, and Michael Wells. The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail. Edited by Robert Borofsky, 1st ed., vol. 36, University of California Press, 2015. JSTOR,
[14] De León, Jason, and Michael Wells. The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail. Edited by Robert Borofsky, 1st ed., vol. 36, University of California Press, 2015. JSTOR,

Early Mexican Migration to the United States

Mexican migration to the United States surged during the early 20th century, driven by to the push factor of political instability, violence, and poverty in Mexico.[15] On the other side, the pull factor of economic opportunities within the U.S, which incentivized many to seek better prospects in the United State For these reasons, Mexican migration into the U.S. remained consistent in the beginning (with a few exceptions), and steadily increased throughout the 20th century.

A vital place to start would be the Mexican Revolution (Nov 20, 1910 – Feb 5, 1917). During this time, Mexico's most powerful man was its dictator, Porfirio Díaz; his dictatorship lasted from 1876-1910. This period brought relative stability known as the "Pax Pofiriana," but was also marked by underlying issues like poverty, marginalization, and political favoritism.[16] Díaz's rule also created a reliance on foreign capital, with U.S. corporations owning significant Mexican resources and industries.[17] With the tensions building up, Díaz's power was challenged in 1910 by Francisco I. Madero, creating the spark for the Mexican Revolution (spanning from November 1910 to May 1911, with Díaz's resignation). The revolution created conditions prompting substantial migration from Mexico to the United States due to violence, disease, starvation, and economic instability.[18] As the revolution came to a stop, the violence was able to come to a stopping point as well. But nevertheless, migration to the United States increased significantly due to the availability of relatively high-paying jobs during World War I. The Mexican government viewed emigration with ambivalence, seeing it as both a national disgrace

[15] Haber, Stephen H., et al., editors. Mexico since 1980. 1. publ, Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008.
[16] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 8-34
[17] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 8-34
[18] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 8-34

and a source of remittances.[19] Remittances from migrants became a key source of foreign exchange for Mexico, and emigration helped alleviate domestic unemployment pressures

Prior to 1917, Mexicans who wished to come to the U.S. faced less challenges. There was much less of a legal challenge, as there were no laws barring entry and only limited border patrol. In 1917, the U.S. enacted the Immigration Act of 1917 due to the rise of nationalism and xenophobia during WWI.[20] This act included a reading test, an $8 head tax ($210 in 2024 with adjusted inflation), and restrictions on immigration from southern and eastern Europe.[21] Interestingly, Mexicans benefited from this. Due to the agricultural expansion during WWI, there were concerns about labor shortages, leading Secretary of Labor William B. Wilson to exempt temporary Mexican workers, initiating the first "bracero program" in 1917, which ended in 1921.[22] Despite bureaucratic hurdles, under the waiver, about a quarter of a million Mexicans entered the U.S. between 1918 and 1920.[23] The first Bracero program ended with mixed results. The U.S. farmers still wanted Mexican workers, and the Mexican government wanted jobs for those who had been displaced during the Mexican Revolution.[24] Additionally, Braceros would often encounter different forms discrimination, like restaurants and store signs which would read “no dogs or Mexicans”.[25] After the program ended in 1921, Mexicans continued to enter the US illegally, and the establishment of the Border Patrol in 1924 did little to impede their movement[26].

[19] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 8-34
[20] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 8-34
[21] Digital History. https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=1141.
[22] Thurber, Dani. Research Guides: A Latinx Resource Guide: Civil Rights Cases and Events in the United States: 1942: Bracero Program. https://guides.loc.gov/latinx-civil-rights/bracero-program.
[23] Thurber, Dani. Research Guides: A Latinx Resource Guide: Civil Rights Cases and Events in the United States: 1942: Bracero Program. https://guides.loc.gov/latinx-civil-rights/bracero-program.
[24] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 58-90
[25] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 58-90
[26] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 58-90

The Second Bracero Program (1940s-1960s)

The 1940s witnessed a significant shift in Mexican immigration to the United States, driven by the labor shortage resulting from World War II. American agribusiness, facing seasonal labor demands, lobbied for a controlled migration system to recruit cheap Mexican labor quickly, establishing another Bracero Program in 1942.[27] This program brought 4.7 millions of Mexican workers legally into the U.S. while also increasing the flow of undocumented workers.[28] Many of these Mexican workers were very eager to participate in this program due to the poor conditions back home.

A return to the 1920s clarifies why many of these Mexican workers were so eager to participate, on must back to the 1920s. In this time, post-revolutionary Mexico began land reform efforts, with peasants demanding land and resorting to violence. President Lázaro Cárdenas initiated agrarian reforms in the late 1930s, expropriating large estates and distributing land among peasants.[29] These reforms led to the creation of large-scale land reform programs, redistributing large estates as communal farmlands(*ejidos*) supported by the government. Cárdenas also established the National Ejido Credit Bank to support ejido development, leading to ejidos contributing significantly to Mexico's agricultural output by 1940.[30] However, succeeding governments shifted priorities from agrarian reforms towards urban and industrial

[27] Thurber, Dani. Research Guides: A Latinx Resource Guide: Civil Rights Cases and Events in the United States: 1942: Bracero Program. https://guides.loc.gov/latinx-civil-rights/bracero-program.
[28] Thurber, Dani. Research Guides: A Latinx Resource Guide: Civil Rights Cases and Events in the United States: 1942: Bracero Program. https://guides.loc.gov/latinx-civil-rights/bracero-program.
[29] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 34-58
[30] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 34-58

development. Post-1940s leaders favored large farms over ejidos, directing public financing toward them and exacerbating land ownership and agricultural income inequality.[31]

The Green Revolution, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, increased farm output dramatically but widened the gap between large and small farmers. The technologies that emerged from this revolution benefited only those with access to capital, land, and water, deepening the regional class division in Mexico.[32]

Furthermore, during this time Mexico's focus on industrial growth and population policies contributed to rural poverty and migration. Despite the growth of agricultural productivity, hunger and malnutrition persisted due to population outstripping food production.[33] Mexico's economic development model prioritized production volume over job creation, leading to labor-saving technologies and a surplus labor force. The focus on capital-intensive growth (process in which requires high percentage of investment in “fixed assets”, like machines for example) meant that industry could not absorb the growing population, thus leading to increased emigration from Mexico.[34]

American agribusiness benefited from an ample supply of poor, unskilled, and eager Mexican labor. Due to the realities these workers faced at home, many of them were desperate to find employment, and so employers would get away with hiring Mexican workers for very little pay.[35] Growers would weaponize exaggerations of the consequences of labor shortages during World War II to justify their desire for cheap Mexican labor.[36]

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[31] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 34-58
[32] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 34-58
[33] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 34-58
[34] “Capital Intensive.” Economics Help, https://www.economicshelp.org/blog/glossary/capital-intensive/.
[35] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 58-90
[36] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 58-90

Agriculture's seasonal demands created a perpetual crisis mentality among growers, who feared labor shortages would lead to crop losses and bankruptcy.[37] The second Bracero program emerged as a solution to the labor shortage, with initial discussions beginning in 1941. But while this program was being discussed in the United States, Mexico reservations. This was due in part to past mistreatment of Mexican workers in the U.S., and thus concerns about being their citizens being exploited.[38] The following year, a formal agreement was reached between the two countries, under which the program aimed to provide a reliable labor source for American agriculture during the war, and also protect the rights of Mexican workers.[39]

Unfortunately, it was proved that Mexico's reservation towards the second program were not unwarranted. As the program progressed, problems began to. Workers claimed to be experiencing abuses, exploitation, and disputes over wages and working conditions.[40] Nonetheless, many Mexican workers continued to work due their need to earn some sort of wages. Although the labor shortage was exaggerated for the financial benefit of the employers (as mentioned earlier), it was not entirely untrue, as there was still a demand for labor (particularly cheap labor). Since World War II was the cause for the labor shortage, once the war ended it was assumed that the labor shortage would decrease, and so would the demand for the Bracero program. However, the reality became that the end of World War II did not end labor shortages, ultimately leading to the continuation of the Bracero Program beyond its initial expiration in 1964.[41]

The program contributed to an increase in illegal immigration due to its shortcomings and exploitation of workers. Deliberate U.S. policies, such as the "drying out the wetbacks" initiative,

[37] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 58-90
[38] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 58-90
[39] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 58-90
[40] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 58-90
[41] Mexican Braceros and US Farm Workers | Wilson Center. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/mexican-braceros-and-us-farm-workers.

further fueled illegal immigration. Mexico used its leverage to negotiate better terms for the program, resulting in Public Law 78 in 1951, which governed the Bracero Program until its end in 1964.

Post-Bracero Program

In the 1970s, Mexico continued to experience different kinds of hardships. Asprigint towards development and self-sufficiency, Mexico based its strategy on Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI).[42] ISI is an economic policy aimed to promote domestic industries to produce goods previously imported, with the state playing a dominant role. In other words, ISI favors the development of domestic industries and the reduction of reliance on manufactured foreign imports.[43]

With this ISI in place, Mexico experienced high GDP growth rates in the 1960s.[44] The industrial sector's share of GDP increased, but employment opportunities still needed to be improved. This was seen as the agriculture sector suffered, leading to rural impoverishment.[45]

While rural impoverishment was happening, social expenditures were also low, which would end up contributing further to inequality and limited social development.[46] Additionally, high population growth led to added pressure on the economy. Structural issues like unequal wealth distribution and limited domestic markets hindered sustainable growth. This would make

[42] "Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI)." Corporate Finance Institute, https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/economics/import-substitution-industrialization-isi/.
[43] "Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI)." Corporate Finance Institute, https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/economics/import-substitution-industrialization-isi/.
[44] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 90-118
[45] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 90-118
[46] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 90-118

Mexico more vulnerable to challenges as the termination of the Bracero Program began to happen.

In the following years, Mexico's new president, Luis Echeverría, was elected and held office from 1970-1976.[47] A member of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (or Partido Nacional Revolucionario/PRI), Echeverría's presidency saw attempts to appease dissent through populist measures, but faced continued repression and unrest.[48] Economic instability grew in the 1970s, marked by inflation, corruption, and political instability.[49] The oil boom in the 1970s did lead to increased spending and borrowing. However, this would not last too long, as eventually the oil price would crash, worsening economic conditions.[50]

The 1980s saw severe economic hardship, with debt servicing consuming government revenues and social spending decreasing significantly.[51] These hardships in Mexico would end up leading to increased illegal immigration to the United States.[52]

The abrupt end of the Bracero Program and the restrictive immigration policies implemented by the United States government led to a surge in undocumented immigration from Mexico.[53] With legal avenues for migration severely constrained, many Mexicans turned to unauthorized means to access the U.S. and its labor market. These would end up risking perilous journeys and exploitation in pursuit of better livelihoods for themselves and their families.[54] This influx of undocumented migrants sparked heightened alarm among the American public, fueling

[47] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 90-118
[48] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 90-118
[49] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 90-118
[50] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 90-118
[51] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 90-118
[52] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 90-118
[53] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 90-118
[54] De León, Jason, and Michael Wells. The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail. Edited by Robert Borofsky, 1st ed., vol. 36, University of California Press, 2015. JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctv1xxvch.

the perceptions of immigration as a pressing issue and contributing to political exploitation of the immigration debate.[55]

In response to the escalating immigration challenge, the U.S. Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA).[56] Intended to address illegal immigration and provide a pathway to legal status for undocumented immigrants already residing in the country. However, the IRCA had ironic and unintended consequences. While it granted amnesty to roughly three million undocumented immigrants, it also inadvertently incentivized further illegal immigration from Mexico, as relaxed residency standards and enforcement loopholes facilitated widespread fraud and abuse of the system.[57] Furthermore, the IRCA's impact was largely symbolic, failing to control illegal immigration effectively as intended and highlighting the complexities and limitations of legislative measures in addressing migration dynamics.

[55] Light, Michael T., and Dimeji Togunde. "The Mexican Immigration Debate: Assimilation and Public Policy." International Review of Modern Sociology, vol. 44, no. 1/2, 2018, pp. 127–41.
[56] Sen. Simpson, Alan K. [R-WY. S.1200 - 99th Congress (1985-1986): Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. 6 Nov. 1986, https://www.congress.gov/bill/99th-congress/senate-bill/1200. 1985-05-23.
[57] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 90-118

NAFTA

Turmoil in Mexico's economy began to subside by the late 1980s, following a period of instability marked by debt and inflation.[58] In 1989, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, representing the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), faced Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, son of former president Lázaro Cárdenas, in a controversial election marred by allegations of fraud and irregularities.[59] Salinas ended up becoming Mexico's president and certainly one of its most controversial ones. His presidency was marked by ambitious economic reforms, including privatization, deregulation, and liberalization of the Mexican economy.[60] Despite economic liberalization, Salinas maintained an authoritarian governance style, with political operations often overseen by figures with a history of repressive tactics.[61]

Salinas began negotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1990, aiming to open Mexico's economy further to international trade and investment.[62] The NAFTA negotiations coincided with solid and sustained economic growth in Mexico in the early 1990s, leading to a sense of optimism among Mexicans about the potential benefits of increased trade and investment.[63] Despite the economic growth experienced in the early 1990s, significant disparities in wealth distribution persisted in Mexico, with the benefits of economic growth disproportionately favoring the wealthy.[64] Salinas's government implemented National Solidarity Program (Pronasol), aimed at poverty reduction through infrastructure projects and social programs.[65] However, critics argued that the program was primarily a political tool to garner

[58] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[59] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[60] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[61] Morris, Stephen D. "Carlos Salinas de Gortari and His Legacy." Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History, 2018. oxfordre.com, https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.013.491.
[62] North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Federal Register, https://www.federalregister.gov/north-american-free-trade-agreement-nafta-.
[63] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[64] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[65] "Salinas; Failed War on Poverty." NACLA, https://nacla.org/article/salinas%27-failed-war-poverty.

support for the PRI.[66] Mexico's economy became increasingly reliant on foreign investment, resulting in a large current account deficit, meaning that the country is importing more goods and services than it is exporting.[67] The overvalued peso at the time, and the structural economic issues threatened the country's long-term economic stability.[68]

Mexico's economic disparities were evident in wealth distribution and regional development, with certain regions benefiting more from economic growth than others. Disparities extended to social services such as education and healthcare, with limited government resources allocated to address these inequalities.[69] Provisions of NAFTA, such as eliminating tariffs on agricultural imports, mainly corn, threatened the livelihoods of small-scale farmers and exacerbated rural poverty.[70]

Signed in 1992, NAFTA took effect on January 1st, 1994. The year 1994 was marked by significant political and economic turmoil in Mexico. The assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio, Salinas's handpicked successor, and José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, a high-ranking official in the PRI, further destabilized Mexico's political landscape.[71] Foreign investors began withdrawing capital from Mexico amid growing political uncertainty, contributing to economic instability and a decline in the peso's value.[72] Additionally, the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas led by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation challenged the government's economic policies and highlighted indigenous grievances.[73] The economic crisis of the mid-1990s led to a significant increase in crime rates and public insecurity, further exacerbating social tensions.

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[66] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[67] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[68] Kóczán, Zsóka, and Franz Loyola. "How Do Migration and Remittances Affect Inequality? A Case Study of Mexico." Journal of International Development, vol. 33, no. 2, Mar. 2021, pp. 360–81. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3526.
[69] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[70] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[71] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[72] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[73] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150

Middle-class disillusionment grew as the promised benefits of economic reforms, and NAFTA failed to materialize, leading to widespread protests and social unrest across Mexico.

Post-NAFTA

Despite NAFTA's focus on promoting trade and economic integration between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada, US policymakers seemed to need to pay more attention to the potential implications for labor migration. There was a paradoxical expectation that while NAFTA would facilitate increased movement of goods and capital across borders, it would not lead to a corresponding rise in labor migration, a fundamental aspect of any integrated economy.[74] Mexico's push for NAFTA was partly driven by the expectation that economic prosperity would reduce the need for Mexicans to migrate to the U.S. in search of better opportunities.[75] However, the promised economic growth did not materialize as expected. Job creation remained sluggish, poverty rates persisted, and migration to the U.S. increased.[76] This suggests that the economic benefits promised by NAFTA only reached some segments of Mexican society, while making those in impoverished regions with limited access to job opportunities more vulnerable.

While NAFTA led to a surge in trade and foreign investment, its impact on job creation in Mexico was limited.[77] The expansion of the maquiladora sector, while contributing to Mexico's export growth, was characterized by low wages, poor working conditions, and minimal job security.[78] Additionally, the concentration of economic development in northern border

[74] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[75] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[76] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[77] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150
[78] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150

regions exacerbated regional inequalities within Mexico, leading to disparities in wealth and opportunities between northern and southern states.[79]

Contemporary Mexican migration to the United States (1850-2021)

Due to many push factors within Mexico, many mentioned above, international migration to the United States has been on the rise since the year earliest decade of available/accessible data, that year being 1850. According to Figure 1, during 1850 the population of Mexican-born individuals in the U.S. was only 13,300 (roughly 0.6% of the total immigrant population at the time). Within the next century, the Mexican-born population in the U.S. would jump to 451,400 (roughly 3.9% of the total immigrant population at the time). The latest survey was conducted in 2021, which

Figure 1

Year	Mexican-born population	Mexican born as share of all immigrants
1850	13,300	0.6%
1860	27,500	0.7%
1870	42,400	0.8%
1880	68,400	1.0%
1890	77,900	0.8%
1900	103,400	1.0%
1910	221,900	1.6%
1920	486,400	3.5%
1930	641,500	4.5%
1940	357,800	3.1%
1950	451,400	3.9%
1960	575,900	5.9%
1970	759,700	7.9%
1980	2,199,200	15.6%
1990	4,298,000	21.7%
2000	9,177,500	29.5%
2010	11,711,100	29.3%
2015	11,643,300	26.9%
2019	10,931,900	24.3%
2020	10,697,400	23.6%
2021	10,678,500	23.1%

Number of Mexican Immigrants and Their Share of Total U.S Immigrant Population, 1850-2021

Source:
Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010, 2015, 2019, 2021, and 2022 American Community Surveys (ACS); 1970, 1990, and 2000 Decennial Census data
https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/mexican-born-population-over-time

Notes from source:

1. "The term "immigrants" (also known as the foreign born) refers to people residing in the United States who were not U.S. citizens at birth. This population includes naturalized citizens, legal permanent residents, certain legal nonimmigrants (e.g., refugees and persons on student or work visas), and persons illegally residing in the United States."

2. "The U.S. Census Bureau experienced significant challenges collecting data in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and released only a small number of data points from its 2020 American Community Survey (ACS), which it called "experimental." This data tool does not include estimates from the 2020 ACS."

[79] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 118-150

revealed that the Mexican-born population increased to ~10.7 million (around 23.1% of the total immigrant population at the time).

The data laid here goes to show how truly prominent the migration of people from Mexico to the United States has become. From being 0.6% of the total immigrant population to a staggering 23.1%. It also points at the reality still being faced many Mexicans in Mexico, how the push factors that drive people out of their country still exist in recent years.

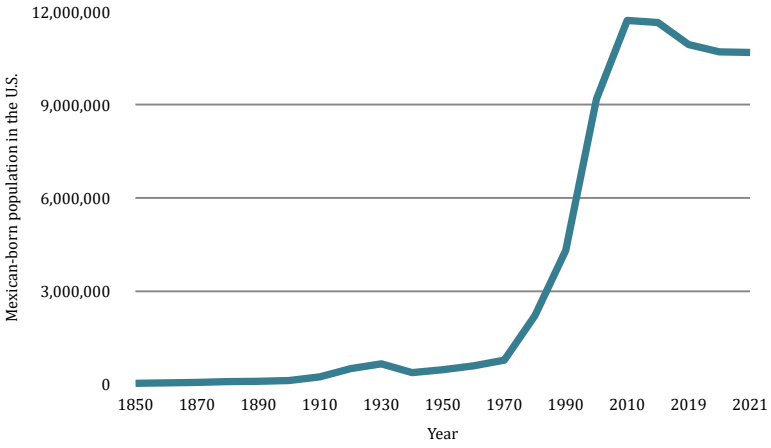
Referring back to the previous section, the eras in Mexican history mentioned above, Post-Mexican-Revolution, The Bracero Programs, and NAFTA, correlate directly with the numbers demonstrated in Figure 1 and Figure 1.1. For example, during the years of and around the Mexican revolution (1910-1917), we see a 119.1% increase in migration from 1910 (221,900 individuals) to 1920 (486,400 individuals). This was due to the increased amounts of violence, and political and economic instability caused by the revolution.[80] Before 1910 there was a only 32.7% increase, from 1890 (77,900 individuals) to 1900 (103,400 individuals). After 1920 there was a 44.2% decrease from 1930 (641,500 individuals) to 1940 (357,800 individuals) in Mexican migration to the United States. In other words, Mexican migration to the United States only increased significantly during the Mexican-Revolution (1910-1917), since the decades before (1890-1900) and after (1930-1940) did not see the same increase rate (or any sort of increase).

When the first Bracero program ended many Mexican workers were sent back, since the demand for them decreased. A big contributing factor to this was the Great Depression, which led to a lot of unemployment in the United States.[81] This dip can be seen in Figure 1 in years 1930-1940. However, Figure 1 also shows the Mexican migration increase when the second

[80] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg 8-34
[81] Great Depression Facts - FDR Presidential Library & Museum. https://www.fdrlibrary.org/great-depression-facts.

Bracero Program was in effect (1942-1964) when looking at the increase in migrants from years 1940-1970.

Figure 1.1



Mexican-born population in the U.S. 1850-2021

Source:
Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010, 2015, 2019, 2021, and 2022 American Community Surveys (ACS); 1970, 1990, and 2000 Decennial Census data

https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/mexican-born-population-over-time

Furthermore, after the end of the second Bracero Program, Mexicans were still experiencing similar push factors while also being drawn to migration to the U.S. due to its pull factors (like jobs). This is evident as one can see in Figure 1.1 the upward trend of Mexican migration further increasing after 1970.

Looking at the impacts of NAFTA (signed in 1992, and enacted in 1994), had on the Mexican economy, and thus the Mexican people (particularly those employed in the agricultural sector), can be seen extremely well in the graph as well. NAFTA being a push factor for many middle and lower-class Mexicans, out-migration to the United States would have a higher intensity for the years to come. The years in which NAFTA was taking effect (1990-2000) and its consequences began to spread, there was a 113.5% increase of Mexican-born people now residing in the United States (rising from 4,298,000 to 9,177,500). According to Figure 1, this 113.5% increase has been the most significant increase of Mexican migration to the U.S. in history so far.

Since the historic increase of migration caused the NAFTA, there has not been another increase of its kind. Nonetheless, migration from Mexico to the United States continues growing at a usually positive rate (according to Figure 1.1).

Where are Mexican Workers migrating from?

Figure 2

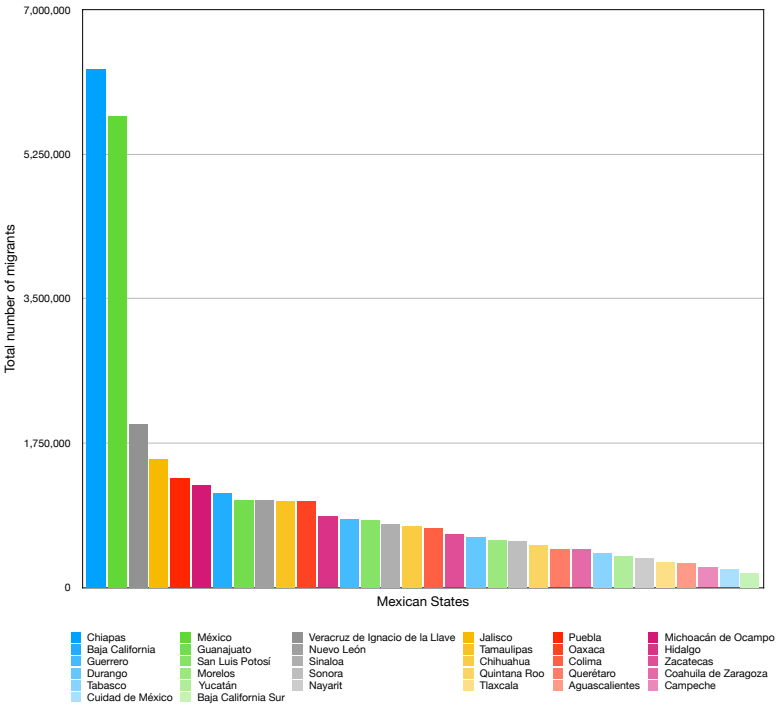
	2000		
Mexican State	**Immigrant**	**Emigrant**	**Total**
Chiapas	1,827,644	4,457,713	6,285,357
México	5,059,089	654,711	5,713,800
Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave	629,180	1,350,282	1,979,462
Jalisco	835,121	726,021	1,561,142
Puebla	436,024	884,670	1,320,694
Michoacán de Ocampo	332,805	909,120	1,241,925
Baja California	1,025,754	127,074	1,152,828
Guanajuato	389,975	669,729	1,059,704
Nuevo León	827,453	228,453	1,055,906
Tamaulipas	678,752	370,722	1,049,474
Oaxaca	201,099	843,317	1,044,416
Hidalgo	276,143	579,937	856,080
Guerrero	167,115	655,538	822,653
San Luis Potosí	217,042	594,267	811,309
Sinaloa	303,514	468,353	771,867
Chihuahua	317,792	425,338	743,130
Colima	524,897	202,864	727,761
Zacatecas	125,319	522,885	648,204
Durango	163,607	447,731	611,338
Morelos	431,003	143,964	574,967
Sonora	356,489	208,016	564,505
Quintana Roo	485,255	34,139	519,394
Querétaro	284,890	174,955	459,845
Coahuila de Zaragoza	122,451	336,140	458,591
Tabasco	178,683	235,392	414,075
Yucatán	113,140	271,734	384,874
Nayarit	152,540	204,431	356,971
Tlaxcala	136,504	179,408	315,912
Aguascalientes	187,768	116,039	303,807
Campeche	156,158	89,223	245,381
Mexico City	139,290	78,375	217,665
Baja California Sur	137,928	29,883	167,811

Data of Mexican emigrants, immigrants, and its sum, for each Mexican state in the year 2000

Source: National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI)

INEGI. XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda 2000

Figure 2.1



Total number of migrants leaving to the United States from each Mexican state during the year 2000

Source: National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI)

INEGI. XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda 2000

Although Mexico has certainly become one the most significant countries of when it comes to discourse of migration to the United States. In the past years, certain states in the Mexican republic have higher rates of migration compared to other states. For example, the state of Mexico has been historically (since 2000) a state with higher out-migration to the United States, than compared to Baja California Sur, according to Figures 2, 3, and 4 (below)

The following data is the earliest available and most accessible data, on how many undocumented migrants are leaving for the United States (and from where) starts in the year 2000. This data is provided by the Mexican government, but it is important to note that a major reason why there is data on undocumented migrants is because of Mexico's Matrícula Consular.[82] Issued in 1871, the Matrícula Consular acts as a "registration document provided by Mexican consulates to nationals who reside abroad.[83]

Observing the data of the year 2000, Figure 2 & 2.1(above) shows how the states with the highest levels of migration to the United States were (in order of highest to lowest level of migratory population); *Chiapas* (6,285,357 migrants), *Mexico* (5,713,800 migrants), *Veracruz* (1,979,462 migrants), *Jalisco* (1,561,142 migrants), *Puebla* (1,320,694 migrants), and *Michoacán* (1,241,925 migrants).

Figure 3 & 3.1 (below) provides an updated set of numbers for the year 2010, but only minor changes (in terms of which states were now higher in migration rates) have occurred. The Mexican states in 2010 with the highest migratory populations were; *Chiapas* (6,886,952 migrants), *Mexico* (6,505,726 migrants), *Veracruz* (2,342,990 migrants), *Jalisco* (1,766,177 migrants), *Puebla* (1,530,972 migrants), *Baja California* (1,530,972 migrants). The only change here would be that now, Baja California would be the sixth-highest state with the highest population leaving for the United States, replacing Michoacán (although Michoacán would place only place below Baja California).

[82] O'Neil, Kevin O'Neil Kevin. "Consular ID Cards: Mexico and Beyond." Migrationpolicy.Org, 1 Apr. 2003, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/consular-id-cards-mexico-and-beyond.
[83] O'Neil, Kevin O'Neil Kevin. "Consular ID Cards: Mexico and Beyond." Migrationpolicy.Org, 1 Apr. 2003, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/consular-id-cards-mexico-and-beyond.

Figure 3

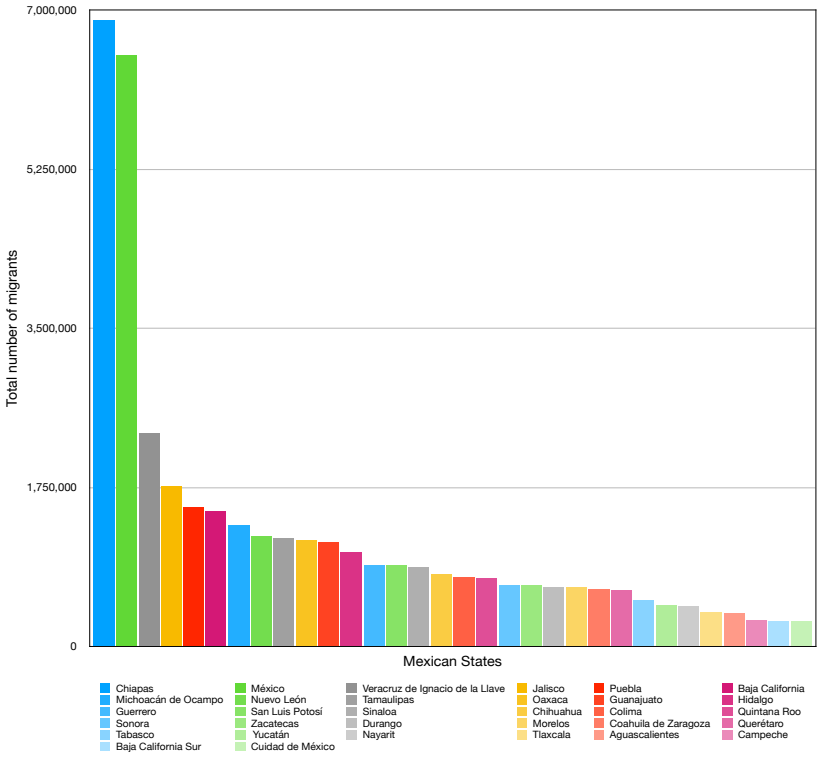
			2010
Mexican State	**Immigrant**	**Emigrant**	**Total**
Chiapas	1,679,045	5,207,907	6,886,952
México	5,566,585	939,141	6,505,726
Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave	731,901	1,611,089	2,342,990
Jalisco	961,503	804,674	1,766,177
Puebla	531,496	999,476	1,530,972
Baja California	1,299,773	185,457	1,485,230
Michoacán de Ocampo	390,086	939,387	1,329,473
Nuevo León	961,505	250,421	1,211,926
Tamaulipas	764,399	427,909	1,192,308
Oaxaca	249,076	919,145	1,168,221
Guanajuato	494,894	657,513	1,152,407
Hidalgo	418,529	618,008	1,036,537
Guerrero	185,024	713,735	898,759
San Luis Potosí	260,447	635,236	895,683
Sinaloa	267,059	603,265	870,324
Chihuahua	362,707	434,617	797,324
Colima	521,469	243,052	764,521
Quintana Roo	696,831	55,003	751,834
Sonora	417,237	256,904	674,141
Zacatecas	160,039	512,654	672,693
Durango	189,923	461,229	651,152
Morelos	479,892	171,085	650,977
Coahuila de Zaragoza	140,135	491,919	632,054
Querétaro	422,346	201,307	623,653
Tabasco	197,670	311,328	508,998
Yucatán	156,210	300,624	456,834
Nayarit	209,581	231,081	440,662
Tlaxcala	189,196	192,026	381,222
Aguascalientes	233,073	136,354	369,427
Campeche	180,252	109,734	289,986
Baja California Sur	246,685	33,074	279,759
Mexico City	182,943	93,157	276,100

Data of Mexican emigrants, immigrants, and its sum, for each Mexican state in the year 2010

Source: National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI)

INEGI. XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda 2010

Figure 3.1



Total number of migrants leaving to the United States from each Mexican state during the year 2010

Source: National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI)

INEGI. XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda 2010

Within the following decade, 2020 would provide very different results in comparison to these past years. Looking at Figure 4 & 4.1 (below), in 2020 the Mexican states with the highest number of U.S. migration were; *Mexico City* (6,634,495 migrants), *Mexico* (6,534,853 migrants), *Veracruz* (2,753,769 migrants), *Jalisco* (1,909,255 migrants), *Puebla* (1,741,123 migrants), and *Baja California* (1,675,489 migrants). In this new list of the top-six states with the highest numbers of migrant populations (to the US), Mexico City goes from one of the states with the lowest migration rate in both 2000 and 2010, to the state with now the highest rate. Just as intriguing is that there is no longer an appearance of Chiapas. In fact, Chiapas' migration rate

would decrease so much that it would send it to be in the eighteenth position with a total of 853,323 migrants.

Figure 4

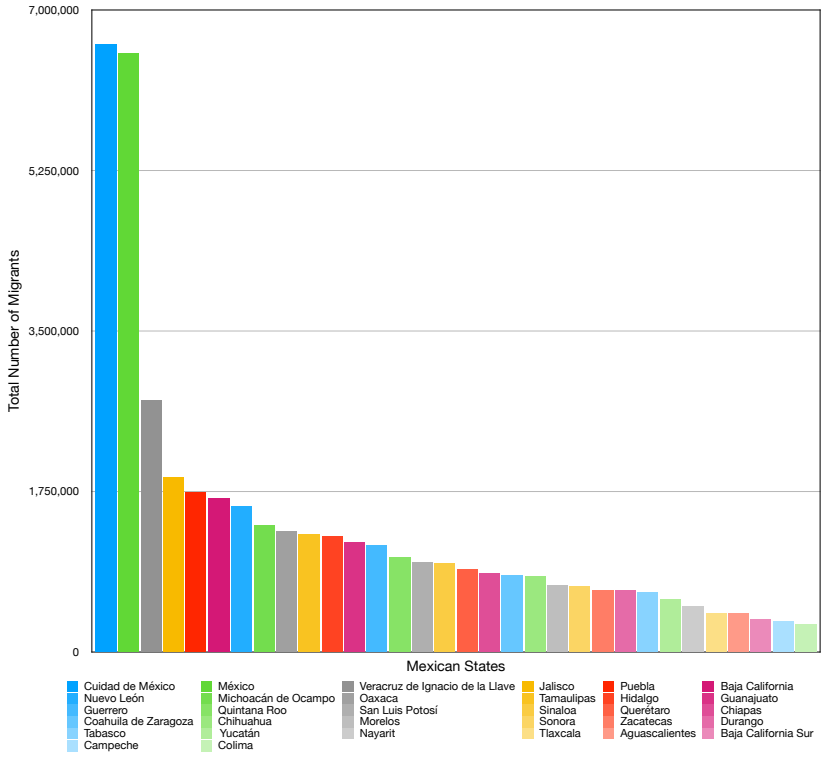
			2020
Mexican State	**Immigrant**	**Emigrant**	**Total**
Mexico City	1,679,063	4,955,432	6,634,495
México	5,190,562	1,344,291	6,534,853
Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave	762,798	1,990,971	2,753,769
Jalisco	1,067,778	841,477	1,909,255
Puebla	660,918	1,080,205	1,741,123
Baja California	1,463,949	211,540	1,675,489
Nuevo León	1,319,964	268,647	1,588,611
Michoacán de Ocampo	433,109	953,793	1,386,902
Oaxaca	293,054	1,030,645	1,323,699
Tamaulipas	764,320	526,943	1,291,263
Hidalgo	609,940	654,244	1,264,184
Guanajuato	557,773	646,602	1,204,375
Guerrero	195,093	966,482	1,161,575
Quintana Roo	945,101	88,963	1,034,064
San Luis Potosí	294,725	684,423	979,148
Sinaloa	312,601	656,351	968,952
Querétaro	686,545	211,297	897,842
Chiapas	174,961	678,362	853,323
Coahuila de Zaragoza	398,612	438,541	837,153
Chihuahua	561,040	259,407	820,447
Morelos	500,693	220,687	721,380
Sonora	425,906	284,860	710,766
Zacatecas	177,107	503,806	680,913
Durango	210,697	464,734	675,431
Tabasco	210,156	446,038	656,194
Yucatán	269,765	305,166	574,931
Nayarit	252,605	244,381	496,986
Tlaxcala	210,269	211,661	421,930
Aguascalientes	276,430	144,612	421,042
Baja California Sur	313,283	42,130	355,413
Campeche	199,443	141,018	340,461
Colima	193,703	114,254	307,957

Data of Mexican emigrants, immigrants, and its sum, for each Mexican state in the year 2020

Source: National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI)

INEGI. XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda 2020

Figure 4.1



Total number of migrants leaving to the United States from each Mexican state during the year 2020

Source: National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI)

INEGI. XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda 2020

As put by Riosmena & Massey, "The heartland for emigration to the U.S. has historically been Mexico's West-Central Region, principally localities in the states of Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, San Luis Potosí, and Zacatecas", which can be seen in the figures provided above.[84] However, the changes seen from Figure 2 (2000) into Figure 4 (2020) suggest that although certain states might have high migratory populations, there always remains

[84] Riosmena, Fernando, and Douglas S. Massey. "Pathways to El Norte: Origins, Destinations, and Characteristics of Mexican Migrants to the United States." International Migration Review, vol. 46, no. 1, Mar. 2012, pp. 3–36. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2012.00879.x.

a possibility for disruption of that given pattern. In this case, Mexico City would now be the state with the highest rates of migration to the United States. With a completely different experience Chiapas would go from being the state with the highest levels of migration, partially due to the effects caused by NAFTA on many people from Chiapas, to being one of the Mexican states with the lowest rate of migration.[85]

When it comes to Mexican migrants arriving in the United States, Mexican migration seems to favor certain U.S. states over others. Before the 1990s the majority of all migrants from Mexico settled in only three states; Texas, Illinois, and California (being the most dominant).[86] Within a couple of years however, spatial distribution began to increase, as more and more Mexican migrants began to settle in other states beside the dominant three mentioned above. In the 1990s, Mexican migrants who were looking for a place to settle were no longer thinking about California as one of their first options, not even the third option. The majority of Mexican migrants have historically chosen California, but the two-thirds majority would end up turning into a one-third minority.[87] The new regions that would up becoming more popular for Mexican migrants in the United States would be located in the; Southeast (North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida), West (Arizona, Colorado, and Nevada), and the Northeast (New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) areas.[88]

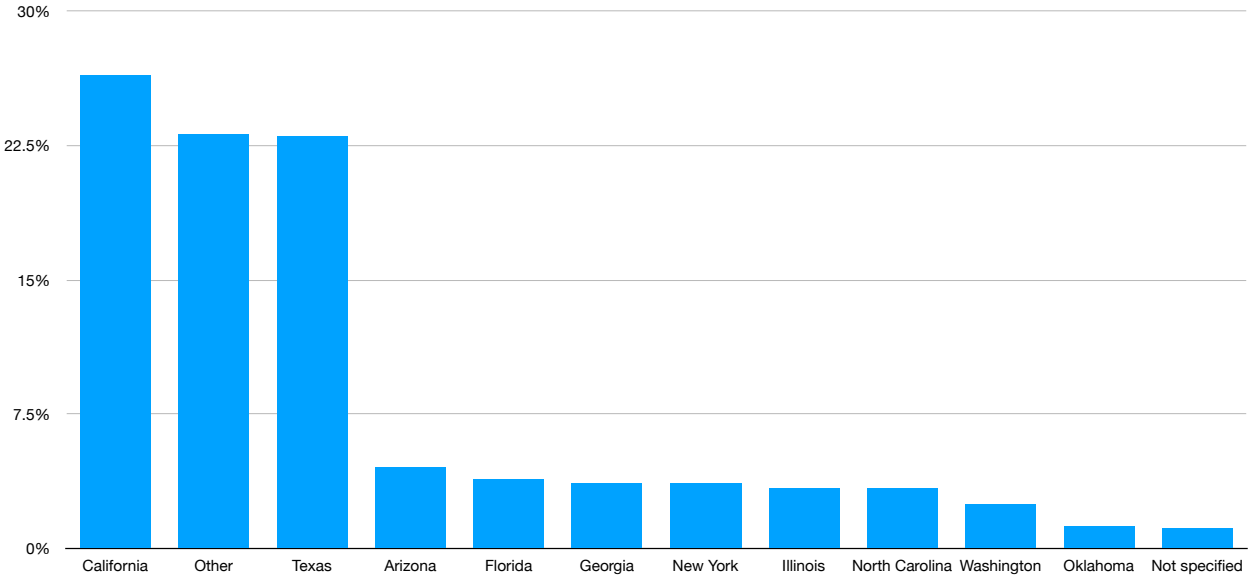
To look at these patterns more closely, Figure 5 (below) provides information on which states were the most popular destinations for many Mexican migrants in the U.S. from 2008-

[85] Henderson, Timothy J. Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pg
[86] Massey, Douglas S., et al. "The Geography of Undocumented Mexican Migration." Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos, vol. 26, no. 1, Feb. 2010, pp. 129–52. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1525/msem.2010.26.1.129.
[87] Riosmena, Fernando, and Douglas S. Massey. "Pathways to El Norte: Origins, Destinations, and Characteristics of Mexican Migrants to the United States." International Migration Review, vol. 46, no. 1, Mar. 2012, pp. 3–36. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2012.00879.x.
[88] Riosmena, Fernando, and Douglas S. Massey. "Pathways to El Norte: Origins, Destinations, and Characteristics of Mexican Migrants to the United States." International Migration Review, vol. 46, no. 1, Mar. 2012, pp. 3–36. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2012.00879.x.

2013. Additionally, it is also able to provide visual context of this shift in preferred locations to settle in U.S for many Mexican migrants post 1990s, as mentioned above.

It is visible that California has still not lost its dominance, as it is the state with the highest percentile of 26.4%. But, as mentioned previously, there is more spatial distribution in U.S. states than before (pre-1990s). This distribution is shown by the second-highest percentile (of 23.1%) where the location is "Other" (one, or multiple states). This unknown location (or locations) is not any of the historically popular states to settle for Mexican migrants (Texas, California, Illinois) since they have already been labeled. Thus, suggesting the reality that after the 1990s, Mexican migration began to spread into other states besides Texas, California, and Illinois. Some of the other states in Figure 5 which were not mentioned, are actually some of the same states pointed out by Riosmena & Massey. Such as; Arizona, Florida, Georgia, New York, Illinois, and North Carolina.

Figure 5



Percentage distribution of international emigrants to the United States of America, according to destination state (English translation) from August 2013 - October 2018

Source: National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI)

https://www.inegi.org.mx/programas/enadid/2018/#tabulados

In 2022, the United States' largest diaspora group of people born in their origin country but residing in the U.S. was from Mexico.[89] With such a large diaspora, especially close to their home country, communication (verbal and non-verbal) between migrants and their families back home is certainly not uncommon. One of the most prominent forms of non-verbal communication for Mexicans in the U.S. are remittances.

[89] "Top Diaspora Groups in the United States, 2022." Migrationpolicy.Org, 15 Feb. 2023, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/top-diaspora-groups-united-states-2022.

1.2 Mexico's Rise in Global Remittances/Increasing Significance

Remittances are commonly defined as a transfer of money, often by a migrant worker to support their family and friends back in their home country. This form of monetary communication with family/loved ones back home has been rapidly increasing in the past couple of years. Remittances have become so significant that they can now be the "largest source of forgiven income for some developing economies".[90] Some can even represent almost 4% of their GDP.[91] To get the money to one's destination country, three steps would usually have to be taken;

i. "The migrant sender pays the remittances to the sending agent using cash, check, money order, credit card, debit card, or a debit instruction sent by e-mail, phone, or through the Internet"
ii. "The sending agency instructs its agent in the recipient's country to deliver the remittance"
iii. "The paying agent makes the payment to the beneficiary"

To make this transaction possible, it is common that the sender would have to pay a fee charged by the sending agent, and, a currency-conversion fee for delivering the foreign currency to the beneficiary.[92] The kind of fees will vary from country to country. Ultimately, the total amount of money the migrant is bringing to the agent will decrease by the time it gets to the beneficiary, due to all the different kinds of fees one has to go through. It is important to mention

[90] Dilip, Ratha. What Are Remittances? - Back to Basics: Economics Concepts Explained - FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT. https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/Series/Back-to-Basics/Remittances.
[91] Dilip, Ratha. What Are Remittances? - Back to Basics: Economics Concepts Explained - FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT. https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/Series/Back-to-Basics/Remittances.
[92] Dilip, Ratha. What Are Remittances? - Back to Basics: Economics Concepts Explained - FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT. https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/Series/Back-to-Basics/Remittances.

that the tools and technology of remittances are also evolving. In some countries new tools have emerged, a majority of them have been made to fit in one's pocket (in a cellphone) in hopes that they can also be more accessible to others.[93]

Possibilities of Remittances

Since remittances are typically sent between loved ones, they tend to be quite specific. Having the beneficiary has some sort of communication with the sender, the beneficiary can ask for the money due to a certain need/reason. With money being sent, more often in developing economies, since it is targeting specific needs there is a common claim in which remittances tend to reduce poverty.[94] There have been various cross-country analyses that generally find that remittances have been responsible for reducing the amount of poverty.[95] In poorer households, this additional income might be able to help the household buy "basic consumption goods, housing, and children's education and health care".[96]

It seems as though the reliance senders and receivers have on t remittances is not for nothing. Remittance flows are quite stable, in comparison to others kinds. For example, remittance flows tend to be more stable than capital flows since remittances tend to be countercyclical.[97] This means that during natural disasters, or economic dips, remittances tend to increase (migrants sending more money to their family back home where something unfortunate

[93] Eswaramurthi, Abinaya, et al. Remittance - History and Present State of the Industry. https://www.latentview.com/whitepaper/remittance-history-and-present-state-of-the-industry/.
[94] Dilip, Ratha. What Are Remittances? - Back to Basics: Economics Concepts Explained - FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT. https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/Series/Back-to-Basics/Remittances.
[95] Page, John, and Jr Adams. International Migration, Remittances, and Poverty in Developing Countries. 636598, 1 Dec. 2003. Social Science Research Network, https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=636598.
[96] Dilip, Ratha. What Are Remittances? - Back to Basics: Economics Concepts Explained - FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT. https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/Series/Back-to-Basics/Remittances.
[97] Dilip, Ratha. What Are Remittances? - Back to Basics: Economics Concepts Explained - FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT. https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/Series/Back-to-Basics/Remittances.

has occurred) while private capital flows are likely to decrease.[98] Furthermore, remittances have proved to be strong/resilient against financial crises in the countries where migrant workers (senders) might be, like the United States and other Western European countries. During these crises, it would eventually reduce return migration, since migrants were now more afraid of not being able to reenter their home country and/or make the same income they were making previously.[99] But in this same conversation of the positives of remittances, there is usually also an acknowledgment that remittances do have possible drawbacks. For example, there is a possibility that countries that receive high levels of remittances can "undercut recipients ' incentives to work and thus slow economic growth".[100]

In 2023, remittances reached a total of USD 860 billion.[101] This is quite a great increase when comparing it to the year 2000 when the total amount of remittances only reached 7.5 billion.[102] In 2023, the top five remittances receiving countries were; India (125 billion), Mexico (67 billion), China (50 billion), the Philippines (40 billion), and Egypt (24 billion).[103]

[98] Eswaramurthi, Abinaya, et al. Remittance - History and Present State of the Industry. https://www.latentview.com/whitepaper/remittance-history-and-present-state-of-the-industry/.
[99] Dilip, Ratha. What Are Remittances? - Back to Basics: Economics Concepts Explained - FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT. https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/Series/Back-to-Basics/Remittances.
[100] Eswaramurthi, Abinaya, et al. Remittance - History and Present State of the Industry. https://www.latentview.com/whitepaper/remittance-history-and-present-state-of-the-industry/.
[101] Ng, Juan. Mexico | Remittances Accumulate 10 Years of Increase and Break Record: 63.3bn in 2023. https://www.bbvaresearch.com/en/publicaciones/mexico-remittances-accumulate-10-years-of-increase-and-break-record-633bn-in-2023/.
[102] See Figure 6
[103] "Remittances." Migration Data Portal, https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/remittances.

Mexico and Remittances

As mentioned earlier in this section, Mexico is one of the top 3 largest receiving countries when it comes to remittances, beating other countries that are much larger (such as China in some years).[104] Although Mexico has had a long history with remittances, it certainly was not always in such a high place like it is today. For example, in 1980, Mexico was shadowed by countries like Egypt (2.7 billion remittances received), India (2.7 billion remittances received), Italy (4.1 billion remittances received), Portugal (2.9 billion remittances received), and Germany (2.3 billion remittances received), with Mexico receiving 1.03 billion that year. A decade later, Mexico began receiving over 3 billion in remittances and would staidly increase throughout the years, according to Figure 6 (right).

Figure 6

Year	Remittances Received (billions USD)
1979	0.2
1980	1.03
1981	1.2
1982	1.2
1983	1.4
1984	1.6
1985	1.6
1986	1.8
1987	2
1988	2.4
1989	2.8
1990	3.1
1991	3
1992	3.7
1993	4
1994	4.1
1995	4.4
1996	4.9
1997	5.5
1998	6.5
1999	6.6
2000	7.5
2001	10.1
2002	11
2003	16.7
2004	19.9
2005	22.7
2006	26.5
2007	26.9
2008	26
2009	22.8
2010	22.1
2011	23.4
2012	23.2
2013	23.2
2014	24.8
2015	26.2
2016	28.7
2017	32.3
2018	35.8
2019	39
2020	42.9
2021	54.1
2022	61.1
2023	67

Personal Remittances received in Mexico from 1979-2022 (Billions USD)

Source: The World Bank https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=MX

Figure 6 (right) provide the earliest accessible data of personal remittances received in Mexico from 1979-2023 (in billions USD). It also can help one understand how Mexico got to where it is today, regarding its very high levels of remittances received. From the dates in this table set, it is clear that it took Mexico almost 21 years to start receiving more than 10 billion in remittances (1979-2001). This is important to mention this because after 2001,

[104] "Remittances." Migration Data Portal, https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/remittances.

the remittances received by Mexico began to grow at a higher rate. From 2000-2005, the number of remittances grew an impressive 202%, going from 7.5 billion to 22.7 billion received. This positive trend would come to a short stop around the same time as the global financial crisis. Remittances received would drop from 26.9 billion (2007) to 22.1 billion (2010). After 2014, the positive trend of remittances received begins to appear again.

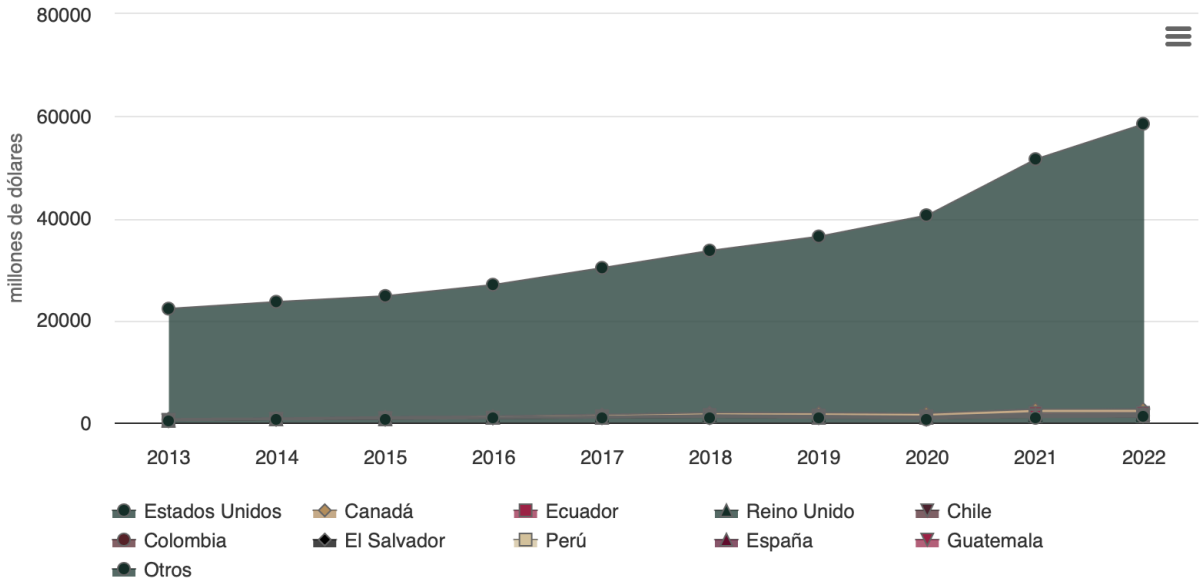
After Mexico's current president—Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO for short)—was elected in July 2018, the total number of remittances flows into Mexico began to increase rapidly leading to historic records.[105] Beginning in his presidency with a total of 35.8 billion USD, remittance flows have increased to an impressive 67 billion USD in December 2023. To put this into perspective, one must look at the Mexican presidencies to understand why AMLO presidency is significant when it comes to remittances. The earliest complete presidency which Figure 6 has is Miguel de la Madrid's (1982-1987), where remittances increase by 0.8 billion, with a 66. % increase. The following presidency, of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1993), saw a 1.6 billion increase in remittances, with a similar increase of 66.6%. Ernesto Zedillo presidency (1994-2000) witnessed a 3.4 billion increase in remittances, with a 82.9% increase. During Vicente Fox's presidency (2001-2006), remittances received increase by 16.4 billion, with an impressive 162.3% increase. To break the positive trend in remittances received, Felipe Calderón's presidency did not see an increase of remittances received, instead they decreased by 3.7 billion (a 13.7 % decrease). The positive trend went back into effect during Enrique Peña Nieto (although not directly due to the change of president), as Mexico's remittances received increased by 12.6 billion, with a 54% increase. Currently, during AMLO's presidency (2018-now, but remittance data begins a year after since Mexican presidents are elected a month before

[105] Hernández, Enrique. México Se Convirtió En El Segundo Receptor de Remesas Más Grande Del Mundo En 2022. https://www.forbes.com.mx/mexico-se-convirtio-en-el-segundo-receptor-de-remesas-mas-grande-del-mundo-en-2022/.

the new year) there has been a 71.7% increase, with a historic increase of 28 billion remittances received. Although AMLO's presidency did not have the highest increase percentage-wise, it's historic increase is something that should not be taken lightly. This is undoubtedly a very interesting time to look at remittances, especially the ones coming from the United States since they occupy the majority when it comes to remittances received by Mexico according to Figure 7 (below).

A question that has been asked many times about Mexico in the discourse around global remittances, is "how"? How is this rate possible? What are the driving factors that have led to

Figure 7



Main countries of origin of remittances, 2013-2023 (millions of dollars)

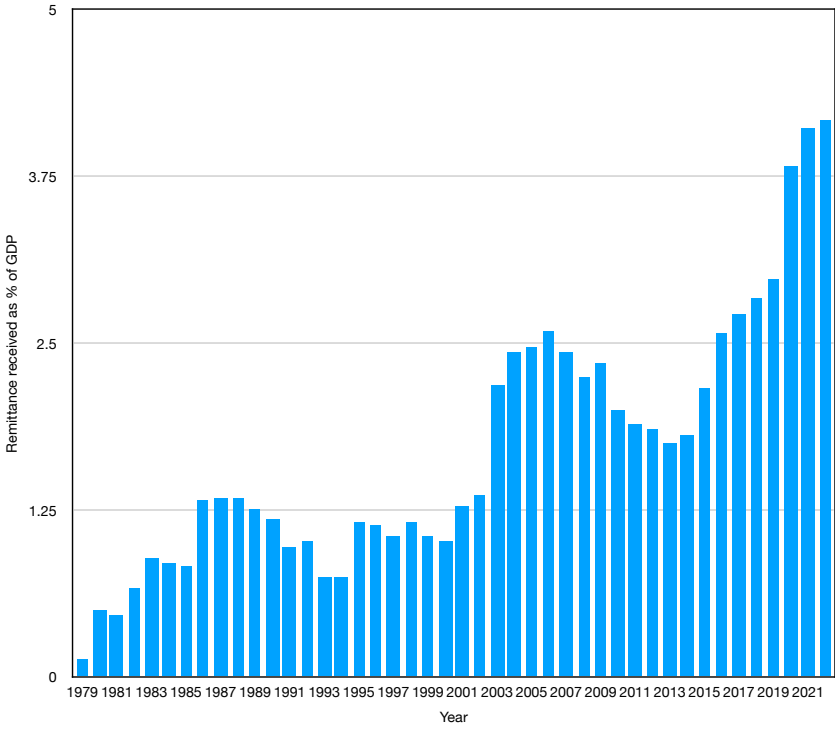
Source:
Prepared by CONAPO based on the Bank of Mexico, Economic Indicators, website: www.banxico.org.mx
http://www.conapo.gob.mx/es/OMI/G_VII42023

Notes:
X-axis represents the years, while the y-axis represents the incoming remittances (Millions USD). Estados Unidos/United States (dark green)are the majority here by a large margin.

remittances increasing at such a rapid growth in certain years? This question has puzzled researchers for years, and although there is no one cut answer, there are certainly different reasons for this. Generally, remittances tend to increase when migration increases, as more people can mean more sending.[106] However, it is also important to mention that as migrants spend more time away from their origin country, especially if they brought their families with them, remittances are likely to decline.[107] Nonetheless, other ways in which remittances can also increase is when the income of migrant populations grows, the peso-dollar exchange rate increases, or when the fees for money-transfers decrease.[108] Although all these factors have contributed to this rapid growth, they have not been singularly "dynamic enough" to account for the different moment of rapid increase, especially during AMLO's presidency.[109]

With so much foreign money going to Mexico, one can assume that the significance of this channel is becoming more and more significant to the country. Remittances have become more and more popular since the 1990s, mainly because of their impact on the Mexican economy. Since 2021,

Figure 8



Remittances Received as GDP% of Mexico from 1979-2022

Source: The World Bank
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=MX

[106] Cañas, Jesus, et al. Explaining the Increase in Remittances to Mexico. 1994.
[107] Cañas, Jesus, et al. Explaining the Increase in Remittances to Mexico. 1994.
[108] Cañas, Jesus, et al. Explaining the Increase in Remittances to Mexico. 1994.
[109] Cañas, Jesus, et al. Explaining the Increase in Remittances to Mexico. 1994.

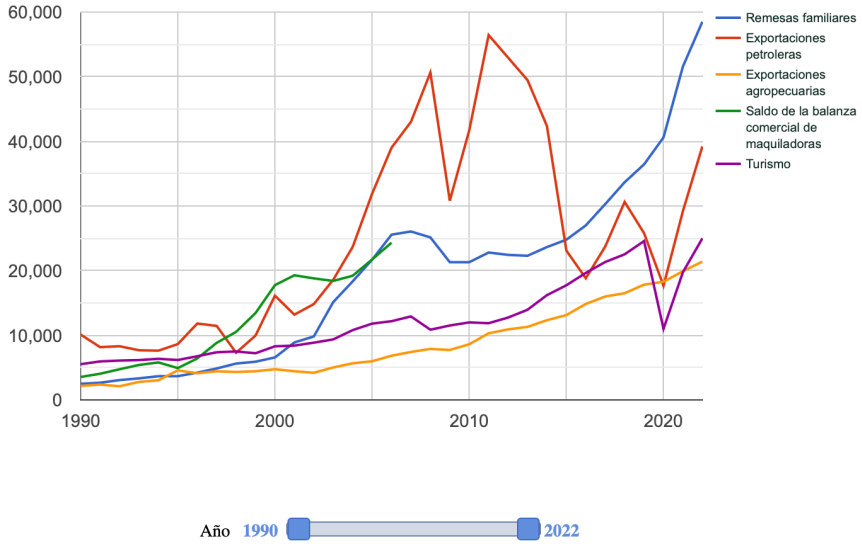
remittances have made up over 4% of Mexico's GDP, which is essentially a measurement of the country's monetary value of final goods and services.[110] According to Figure 8 (above). To put this into perspective, in 2021 Mexico exported products worth $537 billions, and their biggest export were cars making up 7.57% share of total exports, worth a gross export of $40.6[111] billion.[112] According to Figure 6, In 2021, the remittances Mexico received were $54.1 billions, a $13.5 difference from the country's biggest export good.

Furthermore, remittances have been on the rise when it comes to the type of foreign currency that enters the country. There has been a steady rise of remittances now being the highest category of foreign currency, surpassing petroleum exports, agricultural exports, maquiladoras profits, and tourism according to Figure 9 (below). It is quite impressive the amount of money that is being sent back to Mexico from the U.S. (Figure 7) in these past couple of years, in comparison to other nations with larger populations like India and China.

Additionally, during these past couple of years, Mexico has been making historic news headlines by breaking remittance records, as mentioned earlier. This has happened for years

[110] Cañas, Jesus, and Ana Pranger. Strong U.S. Labor Market Drives Record Remittances to Mexico. https://www.dallasfed.org/research/swe/2023/swe2310.
[111] The Atlas of Economic Complexity by @HarvardGrwthLab. https://atlas.cid.harvard.edu/countries/138/export-basket.
[112] The Atlas of Economic Complexity by @HarvardGrwthLab. https://atlas.cid.harvard.edu/countries/138/export-basket.

Figure 9



Entry of foreign currency into Mexico by category, 1990-2022 (millions of dollars)

Source: CONAPO based on the Bank of Mexico, Economic Indicators, http://www.conapo.gob.mx/es/OMI/G_VII12023

Notes:
Remesas Familiares/Remittances: Blue

Exportaciones petroleras/ Petroleum Exports: Red

Exportations agropecuarias/Oil and agricultural exports: Yellow

Saldo de la balanza commercial de maquiladoras/Balance of Commercial Balance of Maquiladoras: Green

Turismo/Tourism: Purple

2021[113], 2022[114], and 2023[115]. A more updated take on why these historic records have been happening during this specific presidency. One study suggests that some of the causes might be; increased migration into the U.S. since 2021 thus increasing the remittance pool, increased frequency of remittances (similar take to one of the possible factors mentioned earlier in this section), and an increase in the average remittances being sent.[116] The same study also suggests some caveats to these possible factors. These being; migration is a "revolving door" (some migrants might leave within two years so there might be an overestimation of the number of senders), and that not all transactions are family-to-family transfers.[117] Like the driving factors mentioned earlier, these

[113] "Remesas reportan un récord de 58 mil 497 millones de dólares." Aristegui Noticias, https://aristeguinoticias.com/0102/dinero-y-economia/remesa-reportan-un-record-de-58-497-millones-de-dolares/.
[114] Hernández, Enrique. México Se Convirtió En El Segundo Receptor de Remesas Más Grande Del Mundo En 2022. https://www.forbes.com.mx/mexico-se-convirtio-en-el-segundo-receptor-de-remesas-mas-grande-del-mundo-en-2022/.
[115] Cañas, Jesus, and Ana Pranger. Strong U.S. Labor Market Drives Record Remittances to Mexico. https://www.dallasfed.org/research/swe/2023/swe2310.
[116] Orozco, Manuel. "Understanding the Recent Growth in Remittances to Mexico." Migration, Remittances & Development, https://www.thedialogue.org/blogs/2023/05/understanding-the-recent-growth-in-remittances-to-mexico/.
[117] Orozco, Manuel. "Understanding the Recent Growth in Remittances to Mexico." Migration, Remittances & Development, https://www.thedialogue.org/blogs/2023/05/understanding-the-recent-growth-in-remittances-to-mexico/.

suggestions do provide better context as to why these historic remittance numbers are happening. These suggestions are possible routes future studies can take in order to better understand the cause(s) for increased remittances, but more importantly how to better understand remittances as a phenomenon and its impacts on Mexico.

Different Approach to Remittances

To better understand remittances being sent to Mexico by Mexican workers in the United States, one must look to both sides, the receiver and the sender. Fortunately, there has been plenty of research done for both of these sides for decades now. One might fairly assume that these are the only sides that should be focused on, since the relationship of remittances is between those who send them from the U.S. and those who end up receiving them (usually a family member/loved one) in Mexico. However, to fully understand remittances, and the impact they have on Mexico (and thus, Mexicans) are those who do not receive them. The households, families, and individuals who are non-transnational. How are they affected, if at all? But also, who might they be and where?

Kunz & Ramírez's study inspired these questions, and the search for possible answers. In their study they focus on the 'financialization of remittances' (FOR), and how it is occurring in Mexico, especially considering how it affects men and women differently.[118] Furthermore, this study introduces a framework to approach FORs called 'constellation of subjectivities', in order to understand the different ways people are being affected. This framework is broken into 3

[118] Kunz, Rahel, and Brenda Ramírez. "'Cambiando El Chip': The Gendered Constellation of Subjectivities of the Financialisation of Remittances in Mexico." Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space, vol. 54, no. 4, June 2022, pp. 779–99. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X211006110.

groups; the “migrant man”, “the remittance receiving women”, and the “non-remittance receiving households”. This case study is key to this research as it poked a major hole. It does so by beginning to shift this discourse of the common wisdom of remittances, which usually claims the benefits remittances have on income inequality.[119] They do this by adding focus to non-remittance receiving households. Although this study is focusing on the non-transnational families in states with high-levels of migrations, it is one of the few studies which begins to include this other group that is not represented as much in the discourse of remittances. Thus, to include families that don't have connections to remittances, allows to get a an even more holistic view of how remittances truly can affect inequality in Mexico.

This shift in focus creates the groundwork for this research. This points to questions like; who does not have access (or less access) to migration, who has access to receiving remittances? A possible answer to this might be found when looking at some of Mexico’s most marginalized groups.

[119] Song, Yuegang, et al. “The Effect of Remittances and FDI Inflows on Income Distribution in Developing Economies.” Economic Analysis and Policy, vol. 72, Dec. 2021, pp. 255–67. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eap.2021.08.011.

Chapter 2

2.1 Non-transnational Families

Transnational families are typically defined as families which has at least one member living in another country.[120] Thus, to be part of a transnational family, there must be access to international migration in some way. Having access to international migration means many things, like having the money to leave, having a place to stay in the destination country, having people who will help one get situated into the new country, and so forth. Having access to international migration also means the possibility to send money back home, which opens a plethora of opportunities for those receiving them. Those receiving them certainly benefit from this additional income, but as mentioned earlier, little is research done around those who don't receive them. According to a study which looked at annual data from 1980 to 2016 of 20 major remittance–receiving developing economies, the results revealed how remittances can be responsible for fueling exhibiting asymmetry like income inequality.[121] Their results demonstrated as remittances increased, so did income inequality, and also saw a decrease in economic growth. What this means is that remittances are also responsible for creating/developing asymmetries/inequalities, like income inequality. They are not only responsible for the benefitting the beneficiaries, but also have a ripple effect on the community as a whole. Thus, not having access to this additional income might put those who do not receive remittances in more vulnerable position, rather than not affecting them at all since they at first glance they might not appear to be part of this relationship (sender-receiver relationship). Ultimately pointing at an expansion of this relationship.

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[120] Mazzucato, Valentina. "Child Well-Being and Transnational Families." Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research, edited by Alex C. Michalos, Springer Netherlands, 2014, pp. 749–55. Springer Link, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_3870.

[121] Song, Yuegang, et al. "The Effect of Remittances and FDI Inflows on Income Distribution in Developing Economies." Economic Analysis and Policy, vol. 72, Dec. 2021, pp. 255–67. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eap.2021.08.011.

2.2 Access to Remittances

Historically, the indigenous populations of Mexico have been in a marginalized position since colonial times, and thus their access to migrating has been inherently limited.[122] Indigenous communities also experience many push-factor, due to the lack of different types of resources regarding health, labor, and education to name a few.[123] With many push factors being present in these communities, to migrate being present all around within these communities, it is unfortunate as Indigenous peoples will experience more difficulties when attempting to migrate internationally.

The study that inspired this project, focused on non-transnational families in Mexican states with high-levels of migration, but was not super specific on who these families were.[124] Non-transnational families do exist all over Mexico, but are there certain communities that might be prone to being non-transnational due to the lack of resources to internationally migrate. This being due to historic marginalization of indigenous communities in Mexico, mentioned above, these communities seem like a decent place to start.

[122] Camp, Roderic A. Politics in Mexico: The Path of a New Democracy. Seventh Edition, Oxford University Press, 2020.
[123] Mora-Rivera, Jorge, and Isael Fierros-González. "Determinants of Indigenous Migration: The Case of Guerrero's Mountain Region in Mexico." Journal of International Migration and Integration, vol. 21, no. 1, Mar. 2020, pp. 93–116. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-019-00692-x.
[124] Kunz, Rahel, and Brenda Ramírez. "'Cambiando El Chip': The Gendered Constellation of Subjectivities of the Financialisation of Remittances in Mexico." Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space, vol. 54, no. 4, June 2022, pp. 779–99. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X211006110.

Figure 10

Mexican State	Population (2020)	Population Speaking Indigenous Language as % of Total State Population	Remittance Income in Millions (USD)	Remittance Income (USD) as % of Total Remittances Received
Oaxaca	4,132,148	28.87%	3,214	5.1%
Chiapas	5,543,828	25.02%	4,367.6	6.9%
Yucatán	2,320,898	22.43%	434.3	0.7%
Guerrero	3,540,685	13.99%	3,182.2	5%
Hidalgo	3,082,841	11.57%	1,754.9	2.8%
Quintana Roo	1,857,985	10.9%	369.9	0.6%
Campeche	928,363	9.8%	173.7	0.3%
Puebla	6,583,278	9.18%	3,145.1	5%
Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave	8,062,579	8.06%	2,574.0	4.1%
San Luis Potosí	2,822,255	8.02%	2,071.6	3.3%
Nayarit	1,235,456	5.34%	874.8	1.4%
Tabasco	2,402,598	3.7%	420.1	0.7%
Michoacán de Ocampo	4,748,846	3.16%	5,409.8	8.5%
Chihuahua	3,741,869	2.83%	1,591.6	2.5%
Mexico State	16,992,418	2.44%	4,354	6.9%
Durango	1,832,650	2.41%	1,391.1	2.2%
Sonora	2,944,840	2.1%	915.5	1.4%
Tlaxcala	1,342,977	2%	414.2	0.7%
Morelos	1,971,520	1.9%	1,149.1	1.8%
Baja California Sur	798,447	1.69%	178.1	0.3%
Mexico City	9,209,944	1.35%	3,868.9	6.1%
Nuevo León	5,784,442	1.34%	1,471	2.3%
Querétaro	2,368,467	1.31%	1,249.2	2%
Baja California	3,769,020	1.29%	1,447	2.3%
Sinaloa	3,026,943	1.15%	1,113.1	1.8%
Jalisco	8,348,151	0.77%	5,355.7	8.5%
Colima	731,391	0.69%	479.5	0.8%
Tamaulipas	3,527,735	0.64%	1,100.6	1.7%
Zacatecas	1,622,138	0.29%	1,816.3	2.9%
Guanajuato	6,166,934	0.22%	5,414.5	8.6%
Aguascalientes	1,425,607	0.17%	938.9	1.5%
Coahuila de Zaragoza	3,146,771	0.17%	1,051.9	1.7%

Mexican states with their total population, Population Speaking Indigenous Language as % of Total State Population, Remittance Income in Millions (USD), and Remittance Income (USD) as % of Total Remittances Received

Notes:
The cells filled in with teal-blue are the states in which the Tren Maya will be moving through.

Sources:
https://en.www.inegi.org.mx/

https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?accion=consultarCuadroAnalitico&idCuadro=CA79

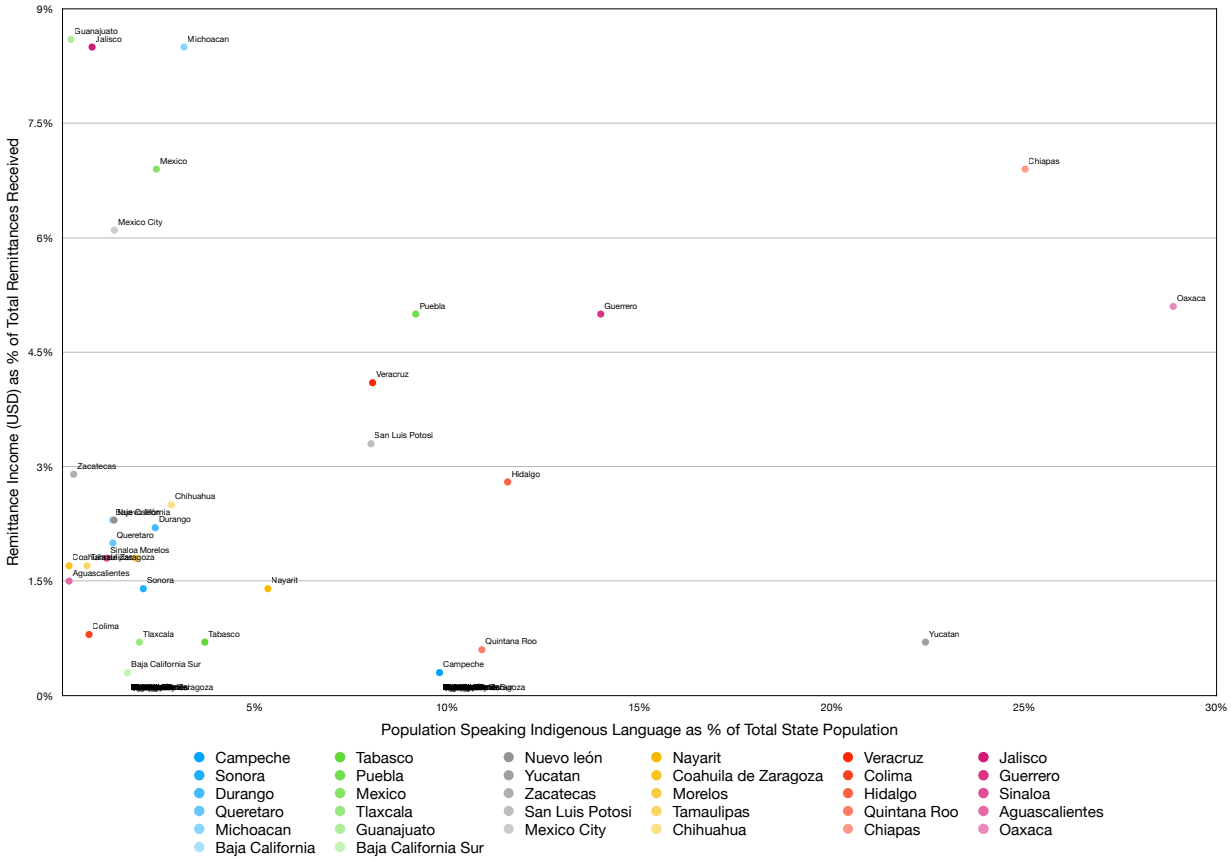
In order to begin looking at which states would have the highest population of indigenous communities, there needs to be a common-ground of what the word indigenous means in the context of Mexico. Researchers of this field have provided certain pathways in which the Mexican government can use when conducting their census. These can include defining indigeneity by linguistic categories, and/or simply by method of self-identification.[125] Currently, the Mexican government defines indigeneity as someone who speaks an indigenous language, self-identifies as indigenous, and someone who lives in household where someone else also speaks an indigenous language.[126] This is seen as Mexico' National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI, an agency of the Mexican government) provides data on the population of each Mexican state, including data on the population aged five years and over who speak an indigenous language.[127]

Figure 10 (left) presents the 2020 (latest census year available) data found via INEGI's database, along with data from the Bank of Mexico, to show; Mexican states with their total population, the population speaking an indigenous language as a percentage of the total state populations, the

[125] Eisenstadt, Todd A. "Indigenous Attitudes and Ethnic Identity Construction in Mexico." Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos, vol. 22, no. 1, Feb. 2006, pp. 107–30. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1525/msem.2006.22.1.107.
[126] Eisenstadt, Todd A. "Indigenous Attitudes and Ethnic Identity Construction in Mexico." Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos, vol. 22, no. 1, Feb. 2006, pp. 107–30. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1525/msem.2006.22.1.107.
[127] Refer to Figure 10

remittance income in millions (USD), and remittances income (USD) as percentage of total remittances received. This data begins to give one a closer to look at these where indigenous communities might exist in Mexico. For

Figure 10.1



Scatter plot, level of Population Speaking an Indigenous Language as % of Total State Population on the x-axis, and level of Remittance Income (USD) as % of Total Remittances Received in 2020

Sources:
https://en.www.inegi.org.mx/

https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?accion=consultarCuadroAnalitico&idCuadro=CA79

Notes:
The two illegible black figures at the bottom-left of the graph is a bug/glitch from the graphing software. It does not affect results, nor should be included as such.

example, we see that some of the state with the highest percentage of people speaking an indigenous language in Mexico (2020) are Oaxaca, Chiapas, Yucatán, Guerrero, Hidalgo, and Quintana Roo. Now that we have some locations which are likely to have a higher indigenous

population, in comparison to other Mexican states like Jalisco, Zacatecas, and Guanajuato, the remittance-related data in Figure 10 points to an interesting relationship.

To better understand this relationship, Figure 10.1(above) provides a scatter plot graph containing the same data as Figure 10. What this scatterplot is revealing is that as you move up the x-axis (as the percent of the state population which speaks an indigenous language increases), the y-axis seems to decrease (the level/percent of remittances received). In other words, the higher the population who speaks an indigenous language in a Mexican state, the lower the number of remittances that state would be likely to receive. There is an exception, which would be Chiapas. This makes sense, as it is one of the Mexican states with background in the international migration (see Figures 2 and 3). To put this into a different perspective, the states with lower levels of people speaking and indigenous are more likely to receive higher rates of remittances. Some of these states include; Guanajuato, Michoacán, Jalisco, Mexico State, and Mexico City.

Ultimately this data hints at some possible realities/patterns when it comes to remittances and indigenous populations. Figures 10 and 10.1 begin to point as to who might these non-transnational families might be, due to where remittances disparity seems to be present. The disparity this data is alluding to the existence of an asymmetrical relationship between indigenous communities and non-indigenous communities.

2.3 Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Peoples in Mexico

The asymmetry found between the number of remittances received in states with lower indigenous populations and states with higher indigenous populations reflects the existing asymmetry between these two communities. Although this can be traced back to 16th century with the colonialization of Mexico by Spain, the asymmetry is still evidently visible today.

First and foremost, indigenous people are one of the most discriminated group in Mexico.[128] This already places one who speaks an indigenous language as their first language, at an uneven level which could translate into having a difficult time finding employment in their area.[129] Additionally, some communities/municipalities in states with high indigenous population suffer from lack of basic basics resources, like potable water.[130] Instead of having more access to potable water, these communities would actually have an easier time access soft-drinks (predominantly Coca-Cola).[131] These communities also lack a local uplifting public education system, due to the fact that some municipalities with a high indigenous populations tend to have lower academic attainment.[132] Furthermore, other example which prove this existing asymmetry include but are not limited to; indigenous communities suffering twice as much in maternal mortality[133], pollutants from biomass burnings[134], and less access to the internet[135].

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[128] Indigenous Peoples in Mexico. Oct. 2023. minorityrights.org, https://minorityrights.org/communities/indigenous-peoples-4/.
[129] Indigenous Peoples in Mexico. Oct. 2023. minorityrights.org, https://minorityrights.org/communities/indigenous-peoples-4/.
[130] Mostafa, Simón, et al. "A Hybrid Centralized-Point-of-Use Drinking Water Treatment System in a Rural Community in Chiapas, Mexico." Environmental Engineering Science, vol. 38, no. 5, May 2021, pp. 418–29. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1089/ees.2020.0245.
[131] Mostafa, Simón, et al. "A Hybrid Centralized-Point-of-Use Drinking Water Treatment System in a Rural Community in Chiapas, Mexico." Environmental Engineering Science, vol. 38, no. 5, May 2021, pp. 418–29. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1089/ees.2020.0245.
[132] Mora-Rivera, Jorge, and Isael Fierros-González. "Determinants of Indigenous Migration: The Case of Guerrero's Mountain Region in Mexico." Journal of International Migration and Integration, vol. 21, no. 1, Mar. 2020, pp. 93–116. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-019-00692-x.
[133] The Health of Indigenous Populations in Mexico: Disencounters | ReVista. https://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/the-health-of-indigenous-populations-in-mexico-disencounters/. Accessed 7 May 2024.
[134] Yokelson, R. J., et al. "Emissions from Biomass Burning in the Yucatan." Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics, vol. 9, no. 15, Aug. 2009, pp. 5785–812. Copernicus Online Journals, https://doi.org/10.5194/acp-9-5785-2009.
[135] "Empowering Indigenous Women through Digital Literacy Education." Viasat.Com, 12 May 2023, https://news.viasat.com/blog/corporate/empowering-indigenous-women-through-digital-literacy-education.

When it comes to the lack of migration within indigenous communities, a key study is Mora-Rivera & Fierros-González's study. This study explores the factors influencing international indigenous migration from Guerrero's Mountain Region (GMR), a socioeconomically disadvantaged area in the southwest of México. A generous share of the data came from Mexico 's 2015 Intercensal Survey, which revealed that there is a lack of essential skills (education and information) and capabilities (assets, income, and savings) among indigenous individuals in the GMR to undertake the associated costs of international migration.[136] In other words, the same obstacles which prevent indigenous peoples to migrate, are some of the same determinants found in these communities causing the need to do so.

This existing asymmetry between the two communities is the reason why many indigenous people cannot migrate, but paradoxically, are also some of the reasons of why they might need to migrate into another country. Usually, people who leave their country to start a different life are doing it because the life they are searching for cannot be found in their home country.

[136] Mora-Rivera, Jorge, and Isael Fierros-González. "Determinants of Indigenous Migration: The Case of Guerrero's Mountain Region in Mexico." Journal of International Migration and Integration, vol. 21, no. 1, Mar. 2020, pp. 93–116. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-019-00692-x.

2.4 Why Do People Leave Home?

Migrants from all over the world tend to leave home because they need to, if they want to find better. An obvious testament to this for many is the so-called *American Dream*.[137] To better understand this relationship, it is crucial to look at the relationship between migration and institutions. A key study to this has been conducted by Thierry Baudassé, Rémi Bazillier, Ismaël Issifou.[138]

Migration and Institutions

In this study, the claim is that institutions become one of the key determinants of international migration, often treated as both a push and pull factor. Institutions, as defined in the study, are "the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction".[139] However, in this study, the definition is used in the context of a binary, formal (constitutions, laws, property rights) vs informal (sanctions, taboos, custom, traditions, and codes of conduct institutions) institutions.

Ideally, migrants who leave their country leave in order to maximize utility when thinking about where to migrate.[140] Thus, the decision is made up by choosing the most optimal location based on their circumstances. Something that has logically had a positive impact on

[137] Mays, Vickie M., et al. "The American Dream: Is Immigration Associated with Life Satisfaction for Latinos of Mexican Descent?" Healthcare, vol. 11, no. 18, Sept. 2023, p. 2495. PubMed Central, https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare11182495.
[138] Baudassé, Thierry, et al. "MIGRATION AND INSTITUTIONS: EXIT AND VOICE (FROM ABROAD)?" Journal of Economic Surveys, vol. 32, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 727–66. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12212.
[139] Baudassé, Thierry, et al. "MIGRATION AND INSTITUTIONS: EXIT AND VOICE (FROM ABROAD)?" Journal of Economic Surveys, vol. 32, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 727–66. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12212.
[140] Baudassé, Thierry, et al. "MIGRATION AND INSTITUTIONS: EXIT AND VOICE (FROM ABROAD)?" Journal of Economic Surveys, vol. 32, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 727–66. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12212.

migration flows has been economic freedom. This has been a consistent pull factor in destination countries for many migrants, which is a reason why there is a significant flow of migration to the United States.[141] On the contrary, some push factors for many migrants have been corruption within their home countries. Focusing on institutions when it comes to studying migration is paramount due to the effects they are supposed to have on migrants, as they can reveal long-term results. For example, it may have intrinsic value for people, and can forecast future levels of development since migration decisions are mainly based on long-term prospects.[142] Furthermore, economic institutions are stronger predictors of migrations than political institutions as the latter are not significant when controlling for economic institutions.[143]

As mentioned earlier, Mexicans have experienced many push factors since the Mexican Revolution (and before, but at lower recorded rates). These push factors have certainly changed throughout the years, but some that still remain include; violence, political instability, corruption, and economic instability.[144] These institutions have proved to be undesirable to many Mexicans, and to other migrants around the world, which has led to out-migration into other countries particularly the United States.[145]Aside from wanting a better life for oneself, many of these migrants which the study is referring to, also migrate in hopes of bettering their own communities where their families/loved ones are living in. The most common form of this is seen through remittances. Thus, countries with a high emigration rate would be more prone to

[141] Baudassé, Thierry, et al. "MIGRATION AND INSTITUTIONS: EXIT AND VOICE (FROM ABROAD)?" Journal of Economic Surveys, vol. 32, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 727–66. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12212.
[142] Baudassé, Thierry, et al. "MIGRATION AND INSTITUTIONS: EXIT AND VOICE (FROM ABROAD)?" Journal of Economic Surveys, vol. 32, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 727–66. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12212.
[143] Baudassé, Thierry, et al. "MIGRATION AND INSTITUTIONS: EXIT AND VOICE (FROM ABROAD)?" Journal of Economic Surveys, vol. 32, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 727–66. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12212.
[144] Baudassé, Thierry, et al. "MIGRATION AND INSTITUTIONS: EXIT AND VOICE (FROM ABROAD)?" Journal of Economic Surveys, vol. 32, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 727–66. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12212.
[145] Baudassé, Thierry, et al. "MIGRATION AND INSTITUTIONS: EXIT AND VOICE (FROM ABROAD)?" Journal of Economic Surveys, vol. 32, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 727–66. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12212.

institutional change.[146] With this is mind, it is clear to see why out-migration from a country with many push factors (bad institutions in this case) is important, if they want a better life for themselves and their loved ones.

Migrants who intend to return home for different reasons are particularly concerned with the quality of institutions in their home country. Many intend to make the efforts for institutional improvement, which seeks that their family and friends sustain themselves, for they are aware of their inability to perpetually ensure the needs of their relatives.[147] A specific example of this in Mexico can be seen in the study which finds that during 2000-2010, migrant-workers who have returned to Guanajuato, have had positive effects within the local economy.[148] This was able to improve income, education, healthcare, electoral participation, and general wellbeing.[149] It is also important to consider that Guanajuato is one of Mexico's state with medium-high levels of migrations (see Figures 2, 3, and 4). But more importantly, in 2020 Guanajuato had the highest number of remittances received and one of the states with the lowest percentage of people who speak an indigenous language. Thus, this state is more likely than not to be made of up an population which is predominantly non-indigenous.

With remittances having the power to create institutional change within homes and communities, they also have the power to affect political institutions back at home. For example, a study using data from 2000-2002 electoral cycle of Mexico (consisting of around 1,982 municipalities from the entire republic), shows that migration significantly increases the likelihood of oppositions parties (parties other than the historically dominant PRI, mentioned in

[146] Baudassé, Thierry, et al. "MIGRATION AND INSTITUTIONS: EXIT AND VOICE (FROM ABROAD)?" Journal of Economic Surveys, vol. 32, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 727–66. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12212.
[147] Baudassé, Thierry, et al. "MIGRATION AND INSTITUTIONS: EXIT AND VOICE (FROM ABROAD)?" Journal of Economic Surveys, vol. 32, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 727–66. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12212.
[148] Waddell, Benjamin James, and Matías Fontenla. "The Mexican Dream? The Effect of Return Migrants on Hometown Development." The Social Science Journal, vol. 52, no. 3, Sept. 2015, pp. 386–95. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2015.02.003.
[149] Waddell, Benjamin James, and Matías Fontenla. "The Mexican Dream? The Effect of Return Migrants on Hometown Development." The Social Science Journal, vol. 52, no. 3, Sept. 2015, pp. 386–95. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2015.02.003.

the previous chapter) to win municipal elections for the first time.[150] To explain this, migration was able to affect electoral outcomes because of social remittances (that are the transfers of ideas and values from the destination to the origin country of migrants), and due to the fact that now remittances undermine the clientelist behavior of the government in power.[151] In other words, because migration can lead to remittances, remittances can decrease political manipulation and thus voters can make more informed political decisions.

2.4 Remittances and Government

With the idea that migration, and thus remittances, are able to impact the political institutions in Mexico, it is clear the power that migration has. In other words, those who have access to migration, or even access to remittances, have the power to change the institutions they interact with in their country of origin for their family and community (at times).[152] With this same logic, those who do not have access to this power do not have the access to this change/improvement of certain institutions. This is so crucial, since the ability of changing institutions (in this case political institutions) can truly transform the lives of many people for the better, or for the worse. In the case mentioned above in the state of Guerrero, that state does not house as many indigenous speaking people a state like Yucatan. Those migrants who return and are able to change the institutions in their own state do so to favor them and their families. Taking this to the political sphere, migrants will more likely push forward certain

[150] Pfutze, Tobias. "Does Migration Promote Democratization? Evidence from the Mexican Transition." Journal of Comparative Economics, vol. 40, no. 2, May 2012, pp. 159–75. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2012.01.004.
[151] Pfutze, Tobias. "Does Migration Promote Democratization? Evidence from the Mexican Transition." Journal of Comparative Economics, vol. 40, no. 2, May 2012, pp. 159–75. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2012.01.004.
[152] Baudassé, Thierry, et al. "MIGRATION AND INSTITUTIONS: EXIT AND VOICE (FROM ABROAD)?" Journal of Economic Surveys, vol. 32, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 727–66. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12212.

agendas/policies that are in favor of them and their loved ones. This can even mean going against certain group, whether it be intentional or not. Thus, if money can buy political influence, what does it mean for those who cannot, especially those who depend on social welfare from the government (as they do not have access to remittances).

To dig into this question more, an important place to start is the dependency on the government for public safety, since it can reveal more about this asymmetry. As mentioned earlier in the first chapter, a major push factor for many Mexican migrants has been the violence in their own country/state. This is certainly still the case today. During AMLO's president, Mexico has seen historic highs under this administration.[153] For example, in 2021, the homicide rate was 28 per 100,000.[154] Trying to speak on these injustices in Mexico is also making thigs worse, as it is also one of the most dangerous countries for in the world for journalist (excluding Palestine), as in 2022 there were 15 journalist killed and 331 threatened in some way.[155]

Since 2007, "successive governments have deployed the military domestically to fight organized crime and conduct law enforcement tasks", but in 2019 the Mexican Congress (controlled by AMLO) disbanded the Federal Police.[156] Later, in 2022 he transferred police functions to the Ministry of Defense. Although there is no one-cut way of dealing with crime, AMLO has been criticized for his passive approach, like his "Hugs not Bullets" approach, to address these high rates of crime.[157] This can certainly be a concern for my Mexican citizens

[153] "World Report 2023: Mexico | Human Rights Watch." World Report 2023, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/mexico#bf6b52.
[154] "World Report 2023: Mexico | Human Rights Watch." World Report 2023, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/mexico#bf6b52.
[155] "2022 Has Been the Deadliest Year on Record for Mexican Journalists." PBS NewsHour, 17 Dec. 2022, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/2022-has-been-the-deadliest-year-on-record-for-mexican-journalists.
[156] "World Report 2023: Mexico | Human Rights Watch." World Report 2023, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/mexico#bf6b52.
[157] Mexico's 'Hugs, Not Bullets' Crime Policy Spreads Grief, Murder and Extortion - WSJ. https://www.wsj.com/world/americas/drug-cartels-expand-murder-extortion-trafficking-146ede54. Accessed 7 May 2024.

who depend on the government for their own public safety. However, it also seems that communities which receive remittances might not have to worry about this as much.

Using Mexican municipal-level data from 2005-2010, one study suggests that states with higher levels of remittances are found to be associated with a decrease in homicide rates.[158] The authors suggest this is due to the affects this additional income can have on households in such a way that it would increase education, job opportunities, and/or reduce time to spend on "criminal activities".[159] Although this study is a bit outdated, it still points to an important reality where there is less reliance on the government when one has an additional income, and in this case, has more resources/opportunities.

With other communities/states who are not receiving high levels of remittances (like many states with high indigenous populations) the lack access to remittances, and thus the inability to receive a similar result as the study mentioned above, can be dangerous reality. In different perspective, the more remittances that would come in to a given state, the less dependency on social welfare as people will experience higher levels of public safety. In a study researching the correlation between remittances received in developing economies and the social spending in those economies, the findings suggest that remittances in Latin American democracies lead to lower social security and welfare spending.[160] Using the data of 19 different Latin American countries (including Mexico) from 1990 to 2009. With this data, the reason this the findings suggest decrease in demand for social welfare is due to the consistent beneficiary of remittances has enhanced income and economic security, thus reducing need for government

[158] Brito, Steve, et al. "Remittances and the Impact on Crime in Mexico." IDB Working Paper Series No. IDB-WP-514, https://publications.iadb.org/en/remittances-and-impact-crime-mexico.
[159] Brito, Steve, et al. "Remittances and the Impact on Crime in Mexico." IDB Working Paper Series No. IDB-WP-514, https://publications.iadb.org/en/remittances-and-impact-crime-mexico.
[160] Doyle, David. "Remittances and Social Spending." American Political Science Review, vol. 109, no. 4, Nov. 2015, pp. 785–802. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055415000416.

welfare.[161] To make this worse for those depending more heavily on social welfare, these findings also suggest a change in the political landscape, since the electoral support for parties advocating for things like higher taxation and redistribution would be receiving less support.[162]

In a later study conducted by the Doyle and López García, this study looks at the relationship between crime, remittances, and the general presential approval in Mexico during 2006-2017. A reason as to why the study chooses to focus on crime is because of the worries voters were facing at the time of the study regarding crime, which is a very similar reality to today.[163] The findings suggest that receiving remittances allows for more steps of precaution to be taken in order to ensure safety for the individual and household, relieving the pressure from crime and violence. Some of these steps can be having access to private security (like cameras), or even having access to safer neighborhoods.[164] Having less pressure from crime and violence has made more people think the country is safe, but also leads to higher rates of presidential approval.[165] Furthermore, those who get remittances in Mexico are more like to feel safer and, think the country is safer than those who do not receive remittances.[166]

Going back to the data in Figures 10 and 10.1, how does this affect states with indigenous communities who are likely to have many non-transnational families that depend more heavily on social welfare? As mentioned earlier, AMLO's presidency has been one of the presidencies with some of the highest crime rates in Mexican history, but has also seen some of the highest

[161] Doyle, David. "Remittances and Social Spending." American Political Science Review, vol. 109, no. 4, Nov. 2015, pp. 785–802. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055415000416.
[162] Doyle, David. "Remittances and Social Spending." American Political Science Review, vol. 109, no. 4, Nov. 2015, pp. 785–802. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055415000416.
[163] Doyle, David, and Ana Isabel López García. "Crime, Remittances, and Presidential Approval in Mexico." Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, vol. 47, no. 6, Apr. 2021, pp. 1395–413. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1623325.
[164] Doyle, David, and Ana Isabel López García. "Crime, Remittances, and Presidential Approval in Mexico." Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, vol. 47, no. 6, Apr. 2021, pp. 1395–413. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1623325.
[165] Doyle, David, and Ana Isabel López García. "Crime, Remittances, and Presidential Approval in Mexico." Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, vol. 47, no. 6, Apr. 2021, pp. 1395–413. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1623325.
[166] Doyle, David, and Ana Isabel López García. "Crime, Remittances, and Presidential Approval in Mexico." Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, vol. 47, no. 6, Apr. 2021, pp. 1395–413. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1623325.

levels of remittances in Mexican history.[167] With these two factors at play, those who are not receiving remittances and/or those families who are completely non-transnational are in a much vulnerable situation, taking into consideration of findings of the two studies mentioned in the paragraphs above. A direct example can be seen rising crime rates in states with a high indigenous population. In Oaxaca there has been multiple murders of indigenous peoples who have been actively protesting for environmental protection, specifically protection over their own local communities.[168] Although this is not happening in extremely high numbers, the findings of these studies presented earlier within this section are in fact being shown in the real-life contemporary examples.

This existing asymmetry is alluding to a sort of negligence from the government onto non-transnational families, particularly those who are more likely to be indigenous. As the crime rates in Mexico are increasing, along with remittances, the negligence from the government on those who do not receive remittances and thus are more susceptible to crime (like the example above) could be on track to a violation of human rights. In another study, data from 106 developing countries over the span of 1981-2011 is used to look at the relationship between trinational remittances and the protection of human rights by the given state.[169] Their findings suggest that remittances have a strong negative impact on state respect for "physical integrity rights".[170] This is because, their data reveals that households which receive remittances is a greater source of "extractible rents", and do not require as much social welfare, thus being in the

[167] Orozco, Manuel. "Understanding the Recent Growth in Remittances to Mexico." Migration, Remittances & Development, https://www.thedialogue.org/blogs/2023/05/understanding-the-recent-growth-in-remittances-to-mexico/.
[168] Violence against Indigenous Groups Defending the Environment in Mexico - Story | IUCN. https://www.iucn.org/story/202212/violence-against-indigenous-groups-defending-environment-mexico.
[169] Bang, James T., et al. "Transnational Remittances and State Protection of Human Rights: A Case for Caution." Economic Notes, vol. 48, no. 3, Nov. 2019, p. e12147. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/ecno.12147.
[170] Bang, James T., et al. "Transnational Remittances and State Protection of Human Rights: A Case for Caution." Economic Notes, vol. 48, no. 3, Nov. 2019, p. e12147. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/ecno.12147.

best interest to treat these households better than those who do not have access to remittances.[171] Mexico was one of the countries listed in this study.

[171] Bang, James T., et al. "Transnational Remittances and State Protection of Human Rights: A Case for Caution." Economic Notes, vol. 48, no. 3, Nov. 2019, p. e12147. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/ecno.12147.

Chapter 3

3.1 Human Rights Violations

The Mexican government has historically been unkind to indigenous communities.[172] As mentioned earlier, some indigenous communities have been provided more access to soft-drinks than simply potable water, a human right[173] This is not the first and last time the Mexican government has gotten in the way of proving basic human rights. Looking back at the data from Figure 10.1, it more likely that states with higher indigenous populations to receive less remittances. With the studies mentioned earlier, their results suggest that these indigenous populations are more likely to be overlooked by the government, and might be the victims of social welfare cuts since they might not be transnational families. Not having access to migration and/or remittances means, being more dependent on social welfare, and having less of voice when it comes to political influence.[174] The latter is crucial, since indigenous communities are already more vulnerable than non-indigenous communities, since having no voice can mean being more prone to human rights violations.

When it comes to human rights abuses during AMLO's presidency, the potable water example mentioned throughout the project is not applicable here as it did not occur during his presidency. However, what did occur (and is still in construction) in AMLO's ambitious project, the Train Maya (Tren Maya).

[172] Nash, June. "CONSUMING INTERESTS: Water, Rum, and Coca-Cola from Ritual Propitiation to Corporate Expropriation in Highland Chiapas." Cultural Anthropology, vol. 22, no. 4, Nov. 2007, pp. 621–39. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1525/can.2007.22.4.621.
[173] "Human Rights to Water and Sanitation." UN-Water, https://www.unwater.org/water-facts/human-rights-water-and-sanitation.
[174] Baudassé, Thierry, et al. "MIGRATION AND INSTITUTIONS: EXIT AND VOICE (FROM ABROAD)?" Journal of Economic Surveys, vol. 32, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 727–66. DOI.org (Crossref), https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12212.

3.2 Tren Maya

Labeled as a dazzling new train route[175], the Tren Maya (Train Maya, in English), ironically named after Mexico's indigenous population within Yucatan's Peninsula[176], is a $20 billion (originally $11.8 billion[177]) mega-project "that will strengthen the territorial planning of the region and boost its tourism industry".[178] The project is also heavily backed by Mexico's current President, Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO). This project entails the local construction of 42 "X'trapolis" trains (built in the city of Sahagún, Hidalgo); that will cover a distance of 1,525 km by connecting the states of Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatán, and Quintana Roo, while simultaneously creating 4,000 new direct job opportunities (and 7,500 indirect ones).[179] It is important to note that these states are also the states in Mexico with the highest percentage of indigenous populations (judging by the number of people who speak an indigenous language in that area), as shown in Figure 10.1 highlighted in teal-blue (page 42). The prediction of the United Nation regarding this project estimates a doubling of economic growth within the region.[180] The project broke ground during the first half of 2020 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2023, but is still under the final part of its construction.[181]

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[175] Cunningham, Ed. "A Dazzling New Train Route Is Set to Launch in Mexico." *Time Out Worldwide*, Time Out, 23 Dec. 2022, https://www.timeout.com/news/a-dazzling-new-train-route-is-set-to-launch-in-mexico-122222.

2 Ortega, Rodrigo Pérez, and Inés Gutiérrez Jaber. "A Controversial Train Heads for the Maya Forest." *Science*, vol. 375, no. 6578, 2022, pp. 250–251., https://doi.org/10.1126/science.ada0230.

[177] Navarro, Andrea. "Mexico's Maya Train Project to Cost up to $20 Billion, 70% over Budget." *Bloomberg.com*, Bloomberg, 26 July 2022, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-26/mexico-s-maya-train-to-cost-up-to-20-billion-70-overbudget#xj4y7vzkg.

[178] Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo. "Proyecto Regional Tren Maya." *Gob.mx*, https://www.gob.mx/fonatur/acciones-y-programas/proyecto-regional-tren-maya.

[179] "The Mayan Train Project." *Alstom*, https://www.alstom.com/mayan-train-project.

[180] Facebook.com/pinkplankton. "Mexico May Build a Massive Tourist Train over the Yucatán's World-Famous Cenotes." *Matador Network*, Matador Network, 17 Aug. 2022, https://matadornetwork.com/read/tren-maya-over-yucutan-cenotes/.

[181] Mexicanist. "Discover Mexico in Style: Get on Board the Mayan Train." *Mexicanist*, Mexicanist, 28 Feb. 2023, https://www.mexicanist.com/l/the-mayan-train-in-the-yucatan-peninsula/.

Although many valid benefits of this project were advertised, Train Maya was inevitably headed towards controversy due to many kinds of violations. The Mexican state started and currently is, producing this project via vertical proposals and plans rather than through horizontal means, as the name of the train should suggest.[182] The controversy surrounds the vertical means since they entail; irreversible environmental impacts, detrimental disruption to native wildlife populations, an increase in tourism, and mainly an evident violation of the rights of indigenous peoples within the occupied areas of Train Maya.[183]

AMLO's construction of the Train Maya project has failed to; adequately involve all affected indigenous communities through meaningful consultations & obtaining "free, prior, and informed consent" from affected indigenous communities, and respect emergency judicial relief orders. Thus, through the mega-project that is Train Maya the Mexican government is essentially failing in respecting the rights of the indigenous people of the Yucatán Peninsula since they violate their known obligation under the "American Convention on Human rights to protect human rights and to take steps to prevent the abuse of these rights".

[182]Yásnaya Elena Aguilar Gil (2021) Indigenous Rights, AMLO's Wrongs, NACLA Report on the Americas, 53:2, 118-120, DOI: 10.1080/10714839.2021.1923196

[183] Green, Jared. "Going off the Rails on the Mayan Train: How AMLO's Development Project Is on a Fast Track to Multiple Violations of Indigenous Rights." American University International Law Review, vol. 36, no. 4, 2021, pp. 845-886

Background

Before becoming Mexico's first leftist president in decades, AMLO was part of Mexico's infamous Partido Revolucionario Institutional (PRI, Institutional Revolutionary Party), a party that governed Mexico for more than 8 decades, as director of the National Indigenous Institute within the Maya Chantal region of Tabasco (from 1977-1982).[184] This experience ended up becoming essential in molding his future political views. Fast forward to December 1, 2018, AMLO becomes Mexico's new president as thousands of people crowd Mexico City's Zocalo (town square) to watch him partake in an Indigenous ceremony organized by a former Zapatista advisor (Regino Montes). With AMLO's background history, political campaign, and denouncement of Neoliberalism the public was under the impression that this new presidency would set off radical changes recognizing Indigenous communities.[185]

Before the start of this project, the government held a national referendum in November of 2018, asking voters if they approved this new project. Only 850,527 Mexican voters approved, only representing 1% of the nation's electorate.[186] Disregarding the low voter approval, the government continued to move forward with the project by consulting with indigenous communities. The act of consulting with indigenous communities is a requirement, due to the nature and vastness of this project. Soon after the conclusion of this consultation, the Mexican Office of the U.N. High Commissioner on Human Rights ("U.N.H.C.H.R") released a critique on the government's inability to comply with the international standards of indigenous consultations. Although the government has responded by implementing more consultations,

[184]Yásnaya Elena Aguilar Gil (2021) Indigenous Rights, AMLO's Wrongs, NACLA Report on the Americas, 53:2, 118-120, DOI: 10.1080/10714839.2021.1923196

[185] Orozco, Fernanda Hernández. "Amlo Inicia Su Gobierno Con Una Crítica Al 'Neoliberalismo.'" *Expansión*, 1 Dec. 2018, https://expansion.mx/nacional/2018/12/01/amlo-inicia-su-gobierno-con-una-critica-al-neoliberalismo.

[186] Green, Jared. "Going off the Rails on the Mayan Train: How AMLO's Development Project Is on a Fast Track to Multiple Violations of Indigenous Rights." American University International Law Review, vol. 36, no. 4, 2021, pp. 845-886

various other parties within civil society have also pointed to this critique since the government is currently failing to adequately have these consultations.

Apart from the lack of proper consultations, the Mexican government is also lacking public transparency. An environmental impact assessment (EIA) was published in 2020 by the National Fund for Touristic Development (FONATUR). Not only was the EIA hidden from the public[187], but was also immediately critiqued for its neglect of long-term impacts[188] and lack of proper assessment of all possible risks of the project.[189]

Fortunately, there has been resistance within Mexico's civil society (as mentioned before). A powerful example of this resistance occurred in the Spring of 2020, when "a federal judge for the District Court of Chiapas issued an *Amparo* against all new construction on the project".[190] Although the Amparo has limitations, like only being applicable in three municipalities in Chiapas, and its inability to be validated by the Mexican government, it has the potential set off a domino effect of more participation within civil society[191] since its original purpose as a judicial action is to "protect an individual or individuals from the acts or omissions of the authorities that violate the human rights and guarantees protected by the Mexican Constitution".[192]

Disregarding the uncertainty of various parties regarding this project, the Mexican government has intended to keep moving forward, as shown by the number of contracts being

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[187] Juan Luis Ramos | El Sol de México. "Fonatur Presenta Manifestación De Impacto Ambiental De Tren Maya." *El Sol De México | Noticias, Deportes, Gossip, Columnas*, El Sol De México | Noticias, Deportes, Gossip, Columnas, 17 June 2020, https://www.elsoldemexico.com.mx/mexico/sociedad/fonatur-presenta-manifestacion-de-impacto-ambiental-de-tren-maya-5374345.html.

[188] Hernández, Ricardo. "Gobierno Presenta Estudio De Impacto Ambiental Del Tramo 5 Del Tren Maya." *ADNPolítico*, 18 May 2022, https://politica.expansion.mx/estados/2022/05/18/gobierno-presenta-estudio-de-impacto-ambiental-del-tramo-5-del-tren-maya.

[189] *Inicia Construcción Del Tren Maya En Sus Cuatro Primeros Tramos*. https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/empresas/Inicia-construccion-del-Tren-Maya-en-sus-cuatro-primeros-tramos-20200528-0113.html.

[190] Green, Jared. "Going off the Rails on the Mayan Train: How AMLO's Development Project Is on a Fast Track to Multiple Violations of Indigenous Rights." American University International Law Review, vol. 36, no. 4, 2021, pp. 845-886

[191] Green, Jared. "Going off the Rails on the Mayan Train: How AMLO's Development Project Is on a Fast Track to Multiple Violations of Indigenous Rights." American University International Law Review, vol. 36, no. 4, 2021, pp. 845-886

[192] *What Is Amparo?*, https://mexicanlaws.com/amparo.html.

awarded[193] and their continuous objection to legal actions intended on stopping the construction.[194] The government's act of disregarding the lack of adequate and representative indigenous consultations, public transparency, and respect/compliance toward emergency judicial actions (Amparo) in order to produce this project, is becoming a violation of Mexico's responsibilities within the Inter-American Human Rights system (IAHR), and ultimately a human right violation against the affected indigenous communities.[195] Established in 1959, the Inter-American Human Rights system was made to uphold the "effective promotion and defense of human rights", using two principal bodies; the Commission and the Court.[196] If the system of the Court declares there to be a violation, it has the authority to "order a State Party to ensure the enjoyment of that individual's rights as well as to order the reparations be paid to the claimant".[197] The criteria to declare a violation must show "gravity, urgency, and the likelihood of irreparable damages to persons to justify the extraordinary of provisional measures. This is important since Mexico, being a State Party to the Convention, is bound to the decisions made by the Court of this system.

[193] Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo. "Fonatur Anuncia Empresa Ganadora De Licitación Del Tramo 1 Del Tren Maya (Palenque Escárcega)." *Gob.mx*, https://www.gob.mx/fonatur/prensa/fonatur-anuncia-empresa-ganadora-de-licitacion-del-tramo-1-del-tren-maya-palenque-escarcega-240854.
[194] Green, Jared. "Going off the Rails on the Mayan Train: How AMLO's Development Project Is on a Fast Track to Multiple Violations of Indigenous Rights." American University International Law Review, vol. 36, no. 4, 2021, pp. 845-886
[195] Green, Jared. "Going off the Rails on the Mayan Train: How AMLO's Development Project Is on a Fast Track to Multiple Violations of Indigenous Rights." American University International Law Review, vol. 36, no. 4, 2021, pp. 845-886
[196] The Inter-American Human Rights System: Establishing Precedents ... - JSTOR. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40176354.
[197] Green, Jared. "Going off the Rails on the Mayan Train: How AMLO's Development Project Is on a Fast Track to Multiple Violations of Indigenous Rights." American University International Law Review, vol. 36, no. 4, 2021, pp. 845-886

Analysis

The Mexican government is currently violating indigenous rights by its omission and a lack of compliance with emergency judicial orders since these acts themselves violate several indigenous rights under the IAHR system's Convention. The IAHR system has a set of duties states must comply with to not be in violation of their agreements with the system. Some of these duties which are not being upheld by Mexico include but are not limited to; ensuring the effective participation of indigenous communities within relevant projects affecting their land, active consulting according to the traditions and customs of indigenous peoples, and the need to disseminate information.

One of the main and most significant duties upheld by the Court (of IAHR) is ensuring the effective participation of indigenous communities within relevant projects affecting their land.[198] One of the project's main issues is the lack of upholding this exact duty. This is because the government is not implementing an effective and adequate method of indigenous consultation and participation in the decision-making process of the project.

Another required duty not being upheld by Mexico is actively and consistently consulting according to the "traditions and customs of indigenous peoples".[199] Although the Court has not set up and standard guideline for these consultations, the Mexican Office of the U.N.H.C.H.R. has stated again that the existing consultations did not respect the customs and traditions of these communities.[200]

[198] Green, Jared. "Going off the Rails on the Mayan Train: How AMLO's Development Project Is on a Fast Track to Multiple Violations of Indigenous Rights." American University International Law Review, vol. 36, no. 4, 2021, pp. 845-886
[199] Green, Jared. "Going off the Rails on the Mayan Train: How AMLO's Development Project Is on a Fast Track to Multiple Violations of Indigenous Rights." American University International Law Review, vol. 36, no. 4, 2021, pp. 845-886
[200] Green, Jared. "Going off the Rails on the Mayan Train: How AMLO's Development Project Is on a Fast Track to Multiple Violations of Indigenous Rights." American University International Law Review, vol. 36, no. 4, 2021, pp. 845-886

Finally, another very crucial duty states the need to disseminate information. This means that these indigenous communities are required to have full knowledge of any potential harm to their social, cultural, economic, and political sphere. As previously mentioned, the government has failed this duty as well. Aside from failing to hear from communities and accept information from outside members of civil society, the state fundamentally failed to disseminate the negative impacts the construction will have on the land of indigenous people before the consultations and production began.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the construction of AMLO's ambitious but controversial "Tren Maya" project has been a violation of human rights, specifically indigenous rights, due to the lack of compliance with upholding various said duties by the Inter-American Human Rights system.

The possible recommend solutions, include but are not limited to; government voluntary compliance with its international legal obligation with the IAHR[201], emphasis on civil society pressure to promote a shift in morality on companies with influential roles in respecting human rights (like the contracting companies[202]), and finally applying pressure from civil society towards the Commission and the Court of IAHR in order for them to actually declare this project a violation since it hasn't been determined as one (yet).

From all of the possible options, the most likely to succeed is the last option, where civil society exerts sufficient pressure on the Commission and Court of IAHR for them to

[201] Green, Jared. "Going off the Rails on the Mayan Train: How AMLO's Development Project Is on a Fast Track to Multiple Violations of Indigenous Rights." American University International Law Review, vol. 36, no. 4, 2021, pp. 845-886
[202] Green, Jared. "Going off the Rails on the Mayan Train: How AMLO's Development Project Is on a Fast Track to Multiple Violations of Indigenous Rights." American University International Law Review, vol. 36, no. 4, 2021, pp. 845-886

provide. This is more probable than the other options since this project already demonstrates a risk of irreparable harm as it will change the socio-economic “landscape of the region to such a degree that it will not be possible to undo the effects" once the project is done.[203] This falls under the criteria in which the Commission and Court can undeniably label this as a violation of human rights and apply provisional measures. If the situation is approved as a violation, some of these measures can include, an updated form of transparent/adequate consultations, and also provides a great opportunity for the Commission and the Court to clarify certain areas that remain ambiguous under Indigenous laws of the IAHR system.[204]

[203] Green, Jared. "Going off the Rails on the Mayan Train: How AMLO's Development Project Is on a Fast Track to Multiple Violations of Indigenous Rights." American University International Law Review, vol. 36, no. 4, 2021, pp. 845-886

[204]Green, Jared. "Going off the Rails on the Mayan Train: How AMLO's Development Project Is on a Fast Track to Multiple Violations of Indigenous Rights." American University International Law Review, vol. 36, no. 4, 2021, pp. 845-886

Conclusion

The theoretical argument of this project grounds itself in the complex migration history between Mexico and United States. The significant eras to mention for this project were the Mexican Revolution, the second Bracero Program, and NAFTA/Post-NAFTA, as they all had noticeable effects on flow of Mexican migration into the U.S.

A major part of this migratory relationship is the number of remittances Mexican-migrants have sent through the decades. The remittance flows from the U.S. have been on a historic high during Mexico's current president, making it an optimal time to pay attention to the effects this phenomenon has. To study remittances in a holistic way, the binary dialogue between sender and receiver must be transcended to include the non-receiver, the non-transnational individual(s), the non-transnational communities.

To contribute to the discourse of remittances pertaining to the U.S. and Mexico, this project attempts to provide more information on who these non-transnational communities might be. Looking at the data available from the Mexican bank, there are certain states which receive less remittances than others. When putting these results next to the states that are most likely to have high indigenous populations (based on the percentage of indigenous languages spoken) there is a relationship which suggests that indigenous populations are more likely to be non-transnational based on the gap of total remittances received. This is important because evidence shows that those who are non-transnational, and thus do not receive remittances, are more vulnerable to different kinds of asymmetries and inequalities. This is exacerbated if the community is indigenous.

Since these communities might not have the same access to migration as others, and thus do not have access to remittances, their voice for change is not heard and is rendered ineffective.

Those who have migrated to the U.S. and have sent remittances have been able to improve certain institutions in their home town.

As indigenous communities have historically been a target for discrimination and unfair treatment, they are often neglected, and their human rights are abused. This is sustained when the populations in question lack the money to acquire their own voice and political influence. History has shown time and time again that the Mexican government has neglected indigenous communities, including under Mexico's current presidency.

While conducting research for this project, there was a lack of data when it comes to non-transnational families in Mexico. It truly does seem as if they are left out of the conversation regarding remittances. This project attempts to bring more attention to this lack of data, alongside an emphasis to apply this three-way dialogue in other developing economies with high levels of remittances

Remittances have proven to be a lifeline for many families across different kinds of diasporas. Since Mexico is one of the largest diaspora groups in the United States, and since it is one of the highest remittance-receiving countries, studying Mexico to learn more about remittances and its effects on Mexicans is crucial. Even more crucial is to engage in more research on those who do not receive remittances. The pattern observed in this project suggest that indigenous populations are more likely to have less access to migrate internationally, and thus have less access to remittance. With no money, it is very difficult to have power, and to have a political voice and political power. Furthermore, with no power, there is the possibility for one's own rights as human beings to be abused (hence the Train Maya).

Although there is no immediate solution, more research is the first step. More research needs to be done on how remittances are impacting the daily lives and human rights of non-transnational families.

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