

MIGRATION FROM MORELOS TO MINNESOTA

Building Broader Communities
in the Americas

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MIGRATION FROM MORELOS TO MINNESOTA: BUILDING BROADER COMMUNITIES IN THE AMERICAS

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Fundación Comunidad Morelos
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Migration from Morelos to Minnesota: Building Broader Communities in the Americas
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For security reasons, the names of the persons interviewed for this Report were changed.

The opinions expressed in this Report are the full responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of BBKA, The Minneapolis Foundation or Fundación Comunidad, A.C.



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INTRODUCTION

This is why the toughest, the most forceful revolutionary principle is that we are all equal because we are different: there is a natural equality, which is that we are all the unique core of our experience. Each one of us is incomplete if we lack the view of the others; because it is not a matter of tolerating others, but of others being indispensable so they can contribute their own version.

Anonymous, "Asserting together who we are". Alicia Andares et al.
El libro de los saberes (The Book of Wisdom)

Only among all of us can we know everything.

Emeterio Torres, Wixarika marakame

Migration is a universal phenomenon as old as the history of humankind itself. All human civilizations have been marked, at some point, by the displacement of large portions of their population from one place to another, for very different and complex reasons: drought, famine, persecutions, war, and poverty. The history of migration between Mexico and the United States is also part of this great history, whose characteristics and particularities sometimes imply talking about the origin of both nations as one. It is like erasing The Line that divides them. Talking about this migration today not only has great political and social relevance but also, above all, a (trans) community and identity-related sense for the 21st century that demands that we be who we are in the same way that others are who they are: all, male and female, in di-

versity, as both we and they have been shaped by our communities, our contexts, our traditions, our practices, our dreams, our disagreements, and our hopes.

For this reason, those of us involved in this work incorporate our identities, our wishes and our aspirations in order to place in your hands information that may be useful for building together the communities that we desire, always in the hope that, within diversity (of all kinds: biological, cultural, gender related, and even political), we may get to know each other, understand each other, and (re-)build the social fabric that shapes our territories and their inhabitants.

Like its deepest aspirations, this project for mapping the Morelos-Minnesota Migration —Building Broader Communities in the Americas— was born with many expectations on its shoulders, and its origin

can be no other than the desire shared by a variety of initiatives and organizations that seek to coincide with other collective projects and which basically reclaim the role of the communities as leading actors in their own process. This project was thus made possible, firstly, thanks to the collaboration between various Community Foundations and organizations of the American continent gathered within the Building Broader Communities in the Americas initiative —BBCA—, which understood the importance of getting to know and acknowledging one another: an interest that arises from the powerful bonds and networks built by Latin American migrants in the United States and Canada, which has led us to attempt to learn about the communities of origin of those who migrate, their stories and their motives for leaving or for staying, as well as about the transnational community practices that they have created or re-invented. Building Broader Communities in the Americas (BBCA) is an initiative headed by CF Leads and by the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, who seek to create this network. BBKA's mission is to build stronger and more resilient communities across the continent by boosting the responsiveness of community foundations. This is done through a network that facilitates building relationships between peer organizations focused on deepening their understanding of, and engagement with the experiences of transnational communities (BBKA, 2019).

Secondly, this project was also born from the interest and effort of the Minneapolis Foundation and Fundación Comunidad Morelos to understand the particular case of the migration of communities from Morelos to Minnesota —a historical flow that has already established a tradition between the two states and has drawn direct bridges between the two communities. Thus, as can be seen, the origin of this work is consistent with these aspirations, namely: to get to know each other, and to build and communitize¹ ourselves. For this reason, our objectives and methodology seek to respect the identity of each person and each community, but also to make available to the readers of this report useful material for the construction of new forms of community in a world where the governments draw borders to divide while the people build bridges in order to, on occasion, overcome these distances.

¹ This word does not exist in English; however, with it we intend to signify the community, not as a thing but as a collective action whereby we may find common bases between Morelos and Minnesota by respecting our differences while bearing in mind the geographical distance.

1. OUR OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY, STUDY AREA AND SCOPE

In the same line, the objective of this project is to identify the changes in migration patterns from Morelos to Minnesota over the past four decades in order to characterize this migratory flow, allowing organizations and communities to build bonds with the migrants, based on a better understanding of the migration phenomenon, while evidencing its causes and impacts in both the communities of origin and of destination. Finally, this project also seeks to strengthen the binational relations between Mexican and U.S. communities and organizations that are already working together through new channels of dialogue made possible by this project.

In other words, the project aims to understand and explain, in a more comprehensive and systematic way, migration and the transnational communities in Morelos and Minnesota, in order that we may jointly develop strategies that are relevant to the strengthening of the communities and Community Foundations of Morelos and Minneapolis.

We are aware of the challenges involved in achieving the objective established above and understand that the work methodology of this project will face the challenge of linking and interweaving various perspectives to help us provide a comprehensive explanation of the causes and specific impacts of the migration of the inhabitants of Morelos communities to Minnesota, while allowing us to grasp all that is hidden behind the figures and the theories: the emotions and expectations of the people who embody



Illustration by Rini Templeton

these abstract data. We aspire to achieve something difficult: to make the figures elicit empathy.

Therefore, in mutual collaboration with experts in the field, with friends of BBKA and with both the Morelos and Minneapolis Foundations, we decided that this work should not only consist of research and analysis that are statistically and geographically rigorous, from various sources and data, both academic and official, on migratory flows and patterns, but also be a work of reflection with the people, from the people and for the people. That is to say, that the office work should not exclude anthropological work and community intervention, and that it should allow us to see the other side of the hard data: that of the adult men and women, the young people and the children of Morelos who migrate, and of those who stay in their communities of origin separated from their migrant relatives. As a result of this collaboration, the implementation of the project —over twelve months, between February 2019 and January 2020— comprised three stages and three different perspectives:

Analysis of the context: desk work. This first stage consisted of the search and consultation of bibliographic, documentary, historical and statistical sources available on the subject of migration and, specifically, on the migratory flow from the Mexican state of Morelos to the American state of Minnesota, as well as the location of the various Morelos communities distributed in the territory of the United States. Likewise, we carried out a search and analysis of the various databases available both in Mexico and in the United States, from which we were able to obtain the necessary information to characterize the migratory flow that interests us. Thus, the research team could define a starting point based on the already existing research and on the available information that would allow us to establish the field work in a strategic way. At this stage of the project, we analyzed from a quantitative perspective the context in which migration occurs, i.e., we were able to establish the line of argument which requires explaining the existence of attraction factors (causes of immigration to Minnesota) and expulsion/displacement factors (causes of emigration from Morelos), as well as the strategic importance of the geographic location of Minnesota and Morelos for the economic processes of both nations, their potential for articulation with other regions, and, hence, as factors of attraction or expulsion of multiple migratory flows.

Analysis of the subjects: field work. At this second stage, the research team carried out desk and field

work simultaneously. On the one hand, based on the analysis of various databases in the United States and Mexico, it undertook a demographic examination of people from Morelos who migrated to the United States and Minnesota, their reasons for migrating and their occupations. Subsequently, the study area for the field work was delimited. Although the municipality of Axochiapan is the center of interest for this kind of research (given that the most important Latino community in Minnesota is from that location), we decided to expand the work to those communities where Fundación Comunidad Morelos has allies and works with grassroots organizations across the state. In addition to the above, the implementation of the project faced two major limitations: first, the impossibility for a two-person team to cover the entire state's territory; and, second, the escalation of violence associated with the operation of organized crime groups in the state of Morelos during the year in which the research was conducted, which imposed on us the decision to ensure our safety at the cost of ruling out visits to some of the communities of interest. Thus, the delimitation of the study area is partly the result of the analysis of remittances by municipality, but also of the analysis of consular ID cards registered in Minnesota, as well as of the presence of allies in Morelos communities within a context of generalized insecurity.

Finally, the field work was carried out at this stage. Thus, we were able to hold more than ten workshops with young university students and civil society organizations, as well as various interviews with Morelos migrants, among other activities. The field work also included a team trip to Chicago, Illinois, in order to learn about other research and mapping experiences that are also a part of the *Building Broader Communities in the Americas* initiative. This provided us with the opportunity to learn about the experiences of certain Latino organizations in supporting migrants and defending and claiming their rights in the United States. In Minnesota, thanks to the organizational work of the Minneapolis Foundation, the team had the opportunity to interview Morelos migrants, local organizations, academics, politicians, legislators, public officials, and social actors who enabled us to better understand the migration context in the Twin Cities, Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

Impact analysis: collaborative work. The final stage included both the synthesis and the assessments of the information obtained throughout the research. In collaboration with university volunteer students of Social Work at the School of Social Stud-

ies of Temixco, Morelos, a joint reflection was made on the migration of people from Morelos to the United States and its impacts on the communities and individuals. Thus, we can say that one of the results of the project was the consolidation of a support and mutual reflection work team whose results were finally expressed in the Final Report that you now have in your hands and which has also been reviewed and commented on by experts in the field of migration.

2. THE BINATIONAL PROJECT:

COLLABORATION BETWEEN

FUNDACIÓN COMUNIDAD MORELOS

AND THE MINNEAPOLIS FOUNDATION

According to the 2020 World Migration Report of the United Nations' International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of international migrants, most of whom are of working age (20-64 years), is currently estimated at approximately 272 million. Although this figure is relatively low (3.5%) in relation to the total world population, this number has exceeded the forecasts that estimated a total of 230 million international migrants (equivalent to 2.6% of the world population) by 2050 (IOM, 2019). This means that the forecasts for the volume of migrant population were exceeded by more than 40 million people —or 18.2%— 40 years earlier than expected. Although the IOM recognizes the difficulty in predicting any estimate of the rates and scales of migration, this fact indicates that the speed at which migration flows are increasing on a global scale is greater than anticipated and that the causes that drive people to migrate suggest that the world is at a phase of increasing military, political, economic, social and environmental conflict, which puts pressure on the most vulnerable populations to migrate.

The predominant dynamics of international migration flows have been, for several decades, the movement of people from developing to developed countries, so that both the countries of origin and destination have been virtually the same throughout the last and the present centuries (Figure 1). Thus, in 2019, India again became the main country of origin of international migrants (17.5 million migrants living abroad), followed by Mexico (11.8 million) and China (10.7 million) (Figure 2). For its part, the United States still ranks first among countries of destination for international migration, followed by several countries in the European continent (IOM, 2019).

As can be seen, the migratory flow out of India is the largest in the world in quantitative terms. How-

ever, the flow out of Mexico is more significant in relative terms —especially in relation to the United States as an immigration country— for two reasons: first, the migrant population in relation to the total population is proportionally larger in Mexico than in India and China, given that, according to the figures in the IOM Report and to the World Bank's total population estimates by country (2019), the percentage of migrant population of Indian origin living abroad was 1.29 % of the total population of that country in 2019, and in the case of China it was 0.77 %, while in the case of Mexico this percentage rises to 9.35 %! (see Figure 3). This means that one out of every 10 Mexicans emigrates and resides legally in another country, mainly in the United States.

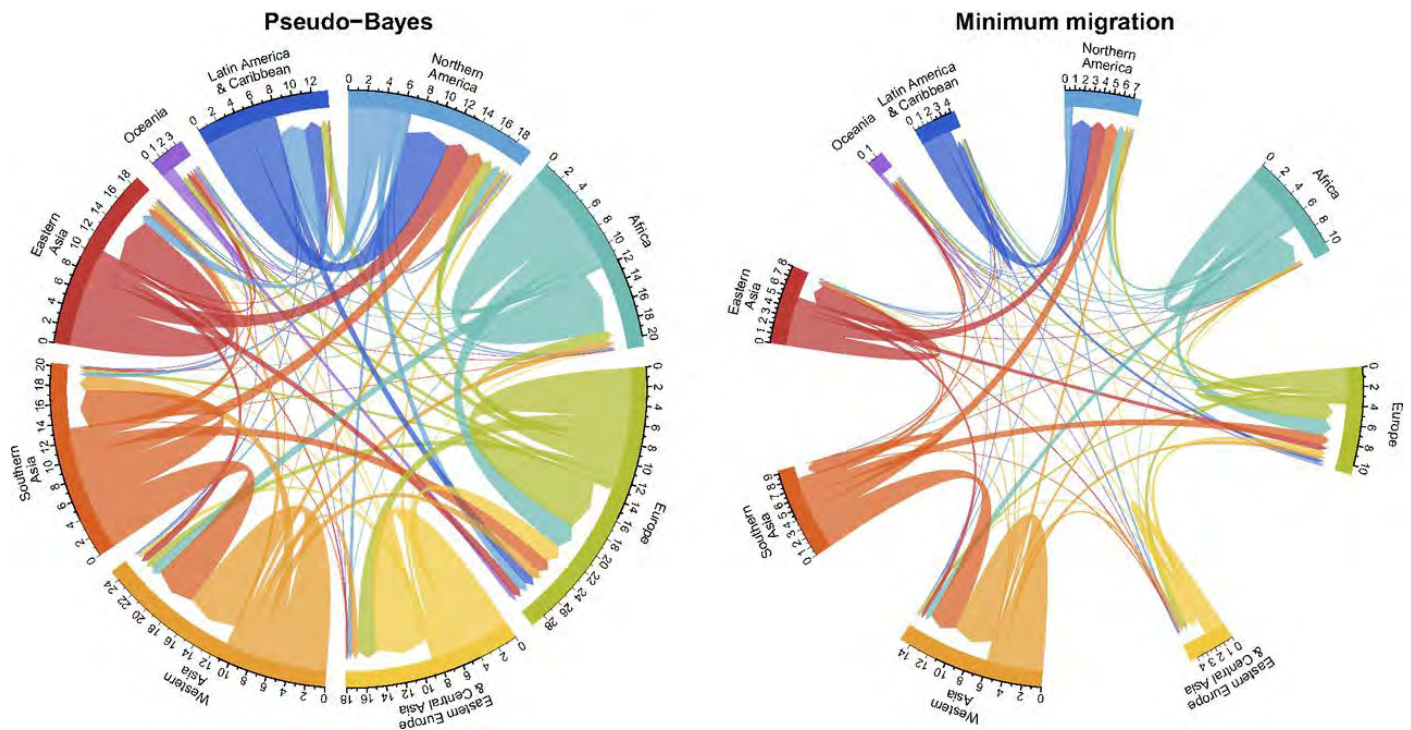
The second reason has to do with this last fact, namely, that 92% of the population that has emigrated from Mexico resides in the United States. This establishes the flow between these two countries as the main migratory corridor of the world, since it constitutes the largest traffic from one country to another, followed by the India-Arab Emirates corridor (Serrano and Jaramillo, 2018).

According to the Migration Policy Institute, to the 12 million Mexicans legally residing in the United States and the 4.9 million undocumented migrants, we should add the over 18 million first-, second- and third-generation Mexican-Americans, which brings the total migrant population born in Mexico and of Mexican descent in the United States to nearly 35 million people. This amounts to more than one fourth (27.7%) of the total Mexican population currently residing in Mexico. From a different perspective, the volume of the Mexican migrant population and its descendants is equivalent to the aggregate sum of the total populations (in 2010) of the states of Mexico, Mexico City, Veracruz, and Chihuahua (INEGI, 2020).

Furthermore, it should be noted that in 2017 the foreign-born immigrant population in the United States constituted 13.6% of the country's total population and, by 2014, the population of Mexican origin was 28% compared to 24% of Central American origin, 26% from South and East Asia, and 14% of European and Canadian origin, the latter three being regions and not countries of origin (Radford and Noe-Bustamante, 2019) (Figure 4).

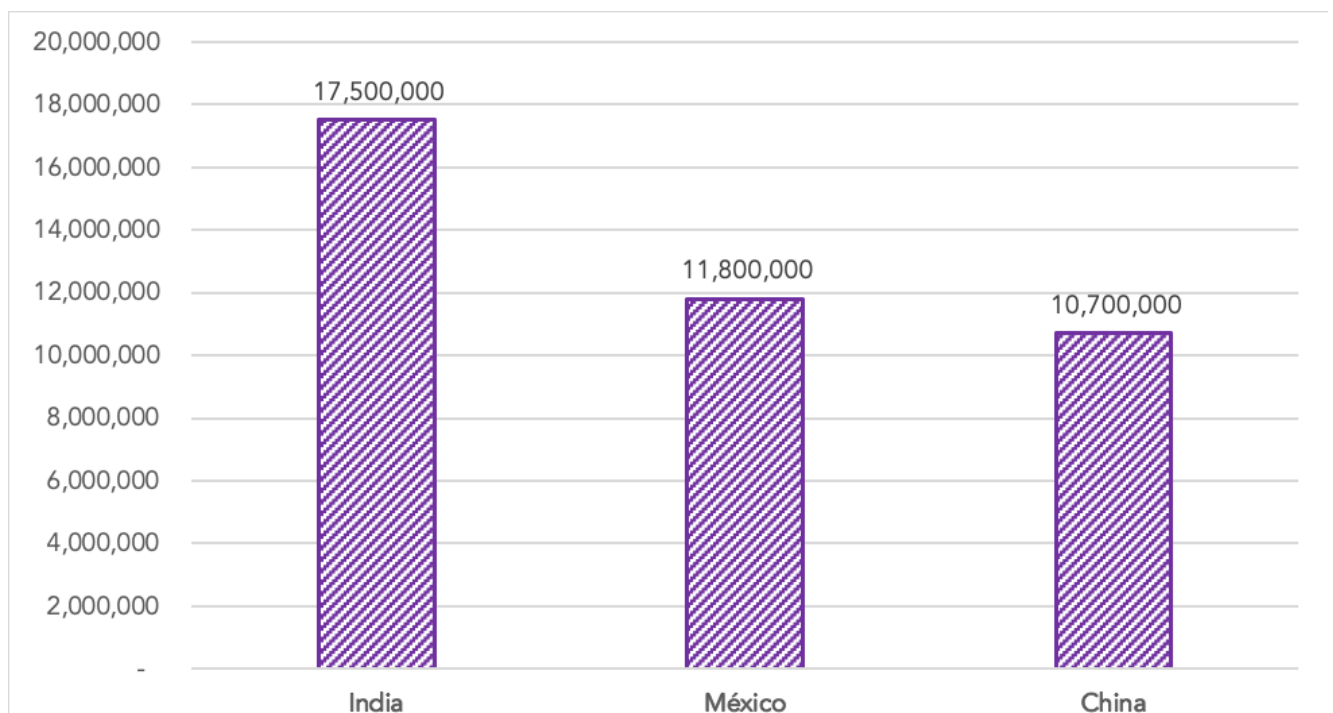
As for the undocumented immigrant population, by 2017, Mexicans constituted 43% of this group —a percentage which represents almost half of the undocumented population in the United States and is the lowest after 10 years of the hardening of the U.S. policy of detentions, raids and deportations,

Figure 1.
Estimated international migration flows, 2010-2015



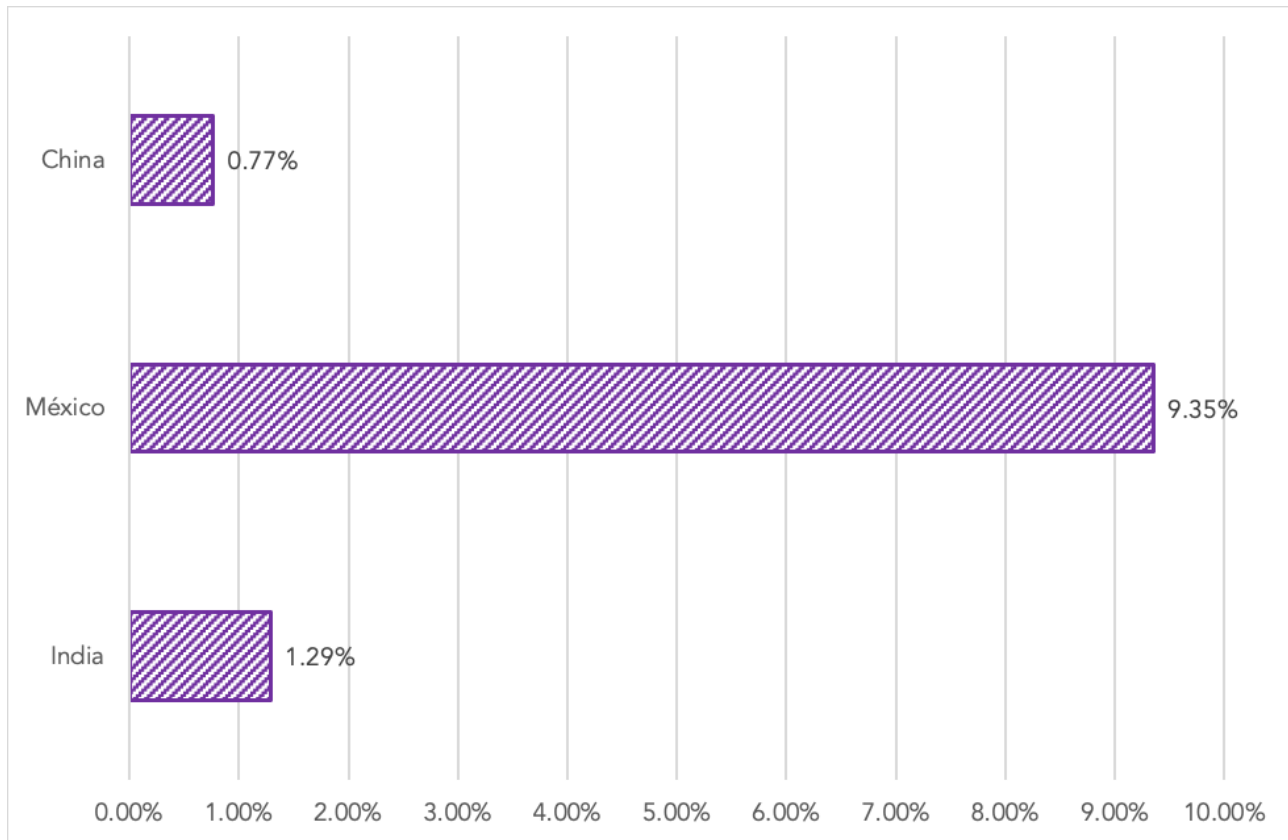
Source: Taken from Azose and Raftery (2019: 118).

Figure 2.
Number of international migrants by country of origin, 2019



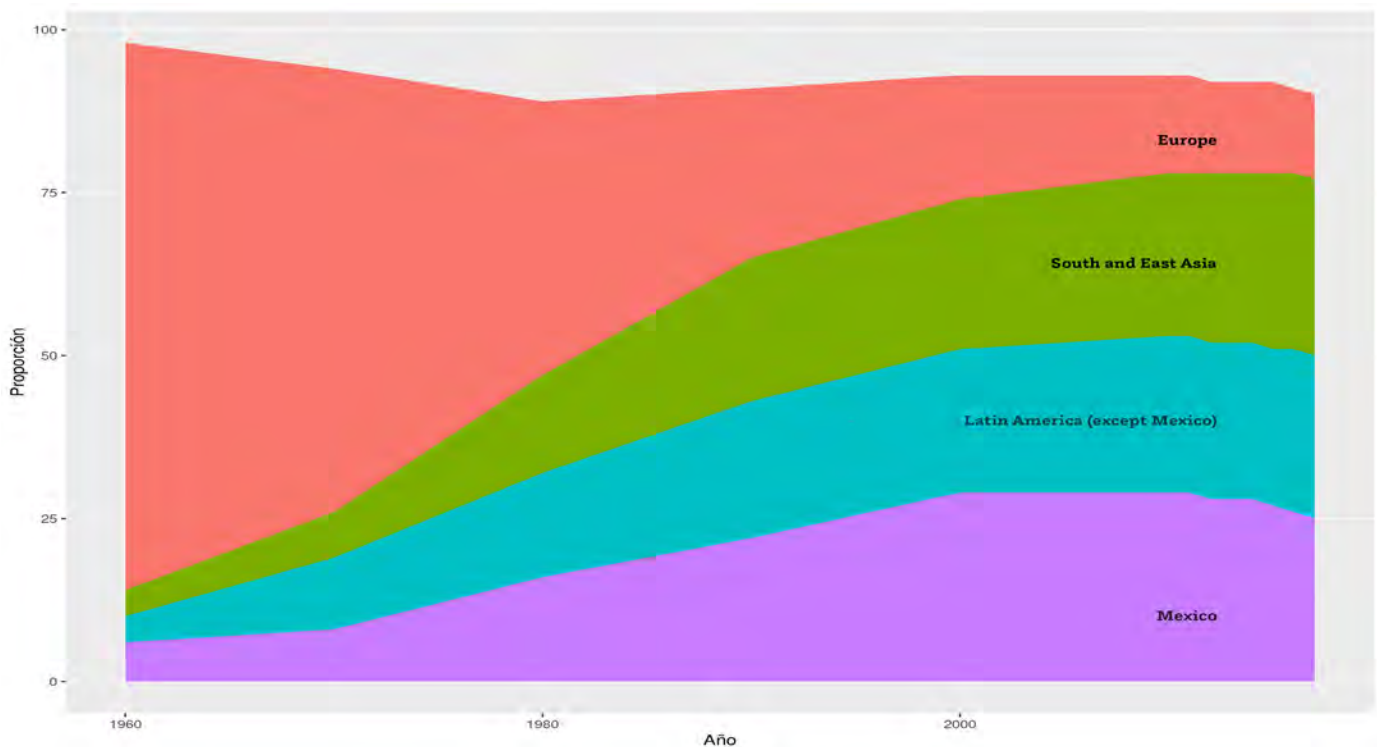
Source: Made by the authors using data from the Spanish language version of IMO's *World Migration Report 2020* (OIM, 2019: 3).

Figure 3.
International immigrants as a percentage of the total population of their country of origin, 2019



Source: Made by the authors using data from the Spanish language version of IOM's *World Migration Report 2020* (OIM, 2019: 3).

Figure 4.
Immigrant population in the United States by region of origin, 1960-2017



Source: Made by the authors with data from Pew Research Center, in Radford and Noe-Bustamante (2019). *Facts on U.S. Immigrants, 2017. Statistical portrait of the foreign-born population in the United States.*

which has led to a decline in this population. Finally, this reduction implies that undocumented Mexican migration (seen as a region) no longer represents the majority group in this segment, especially since the undocumented population of Indian and Chinese origin is on the rise (Passel and Cohn, 2019). However, the importance of the community of Mexican origin in the United States cannot be overlooked (Map 1).

Given the picture described so far, the need for, and usefulness of studying global migration —especially in this case of Mexico-United States migration— becomes evident. The complexity of migration and its impact on all areas of economic, political and social life in each of our countries not only has influenced the binational relationship but also has led academics, governments, civil organizations and other institutions to develop different ways and approaches to study this migration corridor. Although today we have a wide range of data on this subject, the truth is that, in the 1990s, this information was still scarce and dispersed. Currently, with the accumulation of available information —particularly of official and academic origin— in both countries, it is possible to have data on the size of the foreign-born population and its geographical distribution, with regional, historical, legal, sociological and anthropological studies and analyses that gather experiences and ways of life and organization developed within the migratory context. This information has also made it possible to open discussions on our origin, racism, xenophobia, and the role played by migrants in the relations between various population groups in the localities of destination. It has also made it possible to develop geopolitical analyses of the projection of the productive requirements of the North American economy and its potential migratory impact on a global scale. The great limitation we still face today is that, despite the abundance of information and methodologies, only estimates can be made about undocumented migration and some of its basic demographic characteristics.

Thus, it is now possible to distinguish particular migratory flows from a point of origin to one or more specific points of destination. The question then arises: how did these flows and their transnational communities form, and what motivated these people to always seek the same destination? There are communities in Mexico that have adopted specific states or places in the United States as an extension of their region of origin. Thus, for example, it is not uncommon to hear people in the state of Puebla refer to Puebla York, in Oaxaca to Oaxacalifornia, or in Mi-

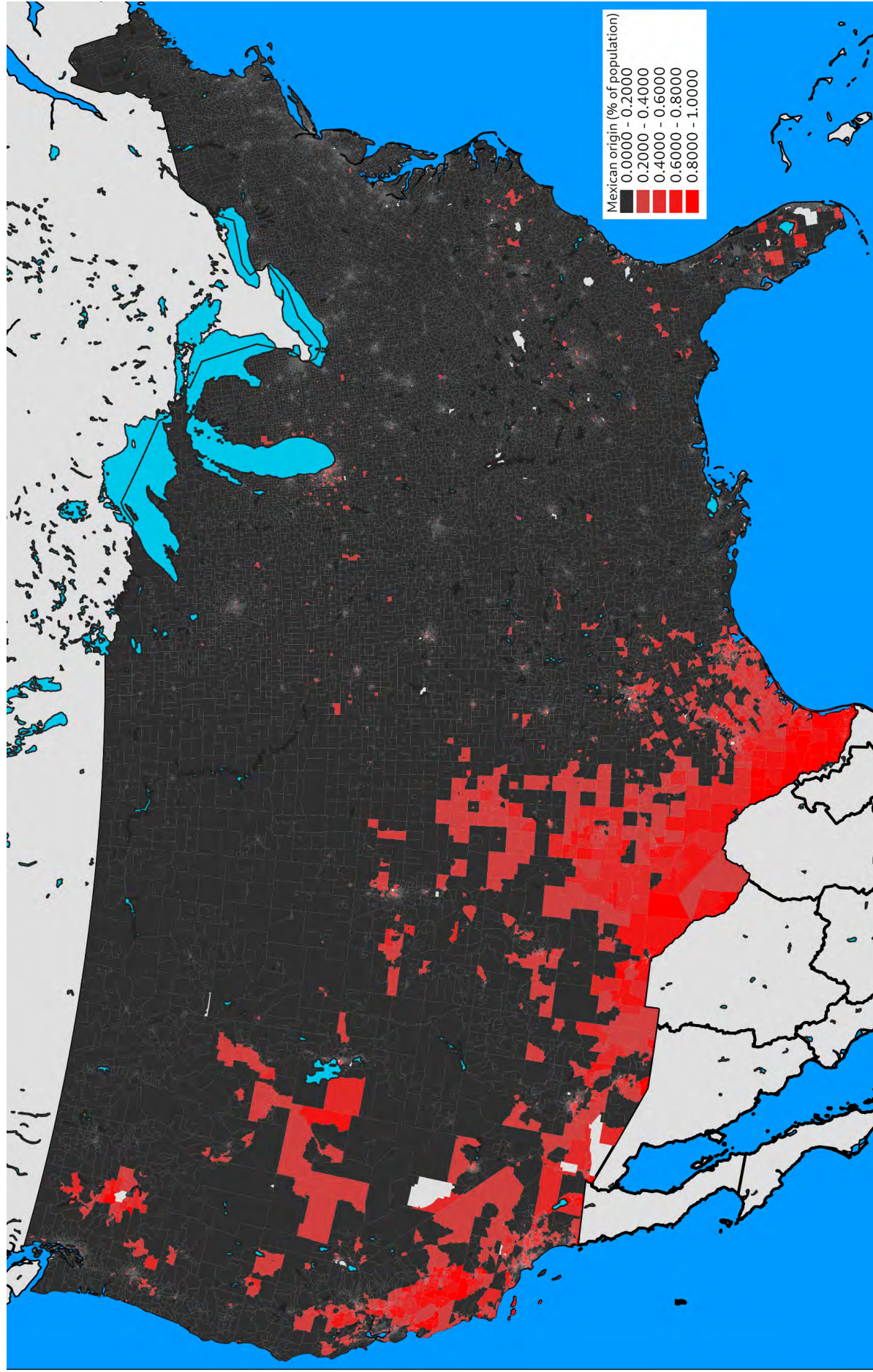
choacán to Chicagoacán, in a sort of attempt to make their own a space which is very distant geographically, but with which they share familiarity and community. In this sense, in the process of developing this project we realized that there is still little analysis of particular flows from one specific community to another, except in the case of California —the U.S. state with the largest number of migrants of Mexican origin, especially from Oaxaca—, despite the real need to try to understand the community networks of reception and recognition that those who migrate manage to weave in their communities of destination.

In the case of the Morelos-Minnesota migratory route, we are facing a flow that has been little explored in Mexico, but which is of great relevance in local and community terms. This project aims to add to the body of documentation on this migratory route, which is a must-read for understanding the origin and evolution of this flow. Thus, authors such as Dionicio Nodín Valdez, Velia Cecilia Bobes or Ana Melisa Pardo Montaña, and archives and documentary sources such as that of the Minnesota Historical Society, were important references for this research project. This study aims to update the information available on this migratory corridor, make it accessible to the general public, and promote greater closeness between the transnational communities of Morelos and Minnesota.

The work and mutual desire of the Minneapolis Foundation and Fundación Comunidad Morelos to deepen the understanding of their own communities and places of origin, on the one hand, and their places of destination, on the other, were fundamental to the realization of this project. It was their shared desire to articulate their communities in both countries, twinned by their migrant population, that made us understand the need to elucidate why the Morelos population, specifically that of Axochiapan, migrated and why they went to Minnesota: How did the people of Morelos find their way to that coldest and most northerly state in the United States? In other words, along with a migratory corridor as extensive as that of California, how did this corridor between Morelos and Minnesota come into existence?

It would be a mistake on our part to assume that migratory flows are static in time and space. However, we cannot deny that corridors such as the one from Morelos to Minnesota produce durable, active and very close transnational communities between points of origin and destination. For this reason, the commitment of both Foundations is very useful not only for those of us who study migration but also —and

Map 1.
Population of Mexican origin as a percentage of the total population of the United States



Source: Made by the authors based upon data from Manson, Schroeder, van Riper and Ruggles (2018).

above all— for those who migrate and connect spaces.

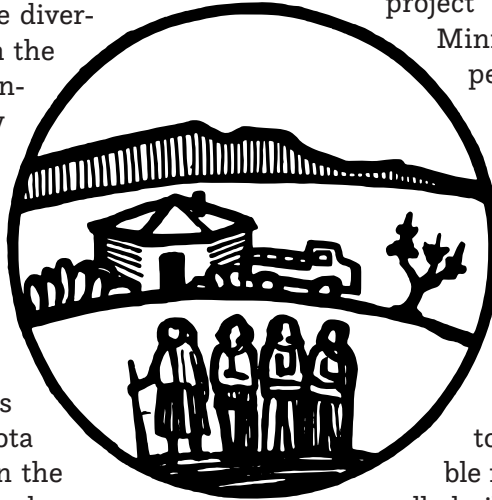
As researchers and participants in the international initiative Building Broader Communities in the Americas (BBCA), carrying out the project with the support of two Foundations, each one in the community of origin and of destination of such a significant corridor as the one we are dealing with, helped considerably in the construction of the methodology and in setting forth our objectives. In other words, if we had focused only on the phenomenon of migration from Morelos to the United States, the research strategy would have been much more difficult to examine and follow because of the diversity of destination points to which the people of Morelos migrate (mainly California, Texas, Illinois, New York, Minnesota and New Jersey) and would have involved breaking up our energy into multiple points of study, each with a great deal of complexity and diversity of manifestations worthy of in-depth analysis; this would have required much more than a year's worth of work. On the Minnesota side, the problem would have been the same, given that Minnesota is not only one of the largest host states for Morelos immigrants, regardless of their migratory status, but also includes three sanctuary cities.² Thus, performing this analysis exclusively from the Minnesota side would have involved studying the communities from Mexico, Somalia, India, Laos, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Thailand (Hmong), China, Korea, Liberia and Canada (Minnesota Compass, n.d.), in addition to the communities of Europeans, which were the first to migrate and settle in that state. It would also be necessary to recover, within this strategy, the rich heritage of the native peoples of Minnesota, which in itself deserves a separate study.

At no time do we regard the complexity of these last two perspectives of analysis as undesirable or unachievable; there already are a number of works that address them. However, we also believe that the chal-

² A sanctuary city "is a city that has decided to use its local resources to solve local problems. Some people believe that the term 'sanctuary' means that the city protects fugitives from the law. A better term than sanctuary city might be city under local control or safe city. [...] A sanctuary city is one that has established limits on the amount of resources it is willing to provide in support of the fulfillment of federal immigration law enforcement responsibilities" (Tsu, n.d.).

lenge of analyzing a particular immigrant community in Minnesota and a particular destination community of migrants from Morelos in the United States offers the advantage of observing in greater detail this transnational community network that is very significant for the populations of both states, regardless of the distance that divides them, which is more than 3,500 kilometers. Therefore, we may assert that there are more similarities between Minnesota and Morelos than might be expected from this "atypical" migratory corridor within the Mexico-United States migratory flow. We who carried out this research project gladly acknowledge that viewing Minnesota from Morelos and from the perspective of our professional path constituted an extremely pleasant novelty and a surprise.

Thus, from the experience acquired throughout this project, we celebrate the fact that this research is the fruit of the collaboration between two sister foundations in Mexico and the United States which, being fully committed to this joint endeavor, made all possible resources available to us and eventually built bridges between the communities of both states and between institutions and organizations. We consider it useful to repeat this experience under this modality, that is, in binational collaboration between various points of origin and destination, in order to achieve the objectives of this initiative which, as its name indicates, aims at building broader communities.



3. RESEARCHING TO BUILD COMMUNITY:

A PRELIMINARY REFLECTION

In Mexico, building community is understood in as many different ways as the enormous cultural diversity that exists within the territory. Some of these interpretations—for example, what is known as the *Altepetl* and, even more popularly, the *milpa*³—are very significant in Morelos (and across central and southern Mexico).

The *Altepetl* (in plural, *Altepeme*, a Nahuatl word that literally means: “the water (atl), the mountain (tepetl)”), is commonly translated into Spanish with the meaning of “people”, although it comes from the conjunction of two words that refer, in the culture of the peoples of central Mexico, to the elements necessary to make a place inhabitable (Fernández Christlieb and García Zambrano, 2006) (Figure 5). However, the *Altepetl* is more than that, because it also refers to the organization of groups of people who have dominion or control over a territory, but not in the exclusive sense of a settlement (e.g., a group of houses arranged in a certain way), but of a form of social organization in which people who live in the water (next to rivers and lakes) and among the mountains coexist with the goods of nature: the mountains (which in central Mexico are also volcanoes), which contain forests and fertile land, and where water abounds, giving rise to a diversity of plants, animals and climates. The mountains produce the water and the land, protect the inhabitants, and represent the strength of the community, seen as the network of relationships that are culturally embodied in its assemblies, in the election and control of its authorities, in its productive activity (the *milpa*), in the care and defense of their territory, and in the celebration of its festivals (Casifop, 2007).

Closely connected to the concept of the *Altépetl*, the peoples of Mesoamerica developed a productive system—the *milpa*—which is based precisely on their millenary relationship with the world (as sowers, as peasants) and on the view of life derived from that relationship. Technically, it can be said in a simplified way that a *milpa* is a productive system of food based on the alternation of crops within the same land so that each crop profits from its qualities, providing nutrients, shade or protection to the others, and thus promoting not only better harvests but also their nutritional, agro-diverse and environmentally beneficial complementarity. However, the *milpa*

³ *Milpa*: cornfield; a traditional agricultural ecosystem whose main components are corn, beans, squash, green leaves, chili and insects [Translator’s note].

is much more than a technical food production strategy. For Mesoamerican peoples, including the people of Morelos, “To be a farmer is to value that which is communal and to collectively relate to the land and the territory” (GRAIN, 2010). Therefore:

Corn is not a thing, nor is it merely a commodity or a crop: corn is a fabric of relationships. It originated some 10,000 years ago from mutual nurturing, from the conversation between the native peoples of Mesoamerica and from certain grasses which, through cultivation, adapted themselves to human ways. Little by little, we learned that corn is a community with beans, squash, chili and other plants, some of which are medicinal. This coexistence is called “*milpa*” by the people of Mexico, and in other places it is known as “*chacra*”. This mutual nurturing between the peasants (especially women) and corn made the latter dependent upon humans to fulfill its life cycle, so that it no longer grows wild. It entails a mutual nurturing that has been exercised by many different peoples, which is why corn is so varied and why these peoples have flourished so well through history: their cultural diversity and that of corn nurture each other (GRAIN, 2010).

What unites both concepts is the idea that social wealth cannot be produced individually, nor can it be static or homogeneous. In other words, the set of elements that make up and connect the production, articulation and renewal of communal wealth—such as the language with which we communicate, the traditions that we preserve and transform, the culture of which we are a product, the artistic, and culinary!, manifestations of our origin—and which not only shape us as the people that we are, the territory in which we live and the way we relate and identify with others, but also give us identity and roots regardless of where we are; they change constantly, and always set discussions in motion and give rise to re-thinking and rearranging between the diverse people who make up our communities. Thus, wealth—understood as everything that makes it possible for us to live in a dignified way, both individually and collectively, but which is not limited to money—can only be produced in diversity and jointly with the community.

In Minnesota, Land of the Dakota, or *Mni Sota Makoce*, “where the waters are so clear that they reflect the clouds” (Westerman and White, 2012: 13), “community” is understood differently than in Mexico; however, both groups have elements in common and can be complementary. In this section we will only refer to one in particular—that of the Dakota people, who understand and practice it in the form of *Tiošpaye*. This idea of community can be explained as follows:

Figure 5.
Symbols of the altepeme from Southeastern Morelos



Axochiapan:

Ayoxochitl (flower of the blooming squash),
Atl (water), and
pan (on)

“River of ayoxochiles or squash blossoms”



Tepalcingo:

Tecpatl (flint),
Tzintli (behind)
co (place)

“Place behind the flints”

Source: The symbol from Axochiapan was taken from Munoespizo’s own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8462342>. The symbol from Tepalcingo is from: Munoespizo’s own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8470667>. The meaning of the toponymies was taken from: <https://heraldicamesoamericana.wordpress.com/2016/05/19/toponimias-y-heraldica-de-morelos/>.

A person’s family members were not limited to the nuclear family (brothers, sisters, father and/or mother). For the Dakota people, family ties are much broader. My father’s brother counts as my own, and his sisters, as aunts. My mother’s sister counts as my own, and her brothers, as uncles. Consequently, their children are considered my siblings. According to this practice, no matter how close or distant their kinship, it is possible by right to claim any relative as part of the immediate family. This inclusiveness was Tiošpaye, the extended family (Westerman and White: 2012).

Strictly speaking, the term Tiošpaye refers to the inclusion and integration among all members of the seven peoples that make up the Dakota Nation. Thus, it was assured that when a member of one of these seven villages traveled to another community, he or she would be welcomed in those other villages as a member of the family. As time went by and the concept developed, Tiošpaye also became the idea that

being family means “sharing, being honest with each other, understanding each other (men and women) and working together. That human beings are part of the family —we are all siblings—, and that when a person is in trouble, it is always possible to go back to his or her family for support and assistance” (Josephson, 2000). This Dakota idea of the extended family as Tiošpaye allows us to view the scope of the community in terms of the fact that, the more members there are, the greater the wealth a person has with which to face life. Tiošpaye refers not only to the family ties that unite us with other people but also to the capacity that we humans have to listen to each other, understand each other, and share with each other the territory, the traditions and the problems, as well as to build a community based on the defense of diversity, regardless of the origin of each one of the individuals that integrate it.

In this migratory history, it is important for us not to leave out the original communities of Morelos

and Minnesota. Although this may seem to divert us from the issue, we cannot fail to point out that the land on which we live and the way we perceive it force us to defend the communities that previously inhabited and gave meaning to the territories that we inhabit today. It is not fortuitous that we refer to indigenous conceptions of community in order to rethink the way in which we want to build new communities that will include them and that will lead us to closer interrelationships based on recognition and respect for the differences of others. Reference to the indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica and to the North American Dakota people is a necessity and a potential starting point.

Within a context where Mexican and U.S. policies are adverse to migrants (for whatever reason), the community plays and has played a key role in providing protection and support to its members, regardless of their origin or migratory status. Only like this, for example, in the case of Mexico, has it been possible for communities to support all those Central American transmigrants⁴ who are at the mercy of organized crime and are susceptible to suffering violations of their human rights by Mexican authorities. Thanks to organizations such as Las Patronas, a group of women from the community of Guadalupe (La Patrona) in southern Veracruz who for more than 25 years have been preparing food for Central American migrants traveling on top of La Bestia,⁵ transmigrants can have something to eat; furthermore, these women have made visible the conditions in which migrants travel to the United States. Also, thanks to organizations linked to the Catholic Church that in several cases have involved their communities in the construction and operation of shelters, migrants can have a space to rest and, at the same time, enjoy some protection. And thanks to civil society organizations that have fought to make visible the injustices to



which migrants are subjected, it has become possible to collectively defend their rights.

Illustration by Rini Templeton

For their part, in the United States, it is the communities and their organizations that have denounced the injustices committed against migrants. Thus, their work has made visible the misinformation that aims to criminalize migrants and, to a certain extent, counteract it, by denouncing, among other things: the stigmatization of Mexican immigrants in the United States (an example of which is the manner in which the current President of the U.S., Donald J. Trump, has stigmatized Mexicans, calling them “rapists and criminals”); the proposed construction of a wall along the entire length of the border to “stop the invasion of illegals”; the Trump government’s pernicious use of the North American Free Trade Agreement (now the USMCA) as an economic weapon to force the Mexican government to stop migratory flows from Mexico and Central America; the suspension of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which in some cases prevented undocumented young men and women who arrived in the United States as children and are now an integral and valuable part of U.S. society (known as the dreamers) from being deported; or the installation of detention centers on the border with Mexico and the separation of families, which have resulted, in some cases, in the indefinite dissolution of families, with traumatic effects on the separated children, and even in sexual and psychological abuses committed by the same authorities in charge of protecting this most vulnerable population; threats of surprise detentions and deportations of undocumented migrants; pressure from the State Department to force the territories of countries like Guatemala or Mexico to make their territories become a “safe third country” in order to avoid guaranteeing the right to asylum to those who request it, and the exacerbation of xenophobic violence by extreme right-wing groups scattered throughout US territory.⁶

⁴ A transmigrant is a person who travels through one or more countries in order to reach another country that is not his or her own. The paradigmatic case of this type of migrant is that of people of Central American origin (particularly from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador) who go through Mexico in order to reach the United States.

⁵ La Bestia [*The Beast*] refers to the convoy that travels through the railway network connecting the southern border of Mexico (Tapachula, Chiapas) with the rest of the Mexican territory, especially the routes that lead north to the border with the United States, and which Central American migrants use to make their journey through Mexico faster (although not necessarily safer).

⁶ The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has compiled and geo-referenced the largest database of hate groups that have proliferated in the United States in recent years. In 2018, the SPLC identified over a thousand active hate groups in this country. The map is available at: <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map>.

This report celebrates the community and organizational responses that seek to address these injustices through the continued defense of the rights of people in general and of migrants, opposition to the wall, mobilization of dreamers, protests in detention centers, strengthening of support networks, and efforts to make injustices visible through social media, which would not be possible without the strength and the social fabric that constitute the wealth of communities.

The truth is that reality does not allow for our being naïve, nor are we trying to depict it as idyllic. Communities are complex and contradictory, but history has taught us that there are moments when the construction of the communities we want depends on their members: this is what traditions are. In honor of the truth, in this work the question we asked and continue to ask ourselves is: Do the people of Morelos practice the *Altépetl* in Minnesota? Do Minnesotans build *Tiošpaye* with immigrants? Do the people of Morelos build *Tiošpaye* and *Altépetl* with their compatriots both in Minnesota and in Morelos when they return?

The objectives of this project, which are to strengthen the communities, could not have been achieved if in the process of this work we had not put into practice that which we yearn for, namely: the building of community. In our opinion, this project could only be possible because all of us who were involved in it worked with dedication, recognized our diversity, and celebrated the differences in experience and capacity. This report is the synthesis of the community we built, even if only momentarily, along the way. While the authors of this Report assume full responsibility for any errors made, we cannot fail to recognize that any success of this work is also the fruit of this binational community committed to the flourishing of our partners both here and there. Our hope is that the community will be a powerful force that will take into its own hands its capacity to transform the world, and that this work will have contributed at least somewhat to that end. The last word is up to the readers.

Along this path, we have met different people and organizations without whose support the readers would not be holding this report in their hands. To all of them we express our deepest gratitude and recognition:

We thank Fundación Comunidad A.C. and the Minneapolis Foundation for their trust in us, for having granted us the opportunity to carry out this work and the possibility of doing it together. We celebrate

the interest and commitment to execute a project of this magnitude within a context where the challenges ahead require willingness to work collectively.

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Illustration by Rini Templeton

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Finally, we leave this material —the fruit of collaborative, collective, and community work— in the hands of the reader and we hope that this report will translate into actions to restore the social fabric and build local and transnational communities because, as the Wixaritari (Huichol native people) say:

If the alternatives are not collective, they are not alternatives.





Santos Motoapohua de la Torre de Santiago,
Jalisco (1942-). *El nuevo amanecer* (Fragment).
Chaquira on Campeche wax on wood.
National Mexican Art Museum
collection, Chicago, Ill.
Photo: Adriana Martínez



CHAPTER 1.

THE MEXICO-U.S. MIGRATION CORRIDOR: A LONG HISTORY OF INTERCONNECTIONS AND INTERDEPENDENCE

There have always been migrants, but now they are multitudes. And the avalanche of migrants coincides with three five-year periods of “structural adjustment,” especially with the launching of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994. Public policies that were supposed to take the country into the first world instead sent Mexicans to “gringo land.” International agreements that were supposed to lift us out of our underdevelopment instead plunged us into crisis and exodus. Ironically, NAFTA scarcely mentions migration, and needless to say, it doesn’t open the borders to braceros (migrant laborers) in search of work, although it does open them to entrepreneurs coming to invest.

Armando Bartra, *Cosechas de ira (Crops of Rage)*, 2003

In this chapter we will address the overall context of the Morelos-Minnesota migration corridor. We will briefly outline the history of the relationship between Mexico and the United States as it pertains to migration. Our intention is for the reader to identify—in time and space—the way in which a complex relationship of interaction and interdependence has been interwoven between the two countries. It will become evident that migration to the United States does not depend solely on the individual decisions made by persons leaving their communities and often their families behind—with everything this involves (pain, fear, uncertainty and hope). Rather, it also responds to the structural factors behind the displacement of these individuals from their countries and communities of origin (including factors associated with violence, work, poverty, lack of access to basic services, displacements caused by large private projects, extreme weather events, etc.). There are also structural elements that explain why people are drawn to countries of destination (more work opportunities, wages relatively higher than those in countries of origin, support networks among migrants, and family reunification that can also open the way to social mobility).

Thus, through a brief review of history and the use of geostatistical information, we will present some elements that reveal the interconnection between the two countries' economies, and we will point to some key features of the migration flow from Mexico to the United States that illustrate the importance of the Morelos-Minnesota corridor from a broader perspective.

1. CONTEXT ANALYSIS: MODERN MIGRATION HISTORY (19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES)

Migration between the territories we currently know as Mexico and the United States is an age-old process that has not always been as we know it today, that is, as the documented or undocumented crossing of the official border between the two countries. As we mentioned earlier, migration is not an exclusively modern process. Rather, it is as old as humanity, and what is constant is the flow of different people from different places, depending on the particular moment in history under analysis. For example, there have been times in which migrations have been associated with the original identity of peoples in a given territory. Consider the myth associated with the founding of Tenochtitlan in which the Aztecs migrated from Aztlán—located somewhere in North America—to the south looking for a sign that

would indicate the place where they would settle. The sign was an eagle perched on a nopal (cactus), devouring a snake, and the place was what today is known as Mexico City. In the 1960s Chicanos would claim mythical Aztlán as a symbol of their identity and the definition of “what it was to be Mexican in the United States.” In contrast, at other times, including the present time, migrations are associated with the search for opportunities, employment, family reunification, refuge, environmental conditions or social mobility.

Tracing migration flows in North America back to their origins is a necessary task, from our point of view. However, in this report we will limit ourselves to briefly summarizing the modern history of migration between Mexico and the United States, and later in this report, we will specifically study the flow of migrants between Morelos and Minnesota. Our intention will be to reveal and understand the implications of these displacements for communities and migrants on both sides of the border. What is true is that, in Mexican and US modern history, the migration of Mexicans to their neighboring country to the north has woven a tapestry of transnational communities, support networks and new cultural practices. This makes it necessary for us—as organizations, communities and individuals—to attempt to understand the social, cultural, political and economic context in which these migration movements take place and which have transformed our daily lives.

We will thus focus on presenting a succinct analysis of a brief episode in the long history of migration between Mexico and the United States—which, according to the historiographic periodization defined by British historian Eric Hobsbawm, encompasses the end of what has been referred to as the “Long 19th Century” and all of the “Short 20th Century—to arrive at a new configuration of interdependent relations and migration between the two countries in the 21st century.

2. EIGHT KEY MOMENTS

Within this modern history we are referencing, we can identify eight stages that have defined the characteristics of the contemporary migration flow from Mexico to the United States. The public policies in each of the two countries and those coordinated between them address this migration flow in different ways during these various stages. In general, public policies respond to reality, with the aim of correcting paths or lending specific meaning to the trajectory of a social or

economic phenomenon, thus producing an expected or desirable outcome (such as reducing poverty, providing a public service to a population previously excluded from access, promoting some type of economic activity in a given region, etc.). In any nation's migration policy we will find a confluence of the many political and economic interests—sometimes conflicting and sometimes cooperating—of those who, for example, require the migrant labor force to avoid economic collapse, as well as those who reject attracting and giving migrants work because they do not belong to the dominant social group in cultural, ethnic or economic terms. Other elements that play a role in negotiations and deliberations include migrant organizations and their aspirations and struggles, primarily focused on winning the right (not yet recognized in many places) to be subjects of law, as any other person, independently of their ethnic or national origin. The history of migrations is, at the same time, the history of migrants' struggle—not always successful—to have their identity recognized no matter where they are, and without fear or stigmas.

We believe these eight stages are important in this analysis, to provide the reader with the broadest context possible for an understanding of migration flows as not only movements of persons from one place to another, but as involving a set of contexts that—in time and space—have led to conditions for the displacement of individuals from their places of origin, for migrants to be drawn to specific places in the United States and for the possibility of building transnational communities in the binational historical path of these two countries.

a) The Long 19th Century: Military conflicts between Mexico and the United States

The border between Mexico and the United States as we know it today was not definitively established until the mid-19th century. Before that time, the United States was engaged in full territorial expansion to the west,¹ and Mexico, for its part, was attempting to deal with its recently won independence from the Spanish crown together with, on the one hand, the inconvenience of a territory that was geographically and demographically difficult to integrate (Map 1), and on the other, the economic problem of bankruptcy brought on by the Santa Anna government.

1 For example, with the purchase of Louisiana from the French empire in 1803; the Treaty of 1818 for defining the border between the United States and Canada; and the Transcontinental Treaty of 1819, which transferred the Florida peninsula from Spanish to US hands (McDougall, 1997).

In the midst of a global context characterized by the world's reorganization, Mexico and the United States were engaged in a series of conflicts that resulted in the latter gaining territories in northern Mexico in two stages:

1. The annexation of Texas to the United States in 1845, as a result of demands made by a separatist group of citizens in that state, as well as the Mexican government's unpaid debts to US citizens, associated with a demand for reparation for damages caused by social turmoil in Mexico.
2. Following a number of provocations by the US army aimed at inciting a military conflict with Mexico, the US Congress had to approve a declaration of war in 1846, thus initiating an episode known as US intervention in Mexico. With the triumph of US troops, Mexico's government was forced on February 2, 1848 to sign the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, through which "the United States acquired a territory greater than 522,000 square miles (840 thousand square kilometers), encompassing what we currently know as the states of Arizona, Nevada and Utah, and a significant portion of the states of Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico—in other words, the largest territorial expansion since the acquisition of the Louisiana territory" (Moya, 1994:248). The Treaty also extended the US southern border from Texas to the West Coast, thus annexing what is today the state of California (Map 2). The US economic projection to the Pacific Coast involved not only a policy of integrating new territories into the United States, but also a demographic policy of the occupation of these territories, since as stated by sociologist Saskia Sassen:

[...] colonizing migrations originated in developed countries and colonists were viewed as a valuable resource. Throughout the 17th, 18th and well into the 19th centuries, this view on population was captured in axioms such as Rodin's: "There are no strengths or riches aside from those of men;" Sir Joshua Child's: "The riches of city or nation [lie] in the multitude of its inhabitants;" and Sarmiento's: "To rule is to populate" (1993: 58-59).

With the new geographic, political and economic conditions characterizing the near-end of the long 19th century, new social conditions were created, and thus so were new characteristics of migration. It is from this moment on that we can speak of contemporary migration between Mexico and the United States.

If we observe the current distribution and settlement of the Mexican population in today's US territory in relation to the US total population, what we see is that the population of Mexican origin resides predominantly in territories that were part of Mexico prior to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (Map 3).

Furthermore, if we observe the distribution and settlement of the Mexican population as a proportion of the population of Latin American origin in US territory (generally grouped under the term "Hispanic population"), what becomes evident is the importance of Mexicans in US economy, culture and politics, as the largest population from the Latin American region (Map 4).

b) The Mexican Revolution, World War I and the Great Depression of 1929

The second decisive moment in the contemporary history of this migration flow is evident in a series of nearly simultaneous historic events that left their mark on the entire world.

1) With the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, a considerable number of Mexicans had to flee to their neighboring country to the north. It was the first major revolution in the 20th century—fought by historic figures such as Emiliano Zapata, who was from the state of Morelos, and for whom "land belongs to those who work it." The effects of this war disrupted the country's economic, political and social life, and led to the formation of contemporary Mexico, although in an economically weakened state. As a result, "it is estimated that approximately a third of a million Mexicans emigrated between 1910 and 1917 [during the Mexican Revolution], with an average of 53,000 per year" (Gómez-Quíñones, 1978).

2) While the Mexican Revolution was taking place, the US economy was experiencing a period of economic growth and development that was fostered, on the one hand, by the accelerated industrialization in the eastern part of the country, and on the other, to a great extent, by the expansion of its territory to the southwest. The latter permitted the United States to increase its agricultural production and gain access to natural resources (especially minerals) in the newly acquired lands. This expansion was accompanied by a growing need for labor, which was insufficient at that time. These economic dynamics, together with the social crisis in Mexico, served as a mechanism that attracted the migrant labor force from Mexico and from the rest of the world to join in the industrialization, urbanization and structuring of

US territory.

All of this was framed in a global context of territorial and political reorganization, which had already led to international military conflicts on two different occasions. For example, World War I, that is, "the 1914-1918 conflict—[was] a struggle to re-divide the world between the world's great powers" (Bambery, 2015: 12).

3) World War I opened up a new phase in migration dynamics between Mexico and the United States, but particularly in global economic dynamics. With war raging in the European continent, the United States was able to establish itself as a hegemonic power by the end of the conflict, and for two main reasons:

First of all, because during this same time period, the United States had initiated a process of demographic integration (see the Map 5 series) and territorial interconnection between the east and west (by building infrastructure), as both a condition and an effect of its accelerated economic growth (Map 6). Or, as Gómez-Quíñones has written:

The conflagration on the world stage caused a decrease in European immigration, and simultaneously, an increased need for labor. Economic and market development [...] brought the emergence of employment agencies established exclusively to recruit Mexican labor. The largest agencies worked for the railroad. Alongside the need for this immigrant labor force was a growing need to control it (Gómez-Quíñones, 1978: 82).

Map 6 shows the current railway system connecting Mexico and the United States, including the major urban centers in both countries. The building of railroad networks served not only to interconnect cities and industries in the United States and Mexico (during the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship). It also served as a means of transportation to bring the migrant labor force that built it.

A second reason for the consolidation of US hegemony was that while US involvement in World War I occurred late for determining the results, another decisive fact was that, "the victors in the First World War had taken out American loans to cover the debts they had incurred, while the losers had taken them to help pay off reparations imposed on them by the post-war treaties" (Bambery 2015:16). In this way the United States became the world's main creditor nation. According to Dionicio Valdés (2000):

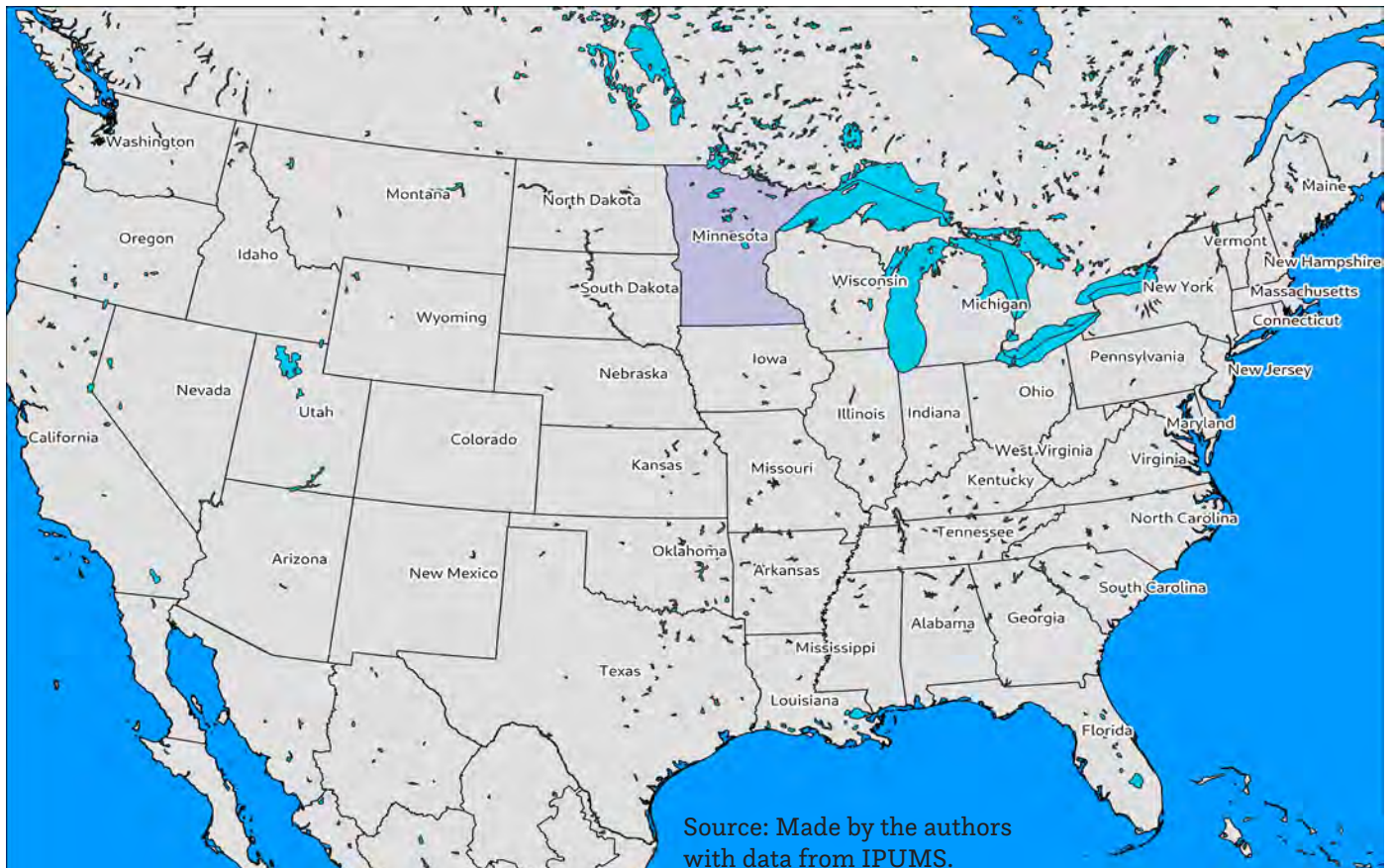
The construction of Mexican railroads stimulated in-

Map 1.
The Mexican territory, 1821

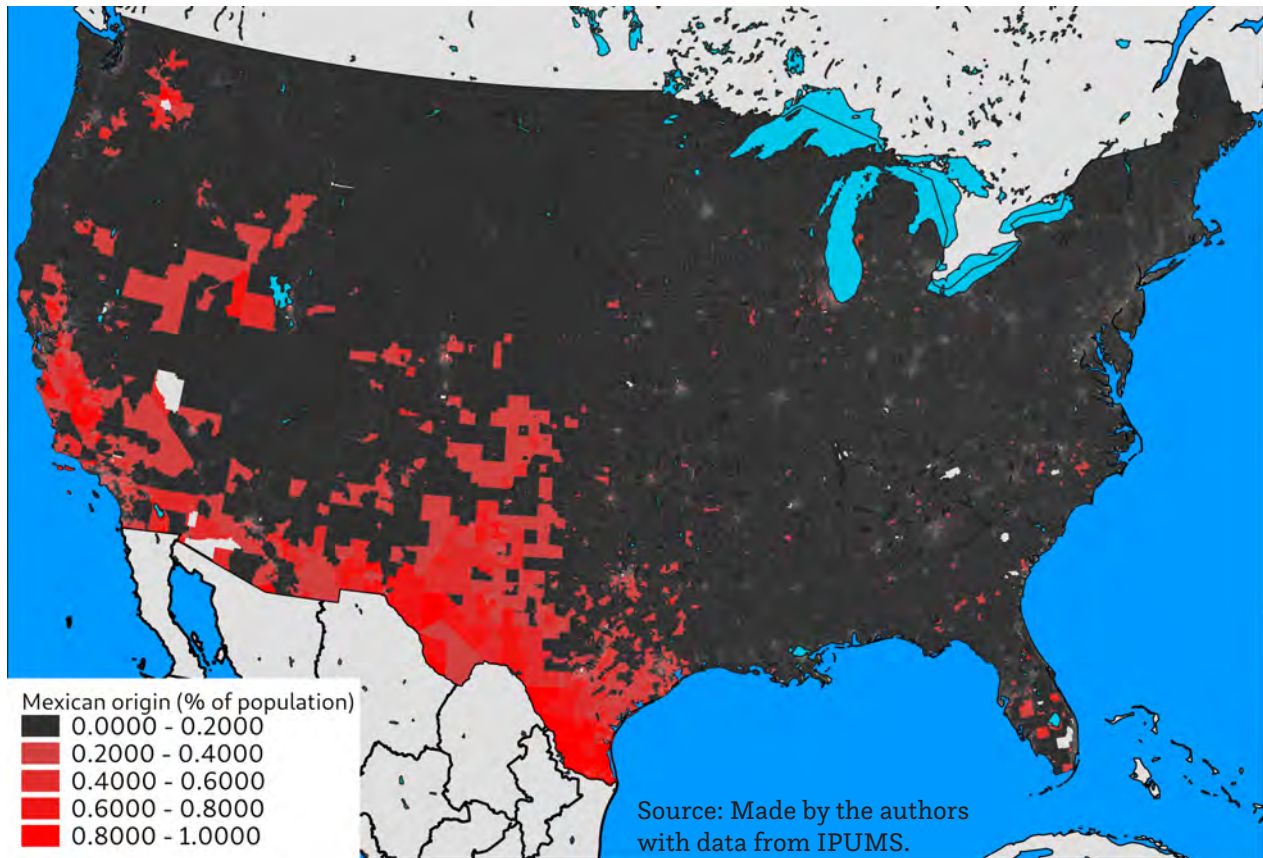


Source: Giggette and Wikimedia Commons. "Political Divisions of Mexico 1821 (location map scheme)", with additional information from Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía. Obtenido de: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/84/Political_divisions_of_Mexico_1821_%28location_map_scheme%29.svg.

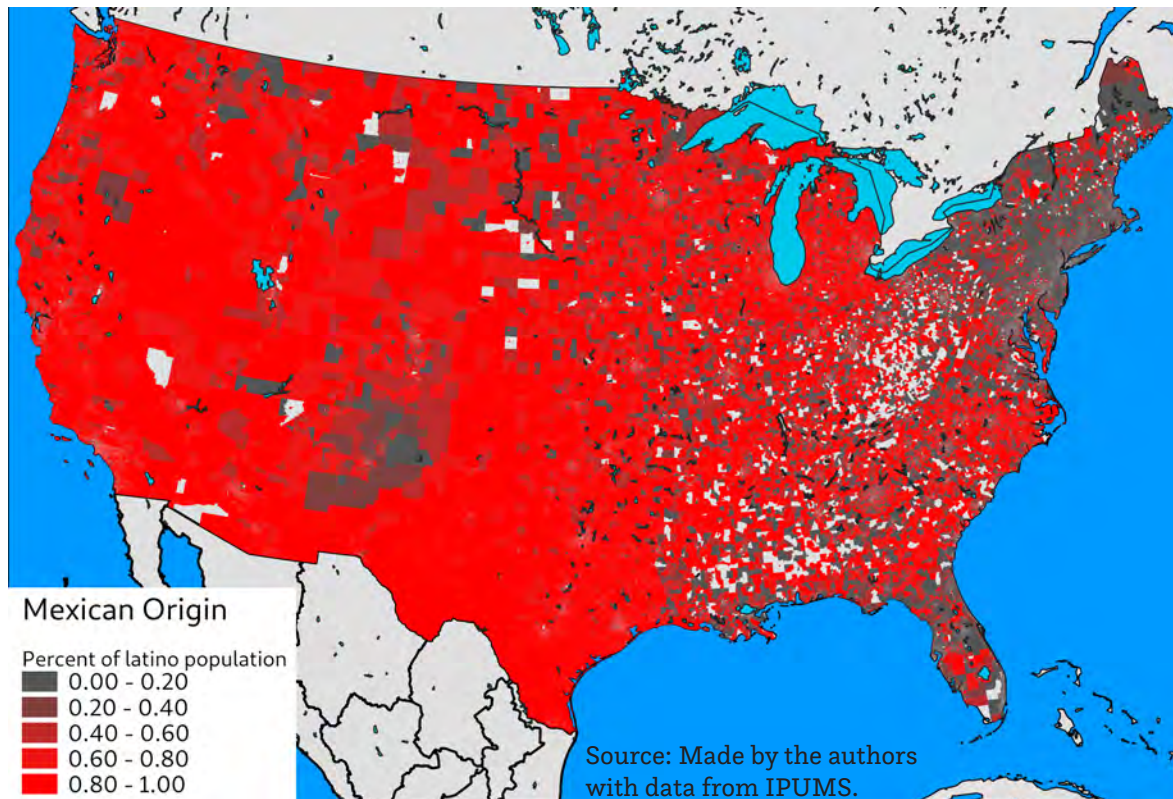
Map 2. The definitive territory of the United States of America, with 50 states



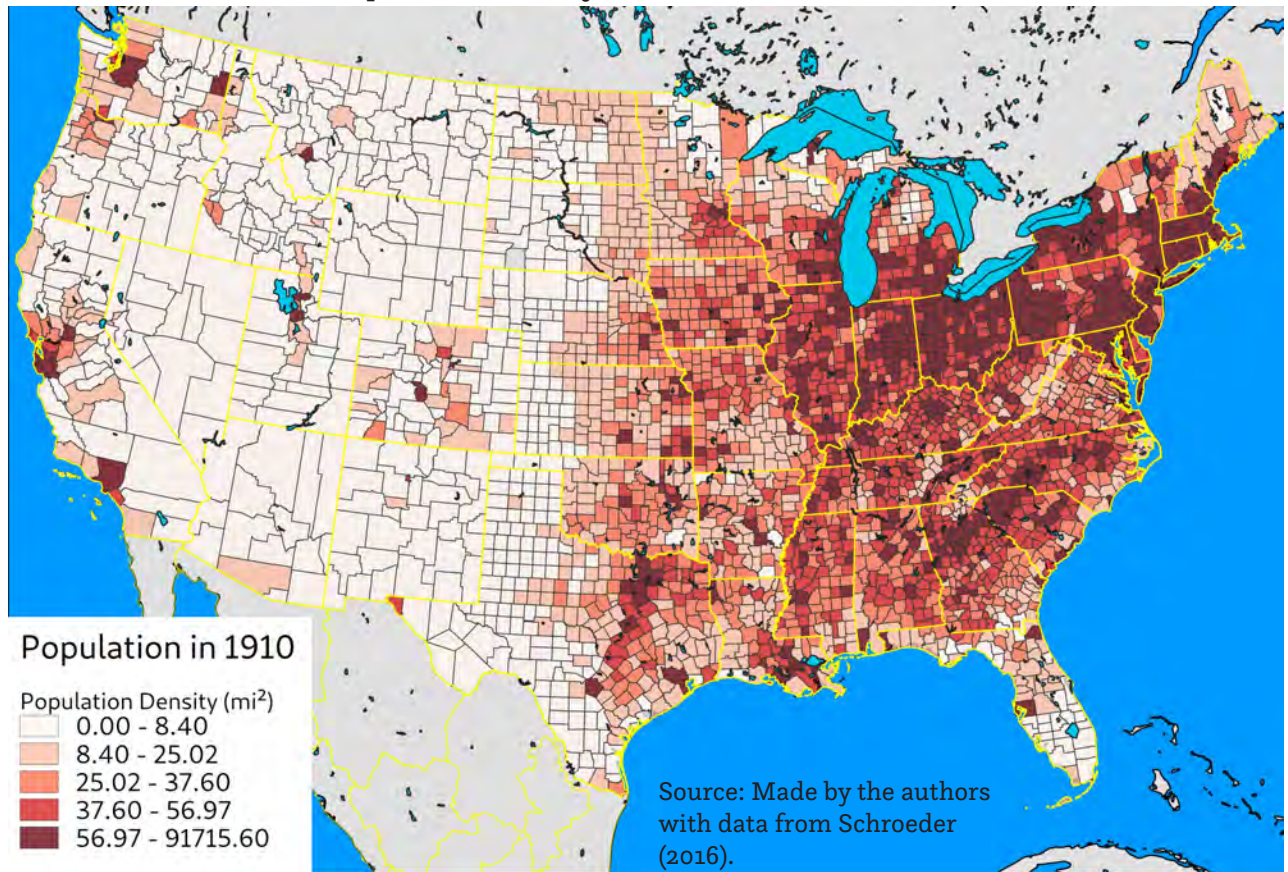
Map 3. Population of Mexican origin and its distribution as a percentage of the total population of the United States, 2018



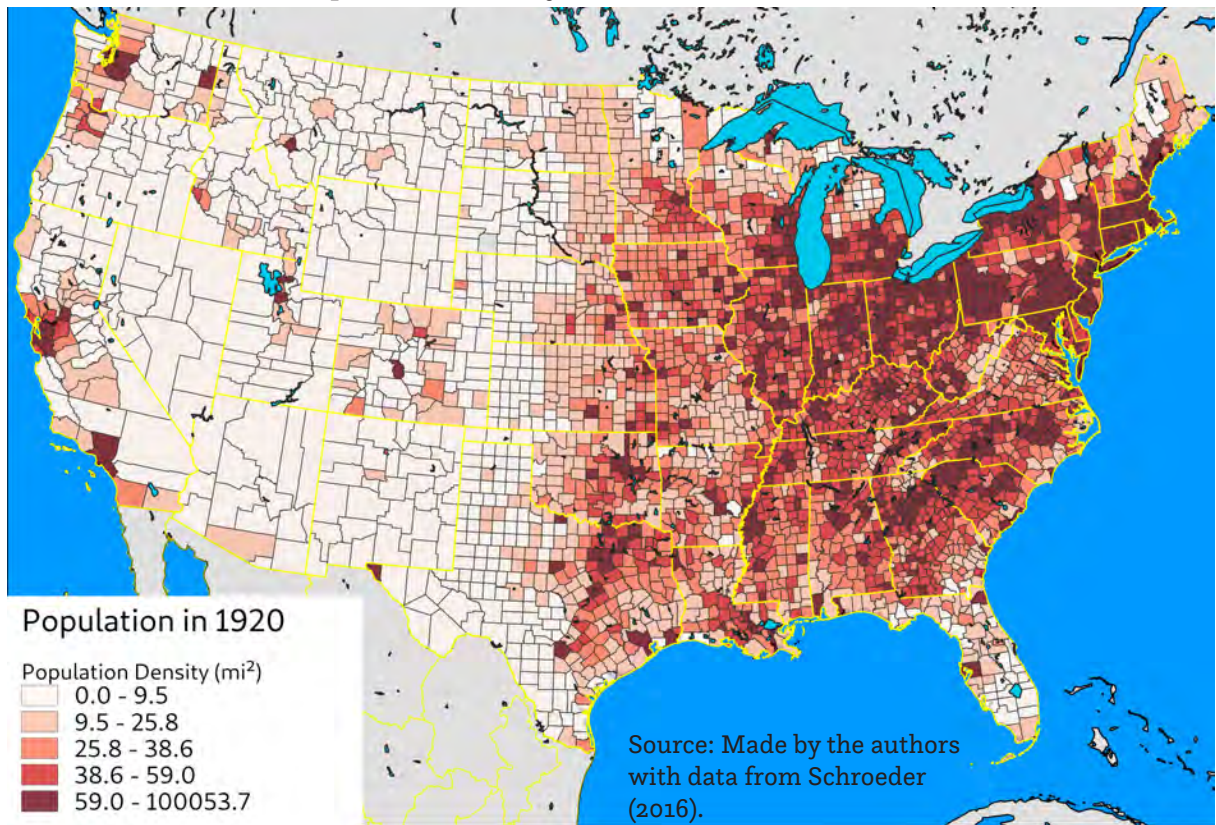
Map 4. Population of Mexican origin and its distribution as a percentage of the population of Latin American origin in the United States, 2018



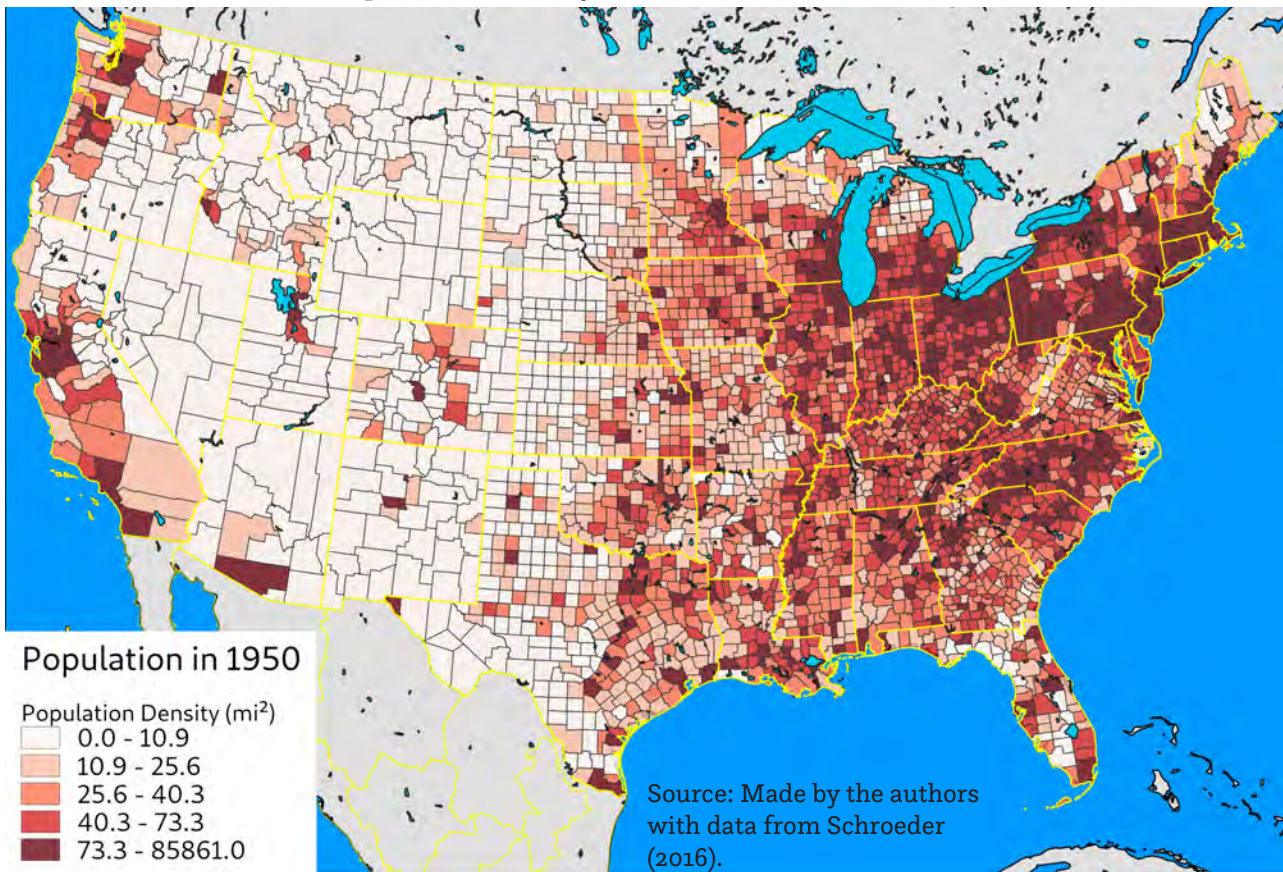
Map 5a.
Population density in the United States, 1910



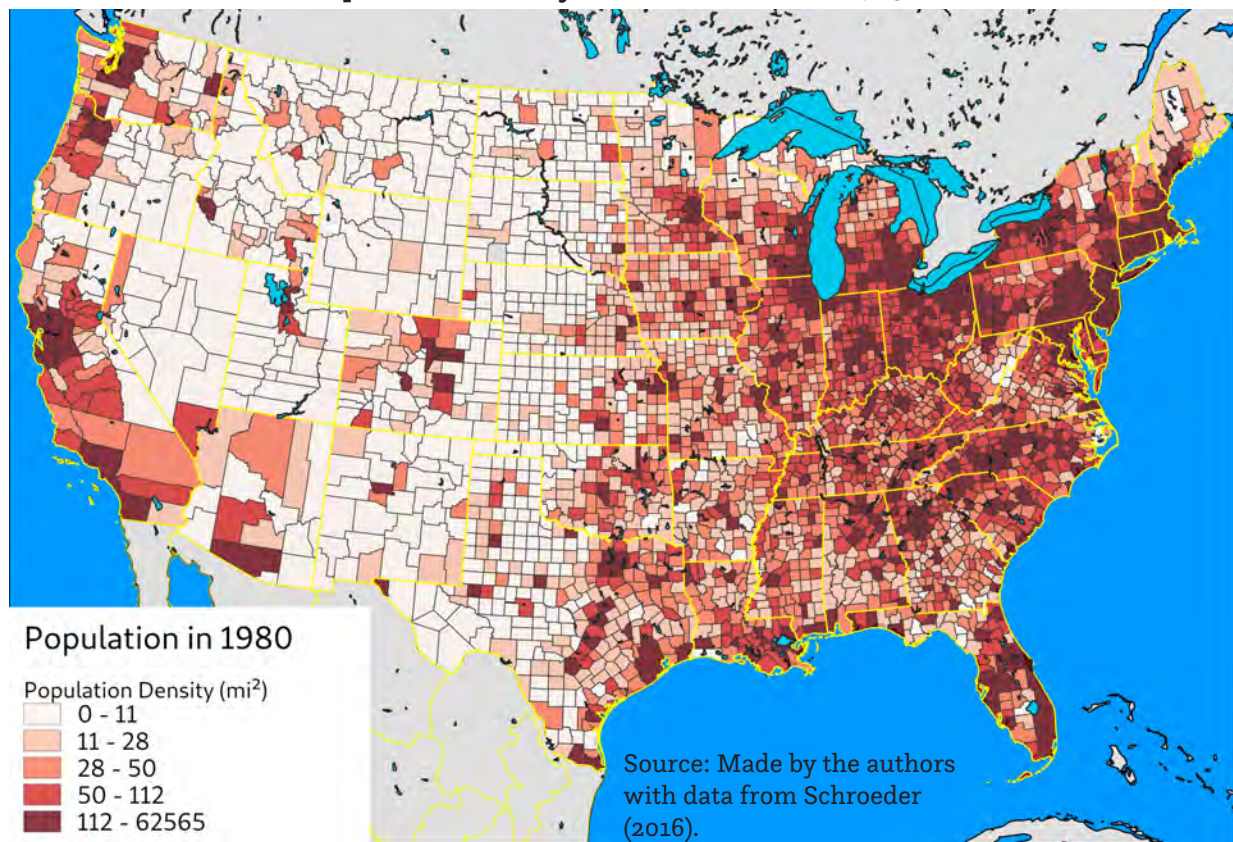
Map 5b.
Population density in the United States, 1920



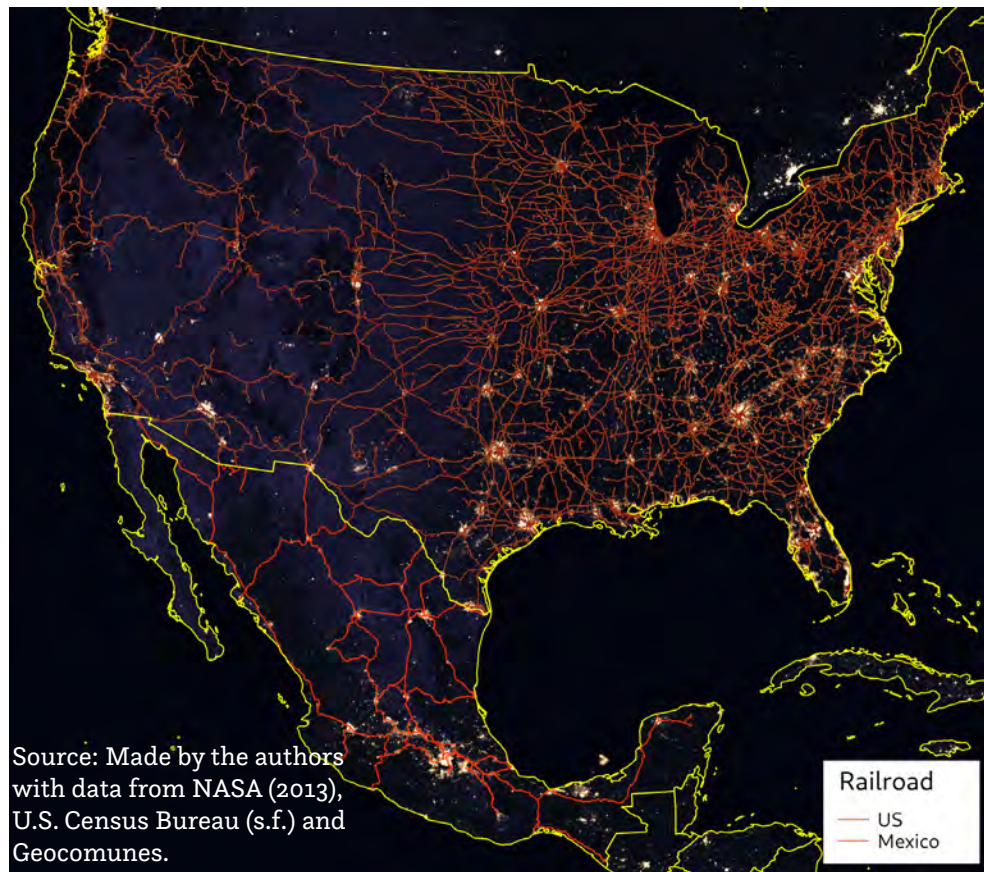
Map 5c.
Population density in the United States, 1950



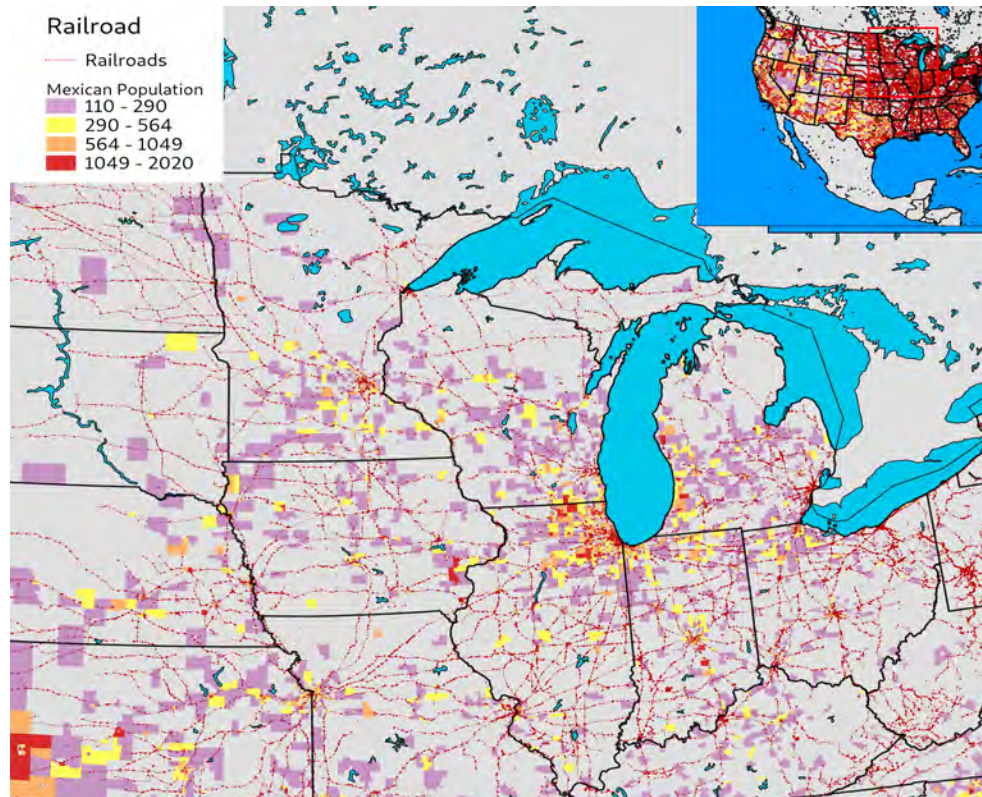
Map 5d.
Population density in the United States, 1980



Map 6.
Main urban centers and the railroad network of Mexico and the United States



Map 7.
The railroad network in the Midwest and main Mexican population settlements



ternational investment and commerce while making possible a rapid increase in migration between Mexico and the United States. [...] Midwestern Mexican colonias appeared in three distinct phases in the early twentieth century. The first, between 1906 and 1910, was associated with recruitment by railroad companies already employing Mexicans in the Southwest. [...] A second phase, from 1916 to 1919, was linked to railroad and industrial employer demands during the World War I economic boom and labor shortages that resulted from restricted immigration from Europe. [...] A third phase took place after the postwar industrial depression of 1920-1921 (Valdés, 2000: 24-25). (Author's translation).

As we can see, the railroad played a determining role in the founding of the US economy as well as in economic relations between Mexico and the United States. However, it also contributed to the establishment of specific migration corridors and the settlement of Mexicans in certain communities. This is evident in Map 7, which illustrates how the locations of Mexican colonias in this region frequently coincide with the routes followed by railroad tracks.

4) Lastly, the logic of the intense, accelerated industrial and financial expansion spurred by the war would end up leading to the Great Depression of 1929, which in turn would redefine Mexico-US relations with respect to migration.

In this regard, it is important to remember that in 1929 the worst economic crisis recorded in the world's history erupted. This crisis was the result of a process in which the production of goods—derived from increasing automation of production—exceeded society's capacity to purchase such goods. This was occurring in a global economy that was, simultaneously, expanding in some regions and shrinking in others—with Europe, devastated by the war, an example of the latter.

During the years prior to the outbreak of the Great Crisis, the need to reduce the hiring of workers was already evident, and the first on the list of those to go were, without a doubt, Mexican migrant workers. One of the largest population outflows from Mexico to the United States in the 20th century took place between 1920 and 1929, with nearly a half million Mexicans emigrating legally to work primarily in the building of railway infrastructure and in agriculture. Nevertheless, a hardening of US labor policies on the hiring of Mexican labor also began during this same period, and it was accompanied by a discourse of hatred and racial superiority that permeated US society, especially in the workers' sector. That year:

...a new form of administrative control over immi-

gration entered into effect. The State Department instructed its embassy officials in Mexico to comply with the restrictions imposed by existing laws and reduce immigration. The primary method consisted of combining the Act of 1917 with the 1885 Alien Contract Labor Law [...] signifying that if an immigrant applied for a visa and stated he did not have the assurance of employment, he was denied a visa based on the public charge provision; if an immigrant stated he did have a job waiting for him in the United States, he was denied a visa because it would violate the labor law on hiring foreigners. The Act of 1929 made entering the United States illegally a crime, and it also established the conditions for applying a more severe punishment to those who re-entered the country after having been expelled (Gómez-Quíñones: 1978: 84).

In this way, US-Mexico relations pertaining to migration adopted the form of “a problem of illegality,” with the US government then creating and selectively applying laws oriented toward the criminalization of immigrants, and especially Mexicans. However, as we have already seen here, this policy was not so much oriented toward resolving a problem of criminality, but rather had the economic function of regulating the flow of migrant workers, in accordance with fluctuations in industrial development and its economic cycles (Box 1).

c) World War II

The Great Crisis of 1929 extended into the 1930s, when millions of families around the world were poverty-stricken due to the lack of employment, the closing of factories, increases in the prices of basic consumer goods, etc. This led to the emergence of two contradicting tendencies in the world. On the one hand, the arrival of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the US presidency brought the policy known as the New Deal, aimed at developing social programs to address the population's basic needs and including an ambitious program for building public infrastructure to generate jobs. The other tendency arose from the deep post-war crisis in Europe, and the rise to power of Adolf Hitler in Germany and Benito Mussolini in Italy. These events unleashed a violent policy—known as fascism—based on a discourse of “racial superiority” and the resurgence of “national greatness” to resolve the crisis.

Throughout the 1930s, the US population experienced the effects of the economic crisis, and the US government implemented policies aimed at expelling Mexican immigrants in order to address the lack of jobs and the low wages for the population. During

Box 1.

The segregation of Mexicans in the 1940s

There is a history of discrimination toward Mexicans in the United States. Although it is estimated that thousands of mob attacks on Mexicans or persons of Mexican origin occurred between 1848 and 1928, there is specific documentation verifying that at least there were 547 lynchings of Mexicans or persons of Mexican descent during this period. The killings occurred in states such as Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado, among others (Carrigan and Webb, 2013: 6-7).

When the economic crisis exploded in 1929, anti-Mexican sentiment in the United States intensified, and it was manifested in accusations such as those claiming that Mexicans (and other foreigners) were “stealing American jobs.” Other forms of discrimination and segregation against Mexicans included prohibiting them from being served in restaurants and in other public places. Mexicans were prohibited from entering movie theaters and sitting among the white population. Mexicans were only allowed to enter public swimming pools on Mondays, since the white population used the pools on Sundays, and it was after Mexicans used the pools that they were filled with fresh water. In states such as Texas and California, with larger Mexican-American populations, US officials frequently conducted raids to detain and “repatriate” thousands of Mexicans. One well-known raid of this type was conducted on Olvera Street in Los Angeles, California in 1931. In this raid, 400 US citizens of Mexican origin were forcibly “repatriated” to Mexico (Olivo, 2001). During the economic crisis, it is estimated that as many as two million persons of Mexican origin were expelled, and 60% of them were US citizens (Blakemore, 2018). In 1936 the Colorado government even issued an order for all “Mexicans” (including the population who spoke Spanish or “appeared Mexican”) to abandon the state’s territory.



Another facet of the discrimination against Mexicans was segregation in US schools. While in southwestern states there were no laws explicitly establishing the segregation of whites and Mexicans—as in southeastern states, where African Americans were the target—the children of Mexican Americans were forced to enroll in “schools for Mexicans.” But in 1945 Gonzalo Méndez Silva challenged this practice in the courts. *Méndez v. Westminster* became the first case in US history

in which the ruling was in favor of school integration. In 1947 the court’s ruling forced schools in Orange County, California to integrate students without distinction as to race. The US Supreme Court resolution stipulating desegregation in all of the country’s schools used a number of arguments from the Méndez case (Echavarri and Bishop, 2017).

Sources of the images: Image 1: Taken from Latinousa.org. Image 2: taken from Latina.com.

this period the US government repatriated over a half million Mexican workers (legal and temporary workers) through a range of methods including persuasion, intimidation, violence and forced repatriation (Gómez-Quíñones 1978: 85). Mexican migrant workers were thus returned to their place of origin, in the midst of a context marked by uncertainty, social labeling, and in some cases, criminalization in the United States.

When World War II broke out, the global econ-

omy once again propelled industrial growth in the United States. This led to an increasing need for more workers, while at the same time the US army was sending large numbers of its citizens to fight in the war.² US participation in the war impacted US citizens of Mexican origin, some of whom joined the

² According to information from the National WW II Museum (www.nationalww2museum.org), 16 million US soldiers fought in that war.

US Army, Navy and Air Force. It is estimated that between 400,000 and 500,000 Latinxs (most of whom were Mexicans) participated in the war. For this reason, it became necessary for the US State Department and the Mexican government to sign the Mexican Farm Labor Agreement, more well-known as the “Bracero Program,” in 1942. The explicit intention of this program was to incorporate Mexican migrant workers primarily in activities associated with agricultural production, although this time only temporarily. Mexican workers would be allowed to enter the country during only a limited period of time, and the program would be of short duration, specifically until the end of World War II. The Bracero Program—the legacy of which continues today—defined a somewhat new scenario for the binational migration relations.

d) The Bracero Program and the preamble to the crisis: 1942-1970

On August 4, 1942, shortly after the United States entered World War II, its president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Mexican President, Manuel Ávila Camacho, signed the Bracero Program, which consisted of a series of agreements to promote temporary employment through the granting of visas to Mexicans as farm laborers, valid for up to six months (Massey, 2017: 214) and which officially “guaranteed their transportation (round trip), the freedom to purchase goods, and adequate sanitary conditions” (Peña, 1995: 49).

In theory, the program was designed to last only as long as World War II was in progress; however, the large agricultural producers (the main beneficiaries of Mexican labor force employment in that period), as well as other large industrialists in the United States (e.g., arms producers), requested that the program be extended over time and to other productive branches, as they considered the employment of Mexican workers highly profitable. The agricultural employers’ lobby led to the passage of Public Law 78 in 1951, adding a title to the 1949 Agricultural Law, which expressly addressed the incorporation of workers “from the Republic of Mexico” (Box 2). Although it was assumed that employers would only hire Mexican workers in areas where labor was scarce and not use them as “strikebreakers,” in fact they ignored many of the rules and took advantage of the employment of Mexican workers; consequently, between the 1940s and 1950s agricultural wages fell dramatically compared to industrial wages, since Mexicans lacked full rights in U.S. society (Bracero History Archive, 2020).

Another factor that influenced the extension of

the Program was the beginning of the Korean War (1950-1953) and the concern to ensure growing levels of production in the United States in order to sustain the war effort in the Far East, whose situation was made more complex by the rise of Mao Zedong to the government of China following the 1949 Revolution. After 22 years, during which more than 4.5 million Mexican migrants were legally attracted, the Bracero Program came to an end in 1964, marking a new stage in the migratory conditions of Mexicans going towards the United States.

The termination of the Bracero Program by the U.S. government not only reflected the beginning of an economic slowdown that was to culminate in the economic crisis of the early 1970s, but at the same time, the U.S. was facing various manifestations of political discontent at home and abroad: the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King, the growing organization of farm laborers in California,



Photo by Leonard Nadel (1956a). Bracero History Archive.

Box 2.

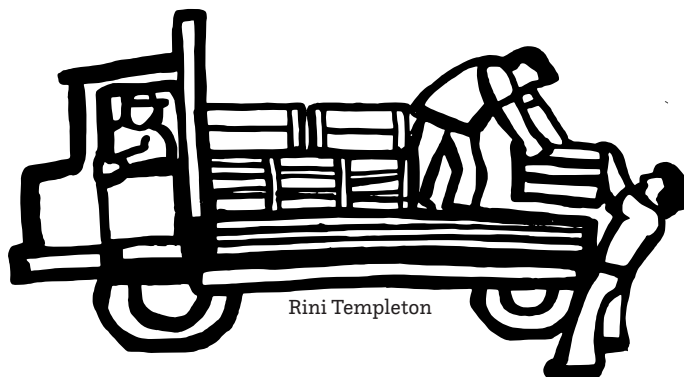
The provisions for Mexican workers in Public Law 78 (1951)

On July 12, 1951, Public Law 78 was enacted in order to amend (through the addition of a title) the U.S. Farm Bill of 1949. It defines the need for using workforce from the “Republic of Mexico” to the extent determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, as well as the necessary authorization for the Secretary of Labor to:

1. Recruit these workers (including all those laborers who have resided in the United States within the preceding five years or who are temporarily in the United States having entered legally);
2. Establish and operate reception centers at or near the points of entry of such workers into the continental United States for the purpose of receiving and housing them while arrangements are made for their employment in the territory of the United States or for their repatriation;
3. Provide transportation for such workers from recruitment centers outside the continental United States to reception centers, and from reception centers to recruitment centers after their period of employment has ended;
4. Provide such workers with means of subsistence, emergency medical or funeral services (up to \$150 [USD] in each case), as may be required during their transfer, as established in subsection (3), and while the workers are housed in reception centers;
5. Assist eligible workers and employers in negotiating the hiring of laborers for agricultural employment (the laborers being free to accept or decline agricultural employment with any employer and to choose the type of agricultural employment they desire, as well as eligible employers being free to offer agricultural employment to any worker of their choice who is not employed by another employer); and
6. Ensure that employers comply with their contracts with the laborers regarding payment of wages and provision of transportation services.

Also, the Law established, in its Section 503, that:

None of the workers recruited under this title shall be available for employment in any area, except in those areas where the Secretary of Labor has determined and certified that (1) there is not a sufficient number of domestic workers available for employment who are willing and qualified, at the time and place required, to perform the duties for which [the foreign laborers] are to be employed, (2) the employment of such [foreign] laborers will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed domestic agricultural workers, and (3) reasonable efforts have been made to attract domestic workers for employment purposes by offering them wages and average hours of work comparable to those offered to the foreign laborers.



Rini Templeton

the social discontent of young people around the world, and, particularly in the U.S., over the Vietnam War, as well as the emergence of national liberation movements in Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. All of these events forced the US government to take action to address these crises.

Without the Bracero Program, one of the greatest challenges was to stop the flow of Mexicans to the United States in search of work, which was not an easy task, especially because, as Ana Alicia Peña (1995) states, during and after World War II—between 1950 and 1970—the United States experienced the greatest industrial expansion in its history, thanks to the technical development applied to all production processes, in industry as well as in agriculture. Logically, these processes required more workers, which was the reason for the creation of the Bracero Program, but although the program had ended, the industrial and agricultural production sectors did not stop growing, and, therefore, continued to require migrant labor.

By then, all those attracted to the United States by the offer of jobs that were relatively better paid than in Mexico had to migrate without the protection previously provided by the now-defunct Bracero Program and did so in an undocumented manner. According to Ana Raquel Minian (2018), approximately 28 million Mexicans without papers entered the United States between 1965 and 1986. The number of undocumented Mexican migrants apprehended in the United States during this period alone increased by 403 percent, going from 55,000 in 1965 to 277,000 in 1970. Despite this increase, Mexican migration maintained the peculiarity of being predominantly circular, that is, although some Mexicans had no intention of returning to reside in Mexico, they were also not willing to permanently abandon their communities of origin (Minian, 2018), and therefore they maintained close ties with their families, their identity and their communities.

The legal, economic and social instability to which Mexican migrants in the United States were subjected, due to their migratory status and the need to constantly move from one place to another in U.S. territory and between both countries, placed this population in conditions of enormous vulnerability to the violation of their labor and civil rights. However, while struggling to cope with their “belonging neither here nor there,” the Mexican community in the United States (accompanied by their Filipino counterparts) produced, during this period, two of the most important episodes in the history and culture of that country: on the one hand, the famous strike of the farm workers who organized

the Grape March, led by César Chávez, and, at the same time, the construction of the Chicano movement, which vindicated being Mexican in the United States, their identity, and the preservation of their culture (Maciel and Bueno, 1976).

Within this context of political and economic instability in the United States, the Mexican government, headed by then President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, announced the implementation of the Northern Border Industrialization Program as a means to contain the flow of Mexicans seeking to emigrate to the United States. This plan considered the construction of industrial parks in the main border cities—starting in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua—, a special tax regime for the industry settled in the northern border and the enactment of a new customs law. All this with the purpose, on the one hand, of favoring US investment within Mexican territory and the hiring of Mexican labor within Mexican territory and, on the other, of containing the flow of Mexican workers who traveled north in search of employment. Although the intention of this program was to prevent the massive flow of undocumented Mexican migrants, the truth is that such containment was only temporary. However, it should be noted that this program constituted the beginning of the process of hyper-urbanization of the northern Mexican border.

We should not forget that, as part of the dynamics of economic and migratory relations between the two countries throughout the 20th century, and fundamentally during this period (1940-1970),³ large private—albeit also public—industrial investments were made in the construction of infrastructure to connect markets, and through which large volumes of goods (goods and services, legal or illegal) are currently moved throughout the world, as well as the labor force that travels north and within the United States. Map 8 shows the interconnection of the road networks and industrial centers of Mexico and the United States.

e) Crisis and Restructuring of the U.S. Immigration Policy: 1970-1986

This particular moment in the migration history of Mexico and the United States is marked by the crisis of the 1970s, which in turn is the product of a combination of global events that im-

³ The road construction boom in Mexico began in the 1950s. As for the railroads, their rise occurred in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. On the other hand, in the United States the road construction boom took place in the 1930s as part of the New Deal policy and served to generate jobs during the Great Depression.

pacted on, among other factors, the working and wage conditions of U.S. and Mexican workers on both sides of the border. The set of actions that responded to this general context also led to the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act of the Ronald Reagan administration, which heralded a new stage in the history of the migration corridor between the two countries.

a) In the early 1970s, the United States was facing a crisis resulting from the stagnation of its production and exports. At the same time, several oil-producing countries decided to stop selling this resource to the western countries that had supported Israel during the Yom Kippur War in 1967, which led to a sharp increase in the prices of fuel and, with it, of all the products that were transported in and out of the US market. The result was a global recession that directly affected the employment and purchasing power of U.S. workers who, along with the big unions (like the AFL-CIO), adopted the discourse that Mexicans were stealing their jobs, thus holding migrants responsible for the economic crisis.

b) On the other hand, on September 11, 1973, the US government gave its endorsement to the coup d'état whereby General Augusto Pinochet, in Chile, overthrew President Salvador Allende, democratically elected in 1970. For many historians and economists, this was the beginning of the neoliberal period, which was to turn around the migratory relationship between the United States and Mexico, Latin America, and the rest of the world.

c) Mexico, on the other hand, experienced a very brief period of economic boom in the mid-1970s, caused by several factors that converged at that time: first, the discovery of a super-giant oil field in the Gulf of Mexico that allowed the Mexican government to contract large volumes of debt (Ros *et al.*, 1987); second, with the money from the large fortunes accumulated by Arab families owning oil fields in the Middle East that had flooded the international financial markets, Mexico and other countries like Argentina and Brazil received loans from international private banks to develop their oil infrastructure and increase their platform for exporting crude oil to the United States (Yergin, 1992), in order to compensate for the oil embargo of the OPEC countries; third, in 1981, the international private bank—which had granted these very high risk loans to our country⁴—unilaterally determined to raise interest rates, which caused a crisis of such magnitude that it became impossible for Mexico (and other debtor countries) to

pay the incurred debts; in the fourth place, the so-called “debt crisis” made it possible for international financial organizations to intervene between 1981 and 1983, while in the United States, Ronald Reagan was taking office as President. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, with the agreement of the US government, forced the debtor countries to accept the adoption of strict structural adjustment programs that were aimed at establishing measures to control inflation, establish wage caps for workers and the privatization or dissolution of publicly owned enterprises. As a whole, this resulted in the drastic reduction of the social functions of the State.

d) Finally, the effect of the economic crisis and structural adjustment in Mexico was, on the one hand, the dismantling of many national productive chains that employed Mexican labor and, on the other, the fall in wages and the collapse of the domestic market, which stimulated the departure of thousands of Mexicans who sought better living conditions in the United States. As if this wasn't enough, in 1985, Mexico City was shaken by the greatest earthquake in its history, which caused the death of at least 20 thousand people and the collapse of the infrastructure of the country's largest city.

In this scenario—in which the economic measures imposed on countries like Mexico caused the impoverishment of millions of people, while in the United States the economic policy of the Reagan and Bush governments granted great tax benefits to large private companies and sought to weaken workers and their unions—the U.S. government, through the passage and enactment of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, allowed the massive entry of international legal and undocumented migrants (Box 3). As Ana Alicia Peña says:

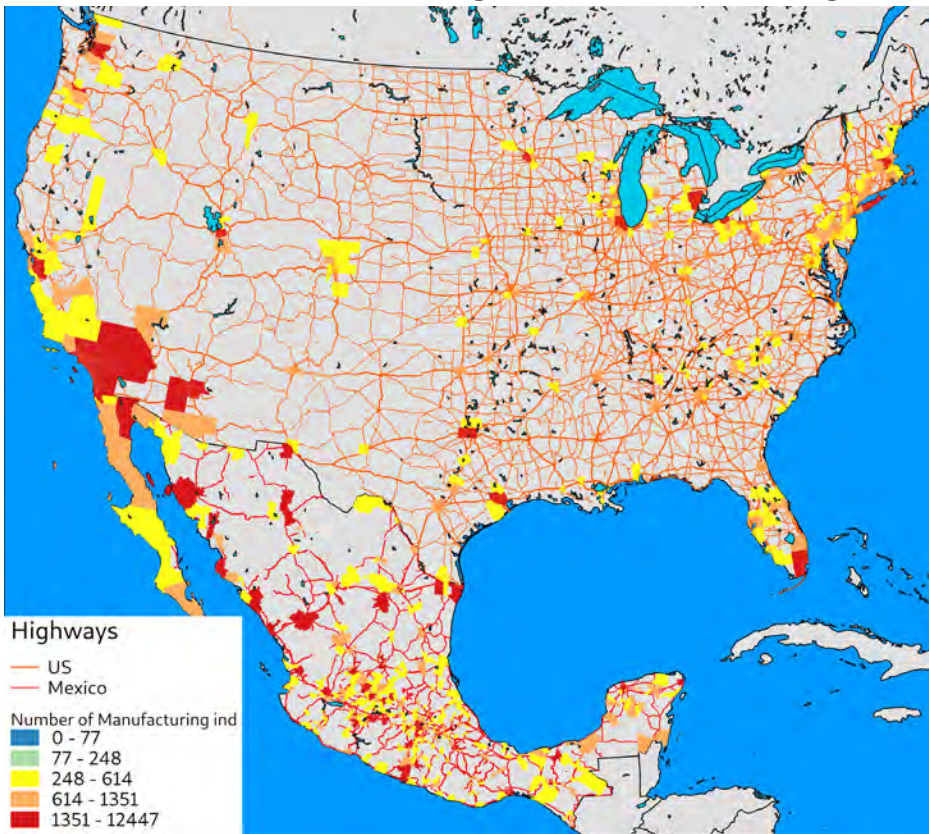
if we take into account the legal migration from European and Latin American countries to the United States after 1950 and until the end of the 1960s, it amounted to approximately 5.5 million people. After the Reform [of the Immigration Law], entry quotas were expanded and a large number of exceptions were allowed for the process of family reunification, so that between 1970 and 1990 the number of legal migrants grew by more than 12 million” (Peña, 1995: 54).

From the start, the approval of the IRCA meant amnesty and naturalization of 2.7 million undocumented migrants (Armenta, 2017: 23). The overall goal of the Reagan administration in passing the IRCA was to guarantee large industries a broad base of

⁴ When we say that the loans were very high risk, we are trying to describe a situation in which the money borrowed by the Mexican government was obtained by accepting an interest rate that, in addition to being very high, could be raised at any time without notice, as indeed it was.

Map 8.

Road network connecting the main manufacturing centers in Mexico and the U.S.



Source: Made by the authors with data from the Bureau of Transportation Statistic Analysis Framework, INEGI, and BLS Quarterly Census.

workers with legal residency, but not unionized, and who would accept lower paying jobs that the local workforce would not be willing to perform. During the 1980s and 1990s, large industries such as the meat packing and processing industry in the Midwest and the construction industry benefited greatly from the employment of Mexican workers. As Dionicio Valdés (2000) explains, the hiring of migrant labor allowed for changes in work processes to simplify meat packing and processing operations and made it possible to take advantage of increasing government deregulation. On the other hand, in the construction industry, the advantage of hiring non-unionized Mexicans facilitated their displacement to the interior of the United States to work on multiple projects “in places as far away as Richmond, Virginia; Raleigh, North Carolina; Providence, Rhode Island; Overland Park, Kansas; Philadelphia, Chicago, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, Nashville, and hundreds of other cities” (Valdés, 2000: 231).

A direct effect of the enactment of the IRCA was that Mexican migrants began to move to regions of the United States where they were previously not very numerous or visible. Dionicio Valdés points out, for example, that stores, restaurants and other businesses owned by Mexicans began to appear, as did a

Spanish-speaking radio network, in states and cities in which the Mexican population was increasing rapidly, such as Atlanta, Georgia, where the community grew by more than 80,000 people between 1980 and 1992. In fact, at the beginning of ‘90’s, the Mexican population of Charlotte, North Carolina, was over 35 thousand, representing more than 5% of that city’s population. Actually, the Latino population of North Carolina, predominantly Mexican, was estimated at 200,000 people by the mid-1990s (Valdés, 2000).

Just as the enactment of the IRCA redefined the role of the migrant population in the U.S. economy, legal reforms were also made in Mexico that further stimulated emigration to the United States. Such is the case of the Reform of the Agrarian Law and of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, which eliminated the protection of land ownership by the campesinos who had benefited from the 1938 Agrarian Reform (Bartra, 2005). The effects of the crisis of the 1970s, as well as all the actions taken by both countries in order to deal with it (for example, the application of a neoliberal model of economic governance), developed the conditions for a new step in North American economic integration that was formalized with the signing of the Free Trade Agreement in 1992.

Box 3. Main aspects of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act

In 1986, the U.S. Congress passed the so-called IRCA [Immigration Reform and Control Act], promoted by the Reagan administration, which established, on the one hand, a series of prohibitions—aimed at employers—to prevent the employment of undocumented immigrant workers, unfair competition between companies based on their employment, and fraud with immigration documents to obtain employment; on the other hand, the new Act established increases in the budget allocated to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), as well as to the activities of the Border Patrol to prevent human trafficking at the border. As an effect of the enactment of the Act, the budget of the Border Patrol was increased by 80 percent, and the personnel employed by this agency was increased by 50 percent (Altangerel and van Ours, 2017). However, it was the section corresponding to the legalization of the migratory status of undocumented immigrants that had the greatest impact on their lives, since, thanks to it, approximately 2.7 million people were naturalized, of whom approximately 70% came from Mexico (Altangerel and van Ours, 2017):

Three million undocumented immigrants applied for regularization of their immigration status under the provisions of the Act. Approximately 2.7 million were regularized. Since the Act established the requirement that, in order to be regularized, they must have entered the country before 1982, that means that today [2014] the beneficiaries of the amnesty have remained in the United States for more than three decades. Their lives could reveal much about the long-term intergenerational consequences of legalization (Badger, 2014).

Since the regularization program for undocumented immigrants was active only for a limited time period, its effects were equally limited: “In the two decades following the passing of the Act, the number of undocumented immigrants tripled, as did the length of their stay in the United States” (Altangerel and van Ours, 2017), partly as an effect of the signing and entry into force of NAFTA/TLCAN and its consequences in terms of employment, wages and the Mexican economy.

Photo: Adriana Martínez



f) The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA, for the United States) or Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte (TLCAN, for Mexico)

The signing of NAFTA/TLCAN is also the result of a series of decisive events in the political and economic history of both countries. It is necessary to explain here two conditions that originated it and gave it meaning: the first has to do with the United States' policy towards Central America and Mexico. During the 1970s and 1980s, with the precedent of the coup d'état in Chile and as a result of the beginning of the neoliberal economic model, the political-military conflicts in Central America generated such high levels of violence in the region, that part of the population had to move away from their communities of origin in order to safeguard their security, with the United States being the destination par excellence and Mexico becoming not only an expelling country but also a transit country for Central Americans fleeing war. In fact, even today, tens of thousands of Salvadorans live in the United States under what is called "special protection status" granted to them as victims of the civil war of the 1980s.⁵ This opened a new chapter in the history of the migratory relationship between Mexico and the United States, which became more complex after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

A second condition has to do with the legal and institutional adjustments made by the Mexican government in order to be able to sign NAFTA. Thanks to these reforms—e.g. Mexico's entry into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which was to be replaced by the World Trade Organization in the 1990s—the economic policy was adapted and subordinated to foreign policy, then centered on the signing and entry into force of NAFTA/TLCAN. Thus, the Mexican law that regulates the participation of the Mexican State in international treaties was adapted to give these a legal hierarchy comparable to that of the Mexican Constitution itself.

⁵ The Romero Center, a non-profit organization, has been based in Chicago for 35 years. Under the direction of its co-founder, Daysi Funes, it has built its international prestige through its community work. The services it provides to the migrant community, especially to those from El Salvador, include: legal assistance, orientation and counseling, support groups, protection in case of emergency and of transition, medical and humanitarian services, child care, and family, youth and educational programs. For more information, visit their website at www.centro-romero.org.

This last aspect is particularly important because it emphasizes the legal asymmetry between the two countries: since according to the Mexican law, NAFTA is an international treaty, it has the same legal hierarchy as the Constitution. In contrast, for the United States, NAFTA is an agreement, which places it, in the legal hierarchy, as inferior not only to the U.S. Constitution but also to secondary and state laws (Plataforma Social Capítulo México TPP, 2016).

NAFTA/TLCAN is the formalization of a regional integration whose history was built over time and of which migration has been a fundamental part. Although the integration between Mexico and the United States is very deep, it is not limited to the economic sphere and it did not begin with NAFTA/TLCAN; the truth is that this agreement did not recognize or formalize those other aspects. If we consider, for example, the European Union, we can see almost immediately that it has a high level of integration, in contrast with the limited (although strategic) integration of the North American region.

The type of integration of the European Union, besides including the political integration of its member states (which share, at least partially, the same electoral, monetary, regulatory and legislative system), led to the creation of a single market through the free mobility of goods, of investments, and—most importantly for our country—of the population. Officially, any European person who must, or wishes to change his or her residence within the European Union in order to, for example, access a job, may do so without the legal impediment of a migratory status that violates his/her labor rights. In fact, these rights are prevalent within the European Union for all local workers.

In contrast, the NAFTA/TLCAN region is not a single market, nor is it politically integrated with a single law and equal rights. NAFTA/TLCAN was designed to facilitate the mobility of goods and large investments, but not of the population. In fact, its entry into force in 1994 started a process of dismantling the productive chains of the Mexican domestic market and replacing them with global productive chains directed from the United States (Plataforma Social del Capítulo México del TPP, 2016).

This was reflected in the reorientation of the Mexican State's agricultural policy so as to favor the production of crops for export, which meant the abandonment of the policy aimed at guaranteeing the country's food sovereignty. Instead, the Mexican market was opened up to imports of all types of processed foods coming from the enormous agriculture

and livestock surplus in the United States (which was also being produced by Mexican migrant workers) (Bartra, 2003). Furthermore, the Mexican government adopted an aggressive policy of privatization of the logistical and transportation infrastructures in Mexican territory (ports, airports, highways, railroads, etc.), which was accompanied by the design of urban-regional integration corridors to facilitate, within the framework of NAFTA/TLCAN, the flow of goods from the northeast of the United States to the ports of the Pacific basin, taking advantage of the facilities provided by Mexican laws for the installation of assembly and maquila plants, as well as for subcontracting and other forms of precarious employment in Mexico (Barreda, 1999).

This integration of trade and investment could only be achieved thanks to the interconnection of the multimodal transport infrastructure between Mexico and the United States, which allows the free, almost unhindered flow of goods to the global market, but which was not made to facilitate the mobility of people within Mexican territory and much less, to allow their entry into the United States. As shown in Map 9, the multimodal integration between both countries connects, by land and sea, the great economic centers (especially in the eastern United States) with the main industrial centers and ports of Mexico. We may say, based on this map, that the development of the interconnection between the two countries is a complex network of trade routes that flow in both directions (even when it comes to drug trafficking). This regional-economic interconnection is, henceforth, the basis for the development of relations between Mexico and the United States, especially those that have to do with migration.

g) Implementation, Development and Impacts of NAFTA/TLCAN: First Decade of the 21st Century

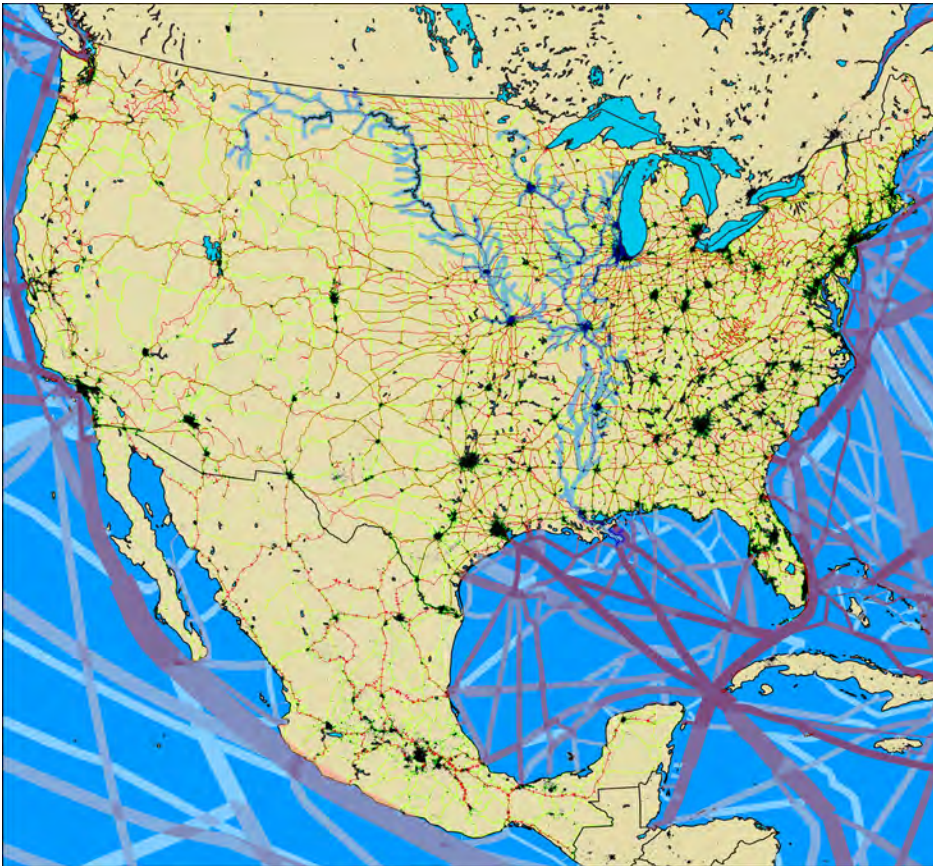
N AFTA/TLCAN, an agreement between Canada, Mexico, and the United States, was signed in 1992 by the respective head of state of each of these countries: in the case of Canada, by Prime Minister Stephen Harper; in the case of Mexico, by President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and, for the United States, by the recently elected President, William Clinton. Although NAFTA/TLCAN was signed that year, it did not come into force until January 1, 1994, when the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) took up arms to express its rejection of the 1992 agrarian counter-reform and the signing of NAFTA, since these “meant a hard blow to agriculture, to the farm workers and to national food sovereignty.

[...] This ‘blow’ was interpreted as a death sentence for the rural world” (Núñez, Gómez and Concheiro, 2013). Within this context, the implementation of NAFTA—which was to be in force during more than 25—started off with forebodings of a Mexican exodus, from then on, toward the United States.

Thus, the migratory relationship between Mexico and the United States was affected by a series of factors in the first 10 years of NAFTA/TLCAN:

1. The Mexican countryside had been characterized over time as having a production of subsistence and for supplying the domestic market, rather than an agro-industry for export. In fact, the Mexican food system is based on production on that scale. For this reason, it was not surprising that the indigenous peoples and Mexican campesinos (farm workers) refused to sign a treaty that would make them compete with their US counterparts, having a technical and social disadvantage, since the Mexican countryside is still very impoverished and, therefore, not highly technified. Under NAFTA, Mexican farm workers would have to compete with U.S. agribusiness, whose productivity is based on the high level of technification of the countryside, the low wages paid to agricultural workers—who are predominantly undocumented Mexican migrants—the fertility of the land, and the size of the territory, mainly in the Midwest, as well as on the high subsidies to producers. It is no coincidence that the United States is known as the “granary of the world”. In 2003, Bartra pointed out, with regard to the U.S. Farm Bill, that it “only deepens the asymmetries in our agricultures [...] because, while subsidies represent an average of 16% of the income of Mexican farmers, in the United States they amount to as much as 23%” (p. 13).
2. In accordance with the differences in the conditions of competition between the three countries, it was agreed that NAFTA/TLCAN would eliminate tariffs on goods, progressively and by stages, i.e. that is, after a certain time, tariffs on agriculture and livestock products from the United States and Canada would be eliminated. Thus, on January 1, 2003, tariffs on livestock products, fruits, grains such as coffee and rice, and other derived products, such as sausages and oils, would be lifted. Even more important, however, was the elimination, on January 1, 2008, of tariffs on the last three protected prod-

Map 9.
Multimodal transport connection between Mexico and the United States:
main cities, roads, railroads and commercial maritime routes, 2013



Source: Made by the authors with data from Nasa (2013); U.S. Census Bureau (s.f.); Geocomunes; Oak Ridge National Laboratory (s.f.); INEGI (s.f.) and Commission for Environmental Cooperation (s.f.).

ucts: powdered milk, corn and beans. The latter two are a constitutive part of the agri-food system that gave origin and identity to Mexican communities: the milpa.

Based on what has been said so far, we can understand one of the most important causes of the growing flow of Mexican migrants to the United States, namely: that there are not only technical asymmetries in agricultural production that make fair competition impossible, but also legal asymmetries that generate conditions in which Mexico is forced to accept the entry of most goods from Canada and the United States, whereas the United States can and, in fact, has on multiple occasions denied access to products from Mexico such as avocados, tuna and tomatoes.

3. The application of the neoliberal economic model and the signing of NAFTA implied deep changes in the political sphere for Mexico. After more than 70 years in power, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) lost the presidency in 2000 to Vicente Fox of the National Action Party (PAN), a party that has been characterized by its

right-wing ideological stance. This political alternation in Mexico coincided with the transition from Bill Clinton to George W. Bush, who became president of the United States with the promise, among others, to negotiate an immigration reform that would ensure the legalization of the thousands of undocumented Mexican immigrants who met the necessary requirements and had the ability to pay to obtain naturalization. As we will explain in the next point, this immigration reform never materialized.

4. In the midst of the development and implementation of NAFTA/TLCAN, the United States suffered one of the most traumatic episodes in its history: on September 11, 2001, the Twin Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Virginia became the targets of a terrorist attack. This event definitively canceled any possibility of an immigration reform during the Bush administration, and instead, the migration policy was subordinated to U.S. domestic security policy. This meant rethinking the immigration problem as a national security issue rather than a political or economic concern.

5. Part of the official response of the Bush administration was the creation and implementation of “Operation Gatekeeper,” which consisted in coordinating with the Mexican government the de facto extension of the southern border of the United States to the border between Mexico and Guatemala in order to make transit conditions worse and more difficult for migrants, regardless of their origin. This program implied the adaptation of Mexican migratory policy to adjust it to the circumstantial security needs of the United States. In addition to the program, the U.S. government has allocated significant resources to building a border fence, which is currently more than 1,100 kilometers long, and to strengthening the Border Patrol in terms of personnel and equipment.
6. In 2002, Vicente Fox announced the creation of the so-called Puebla-Panama Plan, whose objective was to attract investment for the maquiladora industrialization of southern and south-eastern Mexico, as well as of the entire Central American strip from Guatemala to Panama. However, the entry of China into the World Trade Organization and the economic opening to foreign investment in a country that offered abundant labor at costs of approximately 10 cents USD per hour, became a tough competition for the North American region, which had to deal with the outflow of investments to China. This fact alone can explain the reasons for the migration to the United States, during the 2000-2006 period of the Fox administration, of approximately 3.4 million people— the equivalent of 1.07 Mexicans per minute—, most of whom were undocumented workers (Balboa, 2007).
7. At the end of 2006, Felipe Calderón took office as President of Mexico amidst accusations of electoral fraud. His lack of legitimacy did not prevent him, during the first months of his term, from announcing an escalation in the militarization of all Mexican territory as part of a so-called “war on drugs”, in line with U.S. security priorities. Suffice it to say that at the end of his term, many of the weapons his government bought from U.S. companies to fight organized crime ended up, due, among other reasons, to the corruption of the Mexican armed forces and police, in the hands of the very same criminal organizations that they were intended to fight.⁶ By the

⁶ A tangible example of this was the scandal caused by the failed Operation Fast and Furious, through which U.S. authorities brought weapons into Mexican territory with the

end of his administration, more than 120,000 people had been killed, and another 28,000 had disappeared, with migrants being one of the groups with the highest vulnerability to the violence prevalent in Mexico. The National Human Rights Commission conservatively estimated that at least 10,000 Central American trans-migrants were kidnapped in Mexico each year (CNDH, 2009). In 2010 alone, the first clandestine burial site (which now number in the hundreds) was found in San Fernando, Tamaulipas, containing 72 bodies of Central and South American migrants.

This is, roughly speaking, the state of affairs developed during the first decade of the 21st century. Although this panorama announced deep changes in the international relations between Mexico and the United States, it also announced the arrival of the first great crisis of the century, which, once again, would modify the conditions of the migratory scene in the region.

Despite the above, it is a fact that NAFTA/TL-CAN expanded the interconnection and deepened the interdependence between both countries. Suffice it to mention that in the first years of validity of this Agreement:

- a) The United States became Mexico’s first trading partner, receiving more than 80% of its national production (Figure 1);
- b) Mexico became a net importer of foods coming from that country; and
- c) Remittances, along with income from oil sales, became the main source of inflow of U.S. dollars into Mexico.

h) The 2008 Crisis: Hardening Migration Policies in the Obama and Trump Era

During the 90’s and the first years of the 21st century, the real estate sector in several countries around the world experienced an accelerated expansion. In order to open the way to the possibility of purchasing the millions of houses that were being built within a context where economic policy was based on wage restraint, which affected the reproduction of the working population, several governments, particularly that of the United States, applied measures to deregulate the activity of the financial sector. Thereby, the real estate companies alleged intention of tracing their legal and illegal trade route; however, they soon lost the trail, and those weapons were used to commit a large number of crimes in Mexico (Los Angeles Times, 2012).

Figure 1.
Main importing markets for Mexican products, 2014-2018
(Thousands of U.S. dollars)

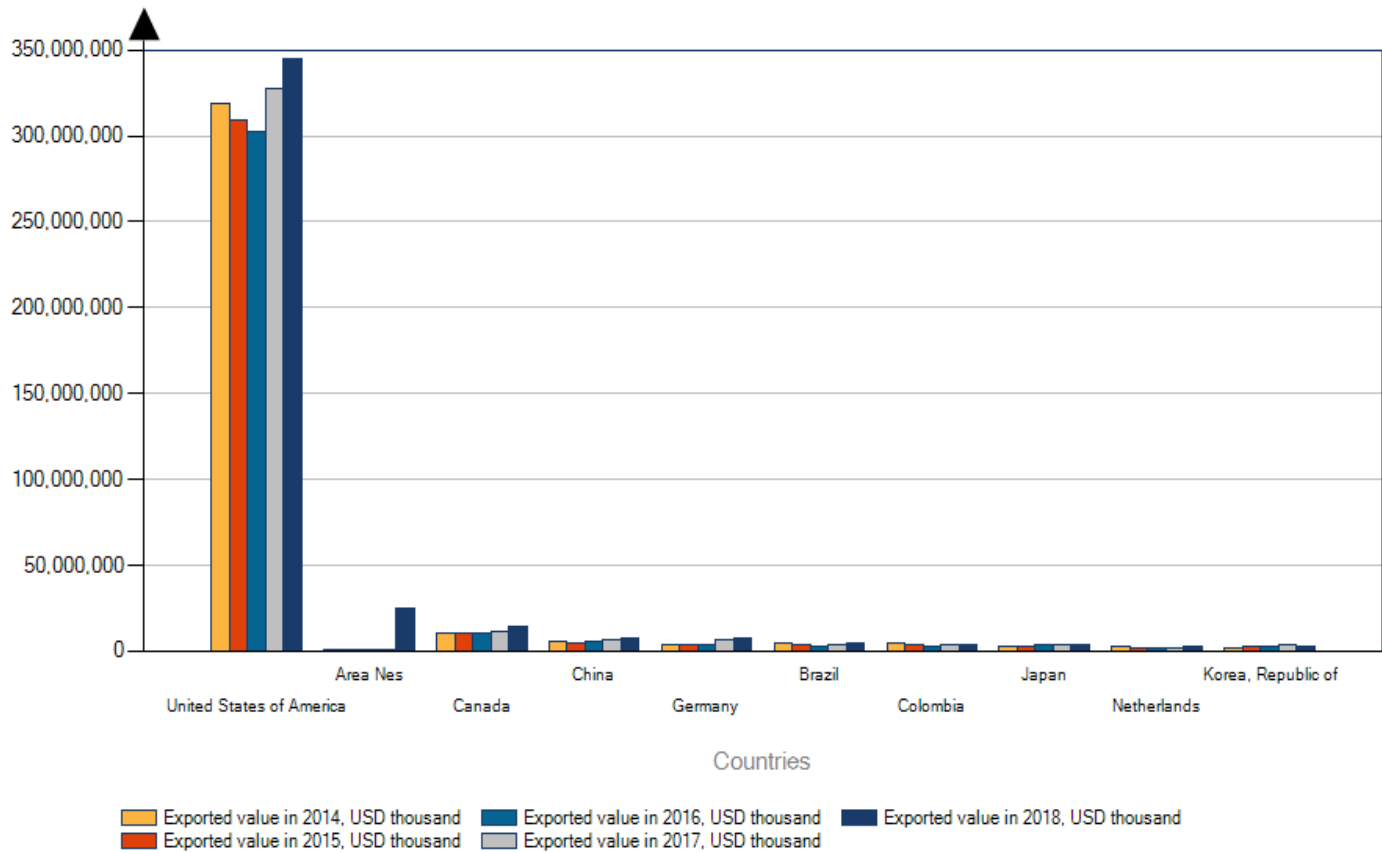
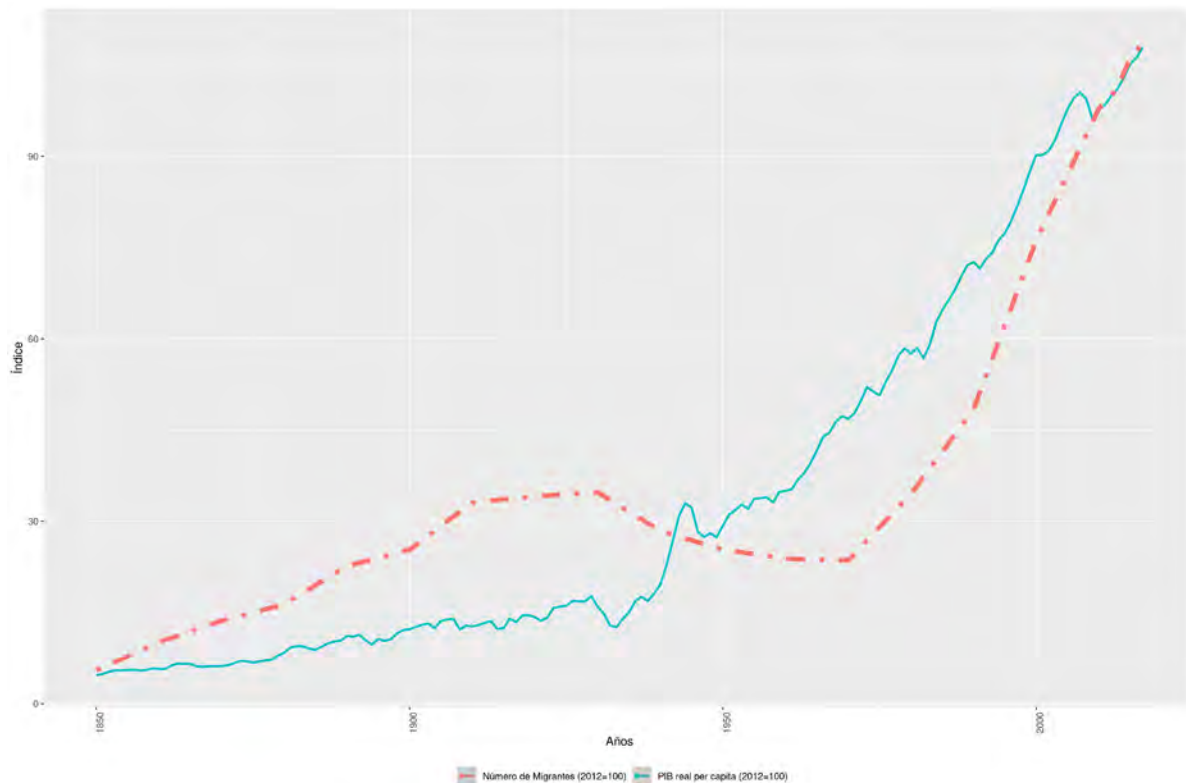


Figure 2.
Per capita GDP of Mexico and number of Mexican immigrants in the U.S., 1850-2019



and the big banks gave access, almost without restrictions, to mortgage loans in order to enable millions of people in the world to buy a house. However, in 2006 an ominous phenomenon began to spread across the United States:

the rate of mortgage evictions in low-income areas [...] increased significantly. In mid-2007, when the wave of evictions hit the white middle class in outlying urban areas ... the issue was discussed in the mainstream media, the authorities began to worry. The construction of new buildings was slowed down [and by] the end of 2007 almost two million people had lost their homes and another four million were estimated to be in danger of being evicted (Harvey, 2012: 7).

Broadly speaking, the problem was a difficult contradiction to solve, since, on the one hand, there was a lot of capital available to be invested, for example, in the construction of houses, while on the other hand, workers' wages were not high enough to access goods such as housing. By giving unrestricted credit to an impoverished working class, what was produced was a financial-real estate bubble that could not be sustained for long. The crisis of 2008 consisted of the bursting of that bubble. Its consequences went beyond the financial sphere and the US government had to rescue a large number of banks, but a world that shortly before seemed 'flooded with excessive liquidity' suddenly found itself short of cash and flooded with houses, offices and stores for sale, with surplus production capacity and more overabundant workforce than before (Harvey, 2012: 11).

Notwithstanding the measures adopted by the US government, large companies like General Motors (based in Detroit)—which in 2009 had 230,000 employees worldwide—had to declare bankruptcy on June 1st of that year, which meant the loss of over 21,000 jobs (BBC World News, 2009). Thus, it was again the US labor force that suffered most from the ravages of the crisis: working families lost homes, their debts became unpayable, they lost jobs, and, once more, it was the immigrant labor force, especially from Mexico and Central America, who were to pay for these ravages.

The beginning of Barack Obama's administration was marked by the emergence of the crisis. In fact, although his campaign proposals included the renegotiation of NAFTA/TLCAN in order to strengthen labor and environmental standards, such renegotiation had to be postponed indefinitely in light of the urgency of the recent crisis of 2008, to the relief of his Mexican counterpart, Felipe Calderón, who explicitly

announced his opposition to renegotiating the terms of the Agreement. Thus, among other strategies, the Obama administration adopted harsh migration policy measures because one of the consequences of the crisis was the loss of millions of jobs throughout the U.S. economy.⁷In this sense, the Obama administration's migration policy was characterized by increased border surveillance, persecution and deportations of undocumented immigrants.

The first measure of the Obama administration was to strengthen the border between Mexico and the United States. This strategy sought to discourage the entry of undocumented people across the border by increasing the surveillance, thereby making it riskier to cross. Despite its purpose, the truth is that the entry of undocumented persons increased, and with it the cost of crossing the border and the number of deaths. In addition, the government increased the penalties against human traffickers (Mora-Téllez, 2017).

Furthermore, in 2012, the U.S. government created a program known as "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals" (DACA) that protected from deportation people who, as infants, had been brought undocumented into the U.S. by their parents, and who had to meet rigorous requirements in order to stay (such as being free of a criminal record and having at least high school enrollment or graduation, or formal employment). All those who were protected by this program were known as dreamers, and although the inadequacies of this program were harshly criticized, the truth is that by 2017—shortly after the Trump administration stopped its expansion and announced its cancellation—, it had protected almost 700,000 young people (López and Krogstad, 2017).

In third place, data shows a consistent increase in the number of deportations of undocumented migrants since the beginning of the Obama administration. According to the Migration Policy Institute,

arrests and removals from the border increased in 2016 compared to the previous year. In 2016, the Department of Homeland Security executed 530,250 warrants of arrest and 344,354 removals, versus 462,388 arrests and 333,341 removals in the previous year. Despite this increase, these figures were much lower than during the peak of the actions carried out at the beginning of the Obama administration (Chishti, Pierce and Bolter, 2017).

⁷ It is estimated that 2.6 million jobs were lost in the United States in 2008 alone—the largest job loss since 1945—, raising the number of unemployed in the U.S. economy to over 11 million people (Uchitelle, 2009).

Even though his policy on undocumented immigration earned Barack Obama the nickname “deporter in chief,” according to Stephanie Leutert,

The number of people deported from the United States actually decreased during the Obama administration, but the consequences for many of those who were actually deported were much more severe. The priority this administration gave to the deportation and removal of newly arrived undocumented immigrants could ultimately succeed in reducing the impact of deportations within U.S. communities. It is important to consider that, while this administration effectively focused on the persecution of criminals, the range of what was considered a crime was very broad, since it included both crimes against immigration laws and other non-violent crimes (Leutert, 2015: 88).

A distinctive feature of the Barack Obama administration’s migratory policy was the imposition of more severe restrictions on new, undocumented immigration in order to stop the flow of migrants to the United States just at a time of convergence of the global economic crisis and the crisis of social violence in Mexico and Central America. Some investigations on the subject have shown that the impact of the U.S. government’s anti-immigrant policy has been such that, in 2019, it was reported that Mexicans were no longer the majority of the undocumented immigrant population in the United States because more migrants are now returning to Mexico than are entering the country clandestinely (Passel and Cohn, 2019). Paradoxically, at the same time, in January 2020, the Bank of Mexico revealed that the sending of remittances from the United States reached in 2019 “a historical maximum that exceeds by 61% the income from oil exports” (Rodríguez, 2020).

To conclude this brief historical account, we should mention that the Trump administration not only exacerbated this policy but also its rhetoric radicalized racism and xenophobia, especially against the Mexicans: from the moment he announced his candidacy, Trump made clear his animosity against the Mexicans by declaring that:

when Mexico sends its people, they are not sending the best. They are not sending you. They are sending people with many problems, and they are bringing those problems to us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They are rapists, and some, I assume, are good people.

For various reasons, Donald Trump signifies the ideological use of the crisis and the use of migrants as

scapegoats, which places them in a situation of greater vulnerability to all kinds of aggressions and violations of their rights. Among the threats that encourage violence against Latin American migrants, and especially Mexicans, are: the construction of a border wall (allegedly paid by Mexico), the cancellation of the DACA program, surprise raids in most major U.S. cities, the cancellation of the protection status of Salvadorans and Haitians, and the imposition of tariffs on Mexican exports unless Mexico would act to stop the caravans of Central American migrants. However, the effects of these anti-immigrant actions can already be seen, for example, in the humanitarian crisis caused by the separation of asylum-seeking families in various detention centers along the border, which has favored psychological and sexual abuse against separated children, as well as the deportation of parents without their children, while the economic impacts of the replacement of NAFTA by the United States, Mexico and Canada Agreement (USMCA) (or Tratado México Estados Unidos-Canadá, T-MEC, in Spanish) are not yet fully visible.

3. A FINAL THOUGHT ON THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES

The situations and facts presented up to this point allow us to draw preliminary conclusions in order to highlight some of the conditions that have influenced the formation of the migratory corridors between Mexico and the United States. Particularly, in our case, pondering upon the Morelos-Minnesota migratory corridor will help us understand some general causes that explain why residents of Morelos move to the distant state of Minnesota.

The main conclusion of this chapter has to do with the fact that an interdependence and an interconnection between Mexico and the United States have been built up over almost 200 years of shared economic, political and social history. Accordingly, it can be stated that oscillations in migratory flows, as well as the public policies that attempt to respond to them or determine their direction, are generally closely linked to the economic cycles of boom, stagnation and crisis in the U.S. economy (Figure 2). In the words of Gómez-Quíñones, these dynamics are characterized by

a practice which, when it [is] advantageous to import Mexican workers, makes immigration laws more lenient, or strengthens their restrictive controls when

it seems necessary to exclude these workers from the benefits of permanent immigration (1978: 83).

In sum, we may assert that the modern history of migration between Mexico and the United States has been one of mutual dependence. The shared history throughout the 20th century and up to the present 21st century, has deepened the interdependence between the two countries and has brought the U.S. and Mexican communities closer together through their migrants, though this may not be apparent in the media or social networks. While we cannot call this an idyllic relationship, we may speak of a relationship that has changed over time, and these changes also depend on the people who make up our communities. The interdependence and extensive interconnection between our countries can be a pretext for getting to know each other better and for building transnational communities based on our diversity. As Sun Yung Shin, a Korean-born poetess and editor of *Race in Minnesota: A Good Time for the Truth*, wrote:

When seeking justice—and the survival of our species as well as of many others—we must recognize the importance of our identities, which often fluctuate between the situations into which we are born and the situations in which power places us. [...] Culture is human nature (2016: 8,10).

From this background we may conclude that, in the face of all the structural causes that affect the displacement of the population from one country to another, the people and social groups to which they

belong and with whom they identify do not remain passive actors but, in general, transcend the sphere of impositions and build communities that enrich the culture of the places of destination through solidarity and collaboration, as well as social and political struggle. Examples of this are the various movements in defense of labor and civil rights of farm workers of Latin American origin (like that of the National Farm Workers Association, now known as the United Farm Workers, led by César Chávez), and cultural movements like that of the Chicanos, or of communities of diverse origins, who make visible and denounce violations of human rights and defend the migrants who are being persecuted, especially in the Trump era.

After this overview, several questions remain to be answered: How did the migration corridor between Morelos and the Midwest, particularly Minnesota, come to exist? Are there also causes of attraction and expulsion in this relationship? What is the relationship between Morelos and Minnesota like? What makes this migratory relationship special among the multiple migration corridors that were formed through this history?

We will try to answer these questions in the following chapters. In the second chapter we will address the causes of attraction of migrants to Minnesota and the relationship of this state with immigration. Finally, in the third chapter, we will address the causes that lead the population of Morelos to leave their communities and who are the people who migrate.



Photo: Adriana Martínez



Photo: Adriana Martínez





CHAPTER 2.

MORELOS IN MINNESOTA



Foto: [Andrés Vera](#) en [Unsplash](#).

I am a peasant. I crossed to the other side because I needed the money to pay my debts. The money I got from selling my crops was not enough anymore to live and to sow the next season, because whatever we grow sells cheap. I had to borrow money to keep on growing food, so I decided to leave, so I could make some money there and pay my debts. I went to Minnesota because my wife has some relatives there.

Don Ricardo, a peasant from Axochiapan.

In the previous chapter we highlighted, as succinctly as we could, some of the most meaningful moments in the migratory history between Mexico and the United States. We concluded that there is a very close relationship between the two countries, largely because of the interconnectedness of economy and infrastructure which has been developing and deepening for more than a century and a half. This closeness has also produced a social and cultural interdependence in which we as communities strive for a better life and flourish, but not without great difficulty. Hence, we begin this chapter with two fundamental facts:

First of all, while there is a part of this history in which we find ourselves, as individuals and communities, at the mercy of larger interests, the interconnection between both countries is a factor that has taken us from places of origin to specific destinations, shaping corridors like the one that exists today between Morelos and Minnesota.

Secondly, this necessary interconnection resulting from economic development and growth (highway and railway infrastructure, large industrial and urban centers and maritime routes, among others) generated an interdependence between the two countries. It is sustained mainly thanks to working men and women and the communities they form and maintain through cultural, affective and political ties as well. We have much to do and much to say about it there. It is where the relationship between *Morelenses*¹ and Minnesotans essentially lies.

While our specific interest is observing the Mexican population in the Twin Cities (Saint Paul and, principally, Minneapolis), we consider it important, for this project and for the current report, that the scope of our analysis covers the entire state, as we believe is the only way to understand the migratory corridor in question. While most of the Mexican population currently resides in large urban centers, the inception of their arrival to Minnesota can be linked to one of the state's most important economic activities: agriculture. From there, migrants expanded into other industries like meat packing and food processing, mining, construction, railroad maintenance and operation, and, later, services. Thus, our regionalization for this research project not only addresses migration to Minneapolis but also looks at the state as a whole, within regional and national contexts as part of the Midwestern United States.

1. UNDERSTANDING THE MIDWEST ON THE MAP

In this chapter we will answer the questions we posed at the end of the previous chapter. To begin doing so it is important to keep in mind Minnesota's place within the territory, economy and society of the United States. This task will be made easier if we look at the US in terms of regions (Map 1) and Minnesota as part of the Midwestern territory (hereafter referred as the Midwest). While there is no definitive agreement on which states make up the region, for purposes of our research we will adopt the regionalization criteria established by the U.S. Census Bureau, which includes the states of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota.

The Midwest is one of the most important regions of the United States. Its significance lies in a natural and geographic wealth that has allowed it to develop both industry and agribusiness and that is distinctive for several reasons: its proximity to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi and Missouri rivers whose navigability guarantees speedy access through maritime routes leading north and to the Gulf of Mexico (Map 2); a great fertile plain suitable for the growth and development of a highly productive agriculture (Map 3); the availability of large quantities of water; a mineral wealth that allowed for the development of heavy industry and mining; and its central location within the US territory that has made it a crossroads between the most important eastern and western cities.

For these reasons, the Midwest provides one of the most important geographic keys to understanding US prosperity, attracting migrants to its metal, rail, automobile, meatpacking and agriculture industries (the Midwest is part of the so called Grain Belt). These jobs have traditionally been filled by Mexican immigrants, some of whom continue working in them until today (Maps 4, 5 and 6).

According to Dennis Valdés, the history of Mexican migration towards the Midwest can be divided into three main stages. The first was marked by the Spanish Conquest during the 16th and 17th centuries driven by the search for wealth (especially minerals). The second is associated with the Industrial Revolution in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries, which was fueled by the wealth and agricultural production exported from the American continent to Europe. The third and final stage occurred during the 20th century and was characterized by accelerated industrial development and the expansion of the

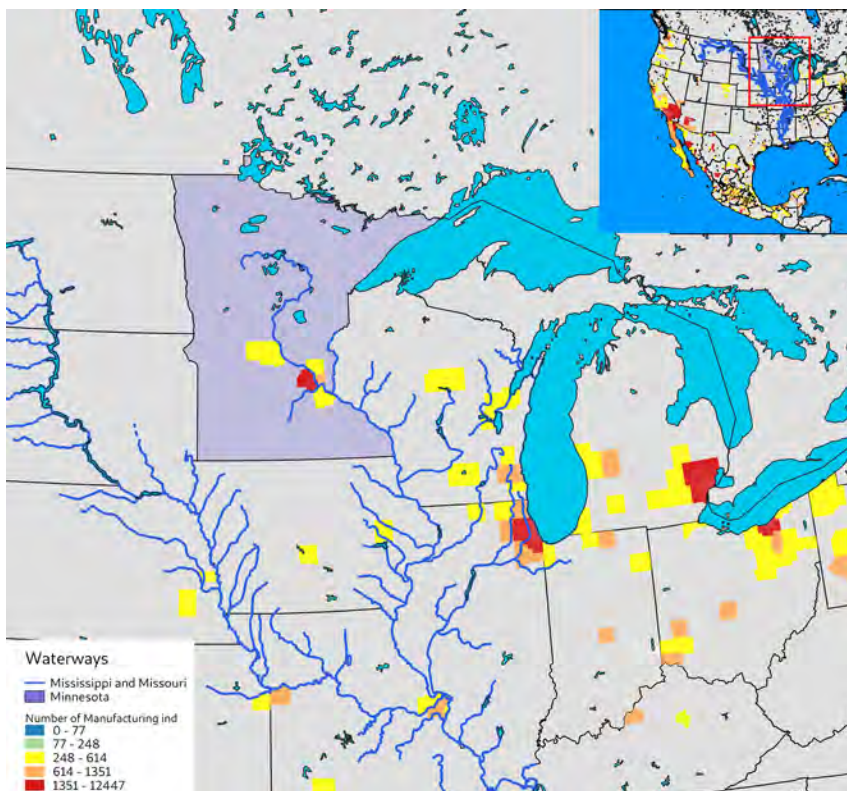
¹ Translator's note: *Morelense* is the demonym that describes the people from Morelos.

Map 1.
The regions of the United States: Minnesota in the Midwest



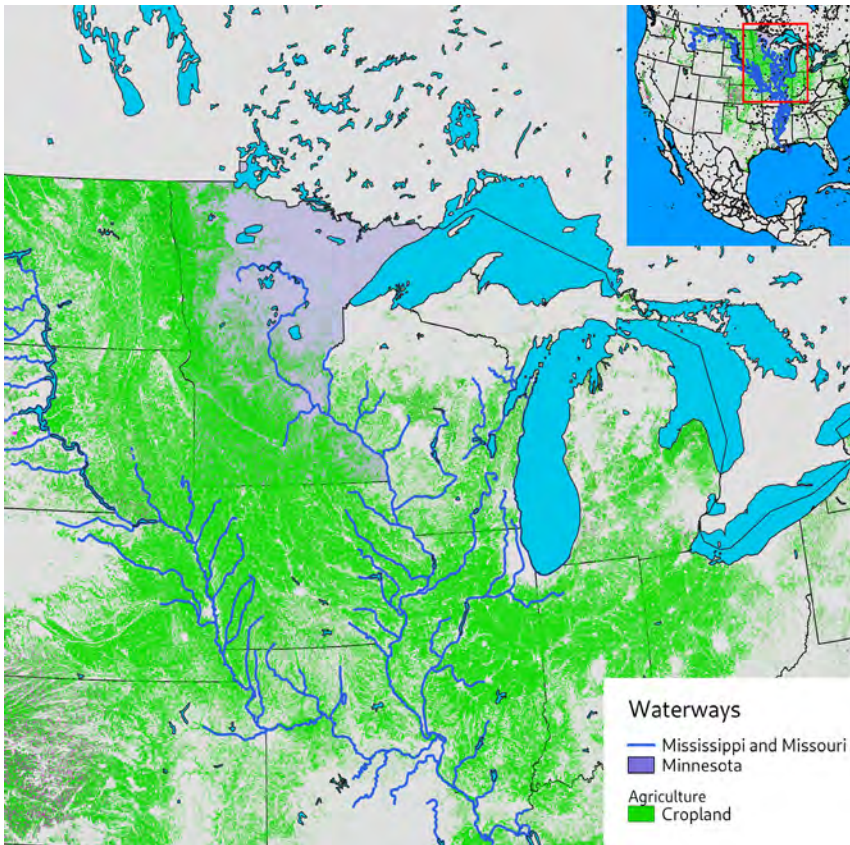
Source: Map of USA showing regions.png. (2014, November 26). Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository. https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Map_of_USA_showing_regions.png&oldid=140625848.

Map 2.
Maritime routes in the Midwest and its main manufacturing hubs



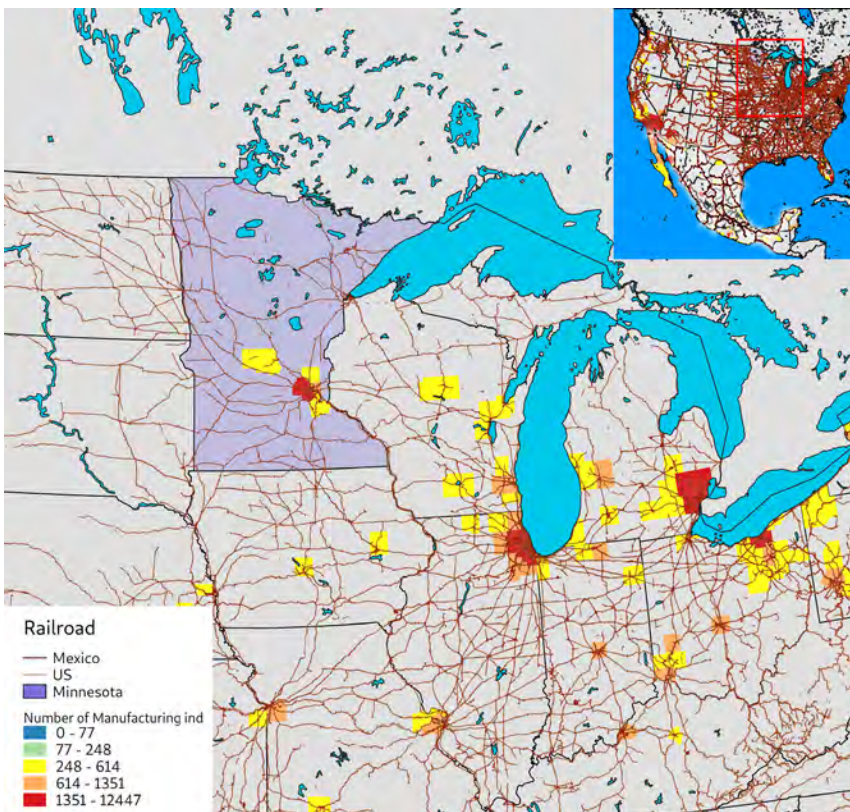
Source: Made by the authors with data from USGS. North America Rivers and Lakes [shapefile], and Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census [database]. <https://www.bls.gov/cew/downloadable-data-files.html>.

Map 3.
Maritime routes and cropland in the Midwest



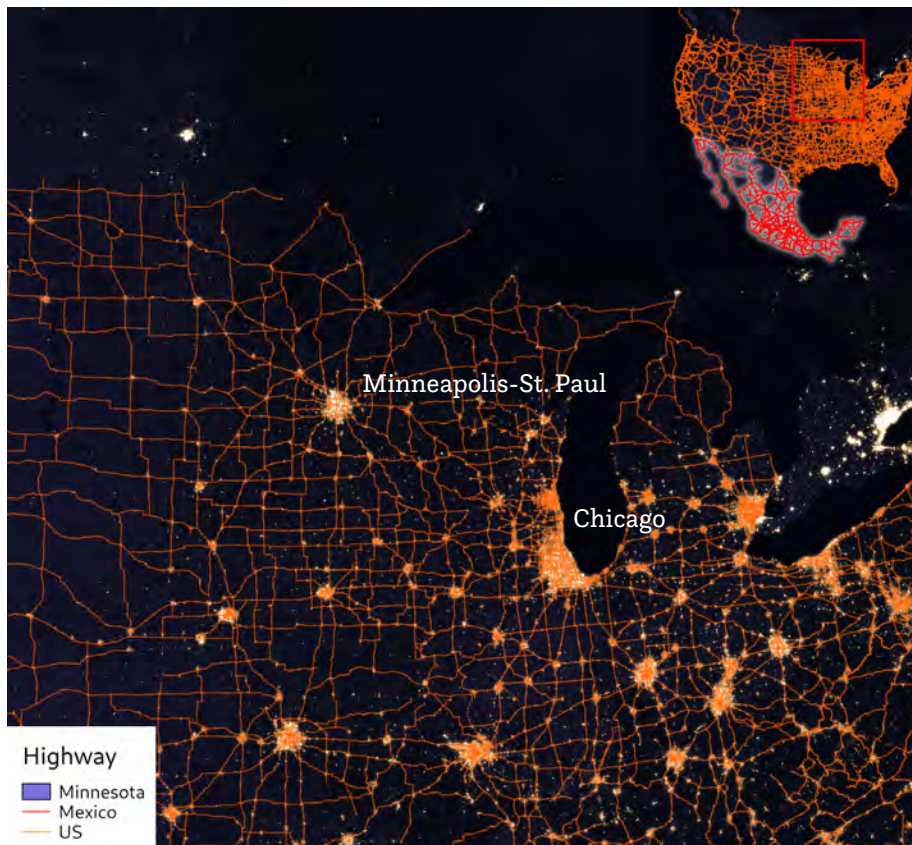
Source: Made by the authors with data from USGS. North America Rivers and Lakes [shapefile], and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). National Cropland [raster]. https://www.nass.usda.gov/Research_and_Science/Cropland/Release/index.html.

Map 4.
Railroad network in the Midwest and manufacturing hubs



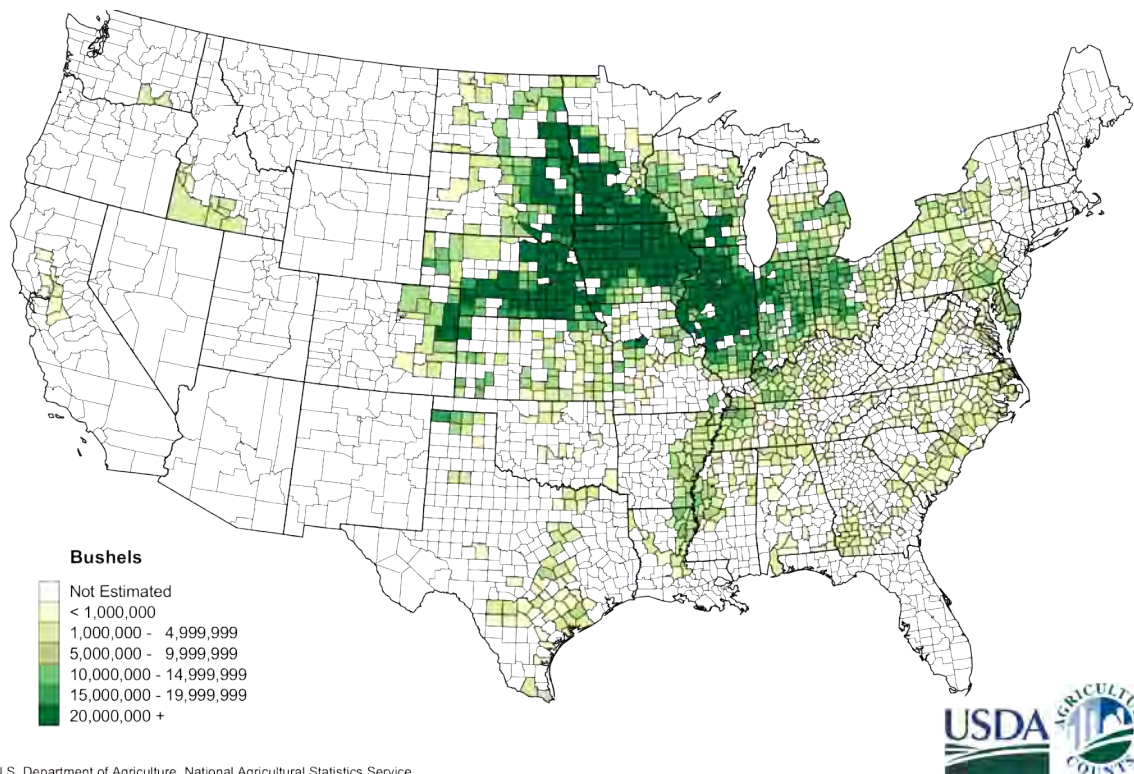
Source: Made by the authors with data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Tiger/Line [shapefile]. <https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/shapefiles/index.php>, and Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census [database]. <https://www.bls.gov/cew/downloadable-data-files.html>.

Map 5.
Road network in the Midwest and manufacturing hubs



Source: Made by the authors with data from NASA. Black Marble [raster]. https://www.nasa.gov/topics/earth/earthmonth/earthmonth_2013_5.html. U.S. Census Bureau. Tiger/Line [shapefile]. <https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/shapefiles/index.php>. Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Freight Analysis Framework V4 [shapefile]. <https://faf.ornl.gov/fafweb>.

Map 6.
Maize production in the United States, 2018



U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service

Source: Taken from USDA NASS. https://www.nass.usda.gov/Charts_and_Maps/Crops_County/cr-pl.php.



The church of San Pablo Apóstol, in Axochiapan, Morelos. Photo: [Catedrales e Iglesias](#), on [Flickr](#)

communications infrastructure which broadened the US's market and industry (Valdés, 2000).

As can be seen, the importance of the Midwest in the growth and development of the US economy is key. Chicago, in turn, is not only the most important city in the region but we believe it also plays a major role in the economy of the country as a whole and within the global market. As we can observe in maps 2, 4, and 5, which show the communication infrastructure, in addition to being a highly developed industrial center² the city of Chicago serves as a crucial hub for the country's economic supply. In fact, to understand the importance of the city's strategic location, it suffices to mention that the CenterPoint Intermodal Terminal, the largest dry port in North America, is "strategically located at the epicenter of the region's huge transportation infrastructure,"³

² According to the City of Chicago government, the city's industrial base consists of the production of building materials, steel, food and beverage, textiles, wood processing, electrical equipment, metals, furniture, leather, non-metallic minerals, paper, and transportation equipment, among other activities.

³ This information was obtained from the CenterPoint website at: <https://centerpoint.com/safe-driving-initiatives/>. With the establishment of CenterPoint the rural

which is located in Elwood, Illinois, just 64 kilometers [40 miles] from Chicago.

Chicago is not only an economic epicenter in the United States, but also a migratory one, especially for a Mexican born workforce. As a hub city, Chicago also attracts and redistributes the migrant workforce to other states of the region, thereby performing a major role in regulating the labor market's workforce supply within the entire Midwest region. Let us consider the fact that within the most important migratory corridors between Mexico and the United States we find the main destinations to be cities like Los Angeles, California; Houston, Texas; Chicago, Illinois; and New York, New York. Each of these cities connects the different regions, and economic and migratory corridors that make up the entire US territory.

community of Elwood, with a population of 2,200 inhabitants, became a vital commercial stop for businesses like Amazon, Wal-Mart, Ikea, Home Depot and other large retailers. These businesses move at least 25 thousand freight trucks a day through this dry port, the equivalent of three million containers yearly, with goods valued at up to 65 thousand million dollars (Sammon, 2019).

2. MIGRATION PULL FACTORS: MINNESOTA AND ITS RELATION TO MEXICO AND THE WORLD

Looking at Minnesota within its regional context can help us, on the one hand, understand migrant labor force pull factors there and, on the other, discover similarities with Morelos (Map 7). Even though both entities are markedly different from each other, geographically speaking they play a similar role. The respective proximity of both states to a city of enormous economic importance places both of them in a strategic economic and political position.

Just as Minnesota articulates north-south and east-west corridors, the state of Morelos and particularly its capital, Cuernavaca, has been an obligatory transit route between Mexico City and the southern Pacific coast,⁴ as well as an important junction in the linkage project of eastern and western Mexico—from the Port of Veracruz in the Gulf of Mexico to the Port of Lázaro Cárdenas and/or Manzanillo in the Pacific coast (Map 8). Similarly, Minnesota serves as a central hub between the East Coast-Chicago and

⁴ The most important was the Port of Acapulco in the Mexican state of Guerrero, even before the arrival of the Spaniards to Mexico in the 16th century.

the Northeast Coast and, along a north-south axis, it connects from Laredo up to Lake Superior (Map 9).

In looking at map 9 we can readily attest to the fact that Minnesota (and the suburbs between Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Bloomington, Wisconsin) not only serves as a satellite territory for the city of Chicago, but also provides an outlet for the region's agricultural and industrial production of the region to the south, the West Coast, Seattle, and Canada. While Chicago is clearly a strategic center for the US economy, it must also be noted that Minnesota's economy plays a significant role in the global market, not only because of its proximity, but also due to its connection to Chicago.

The highway corridor that integrates Minnesota into the Midwest (Map 8) and connects the land route between Minnesota and the Mexican Pacific coast is mainly an automotive and aerospace corridor that links these industries in the United States (the world's largest producer) and Mexico (the world's eighth largest producer and fourth largest exporter) with the global market. Minnesota alone, in addition to the auto industry, manufactures industrial, electrical, and medical machinery, and has chemical, petrochemical, pharmaceutical, textile, wood and paper



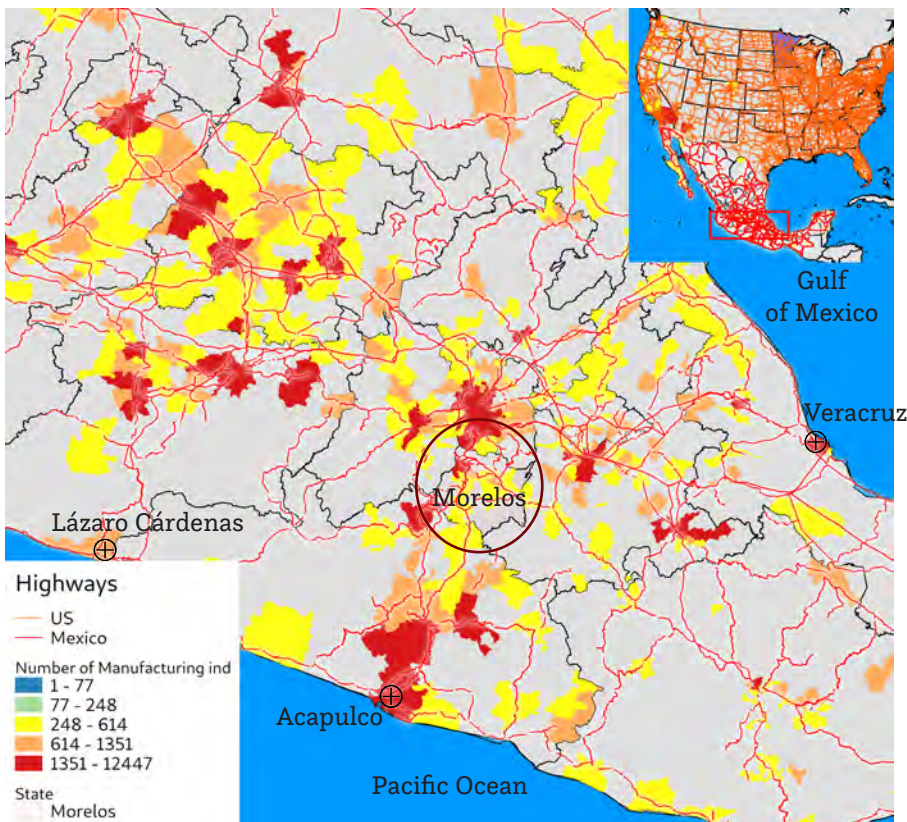
Minneapolis, main destination for Mexican immigrants in Minnesota. Photo: [Steijn Leijzer](#) on [Unsplash](#).

Map 7.
Geographic location of Minnesota and Morelos



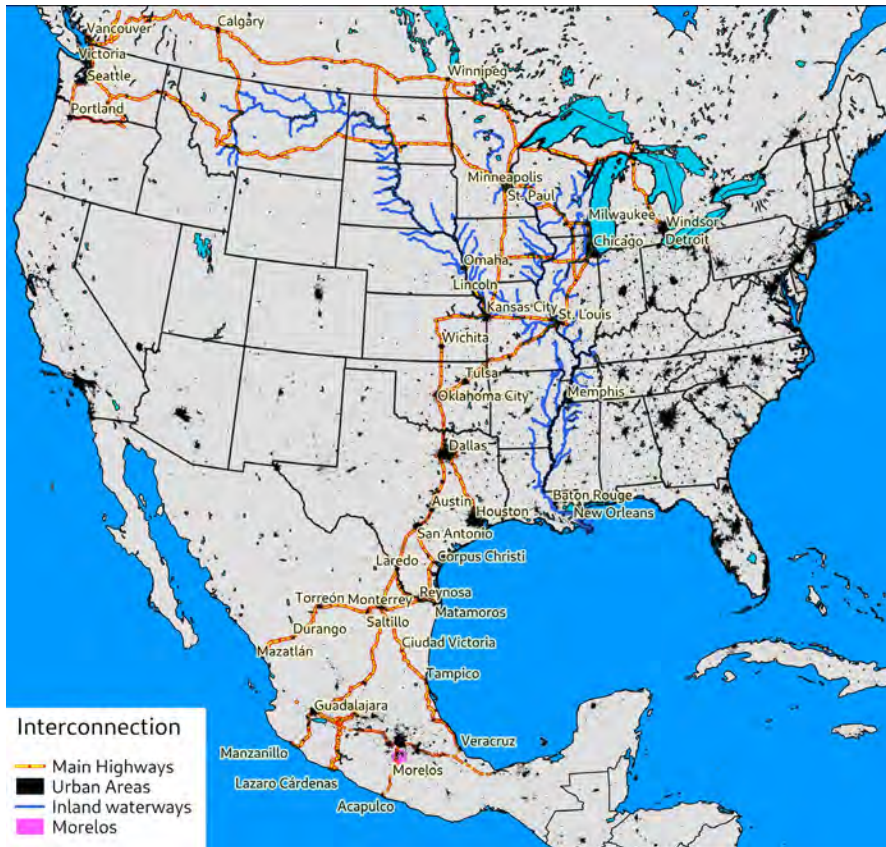
Source: Made by the authors with data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Tiger/Line [shapefile]. <https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/shapefiles/index.php>, and Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI). Marco Geoestadístico Nacional [shapefile]. <https://www.inegi.org.mx>.

Map 8.
Main road interconnections in the area of the state of Morelos, Mexico



Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI. Red Nacional de Caminos [shapefile]. <https://www.inegi.org.mx/app/biblioteca/ficha.html?upc=889463674641>, Directorio Nacional de Unidades Económicas (DENUE) [shapefile] y Marco Geoestadístico Nacional [shapefile].

Map 9.
Logistic corridors between Minnesota and Morelos



Source: Made by the authors with data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Tiger/Line [shapefile]. <https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/shapefiles/index.php>. Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Freight Analysis Framework V4 [shapefile]. <https://faf.ornl.gov/fafweb>. INEGI. Red Nacional de Caminos [shapefile]. <https://www.inegi.org.mx/app/biblioteca/ficha.html?upc=889463674641>. Natural Earth. Populated Places. <http://naturalearthdata.com/downloads/10m-cultural-vectors/>.

industries, among others. However, mining and agriculture are its most important sectors. In fact, the state of Minnesota is the fourth largest exporter of agricultural products in the United States.

As shown in Figure 1, Canada and Mexico are the main trade partners for its export production, followed by Europe and East Asia (China included).⁵ Conversely, Figure 2 shows the set of goods that Minnesota purchases from its main trade partners and the mode of transportation from their point of origin to their entry in Minnesota. With regard to imports, Canada and Mexico (although the latter to a lesser extent compared to exports) are once again the state's main trade partners, followed by Europe and East Asia. Here it is worth noting that the primary means of transportation between Minnesota and Mexico are highways and, to a much lesser extent, railroads.

⁵ While Minnesota's exports to México represent 10.4 percent of its entire exports, the share of its exports to China reaches 10 percent. The communications infrastructure that connects Minnesota guarantees a direct exit to the Pacific through the north of the United States and then southbound, towards the Mexican ports of Lázaro Cárdenas and Manzanillo (as seen on Map 9).

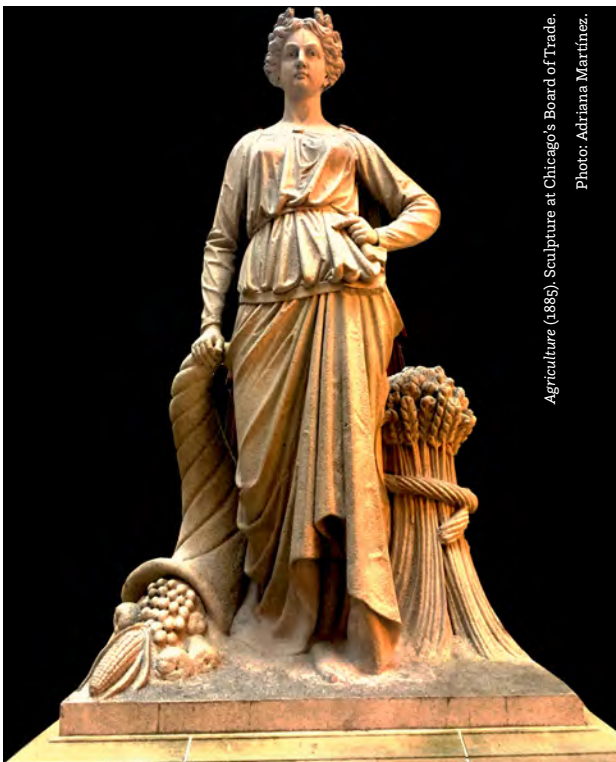
With regard to Minnesota's and Mexico's economies, the commercial relationship between them, as measured by volume, has increased more than one thousand percent in almost 30 years, thanks to NAFTA. Mexico is the second most important export market for Minnesota and its third most important partner for acquiring mainly agricultural products, metals, and (navigation) machinery (Figures 1 and 2). According to the Department of Economic Affairs of Mexico (Secretaría de Economía, SE), in 2017 trade relations between Minnesota and Mexico (imports and exports) exceeded the 4.4 billion dollar mark (SE, 2018). Additionally, according to the same institution, most trade between Minnesota and Mexico enters and exits through the border crossing point between Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, and Laredo, Texas, a border point in the corridor that connects Minnesota in the US (SE, 2018b) (Map 9). Figures 3 and 4 show the volume of trade between Minnesota and Mexico by product and by means of transportation. It is notable here that the main agricultural products purchased by Mexico from Minnesota are corn (a product that originated in and was domesticated in Mexico), soybean and pork.

In this respect, we see that while Minnesota can generate on its own an internal market connecting to many international industrial centers, it also guarantees Chicago a main route to world market entry and exit. With this in view, and assuming that economic epicenters are magnets for labor, the question is no longer, why Mexicans migrate to Minnesota, but rather why isn't this migratory corridor as large as in other cities?

3. MINNESOTA, LAND OF TEN THOUSAND LAKES, LAND OF IMMIGRANTS

“How did we wind up in Minnesota? A friend of my brother's, who was also from Axochiapan but lived in Chicago, was invited to a wedding here. He drove his car to Minneapolis and got drunk at the party. When he started going back home his car broke down and with no money to fix it he could not get back to Chicago. He started working, having found a job pretty quickly and, since the pay was not bad and he was picked up and dropped off from work, he decided to stay and later brought my brother and my brother brought me.”

Mexican immigrant from Axochiapan,
restaurant owner in Minneapolis.



Agriculture (1885), Sculpture at Chicago's Board of Trade.
Photo: Adriana Martínez.

Minnesota “land of ten thousand lakes” (Map 10), was admitted to the American Union on May 11, 1858, making it the 32nd of 50 states that currently make up the US. It is the 12th largest state in the country by size (225,163 square kilometers) and is the 22nd largest state by population (a little over 5.6 million people live there as of 2019). Minnesota is made up of several different ethnic groups, though non-Hispanic whites are the majority with 84.1 percent of the total population, followed by African-Americans (6.8 percent), those of Latin American origin (5.5 percent), Asian (5.1 percent), and Native American (1.4 percent) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Map 11 shows the Mexican population in relationship to the total population and the areas where most of them are currently settled (2018). Notable among these are the counties of Hennepin and Ramsey (within the Twin Cities), Todd, Kandiyohi, Watonwan, Steele, Olmsted, Nobles, and Mower. At first glance the map would appear to show very few Mexicans concentrated in very few counties. However as we will see later, the relevance of the Mexican community in Minnesota is far greater than what might be interpreted by looking only at this map.

The diversity of Minnesota's population can be explained by its migratory history, which began in earnest in the 19th century. At that time, the Dakota people still inhabited the territory and coexisted with the European immigrants through trade. As we have already mentioned, the territory now occupied by the state of Minnesota was populated mainly by seven Dakota tribes (also known as Council Fires or bands): the Mdewakanton, Sisseton, Wahpekute, Wahpeton, Yankton, Yanktonai, and Teton. As a group they formed the Oyate (or Nation) (Westerman and White, 2012: 22). However,

during the 19th century a process began which stripped the Dakotas of their territories. Between 1805 and 1858, a period of 53 years, twelve treaties were negotiated between the Dakota nation and the United States [...]. Where once the Dakota Nation was settled across the entire territory that eventually became the state of Minnesota, by 1858 it had been physically confined to a small reservation 10 miles wide [...]. (Westerman and White, 2012: 134).

In other words, while the official history records that the signing and execution of the treaties were a negotiation process for the “cession” of the Dakota territory, in reality they were disposessions sanctioned by United States law. Finally, with the signing

Figure 1.
Minnesota exports to main trade partners,
by product and means of transportation, 2017

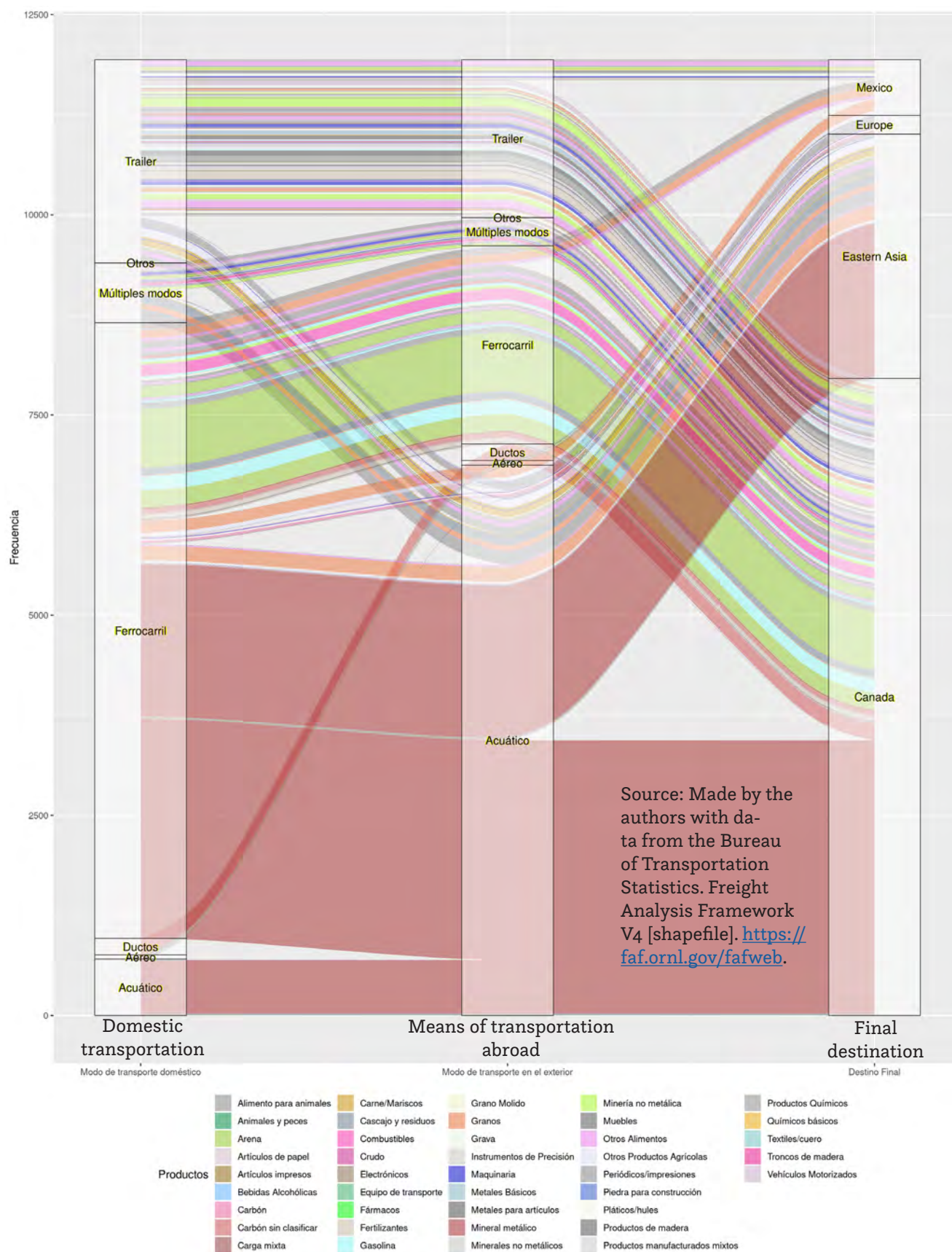


Figure 2.
Minnesota imports from its main trade partners
by product and means of transportation, 2017

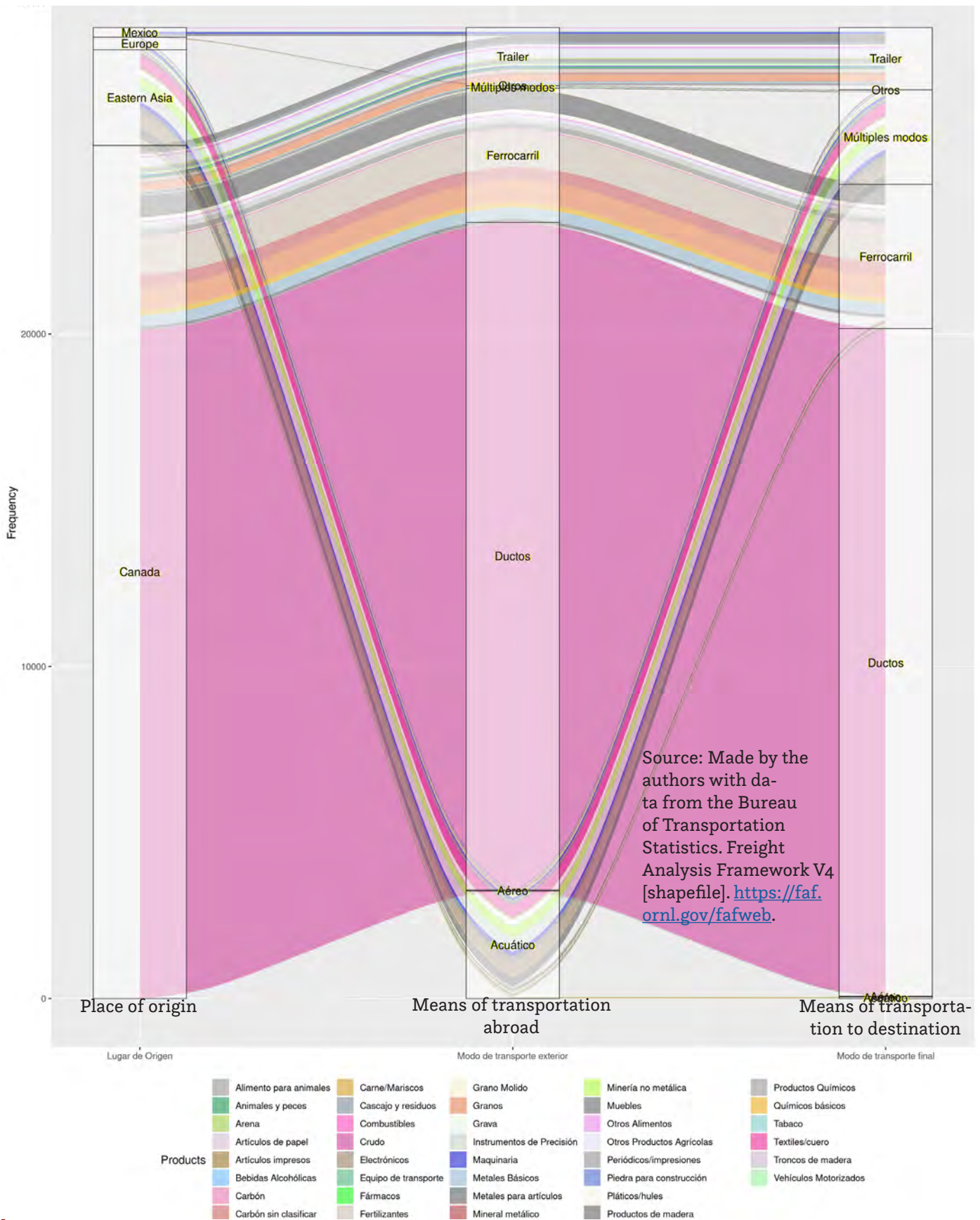
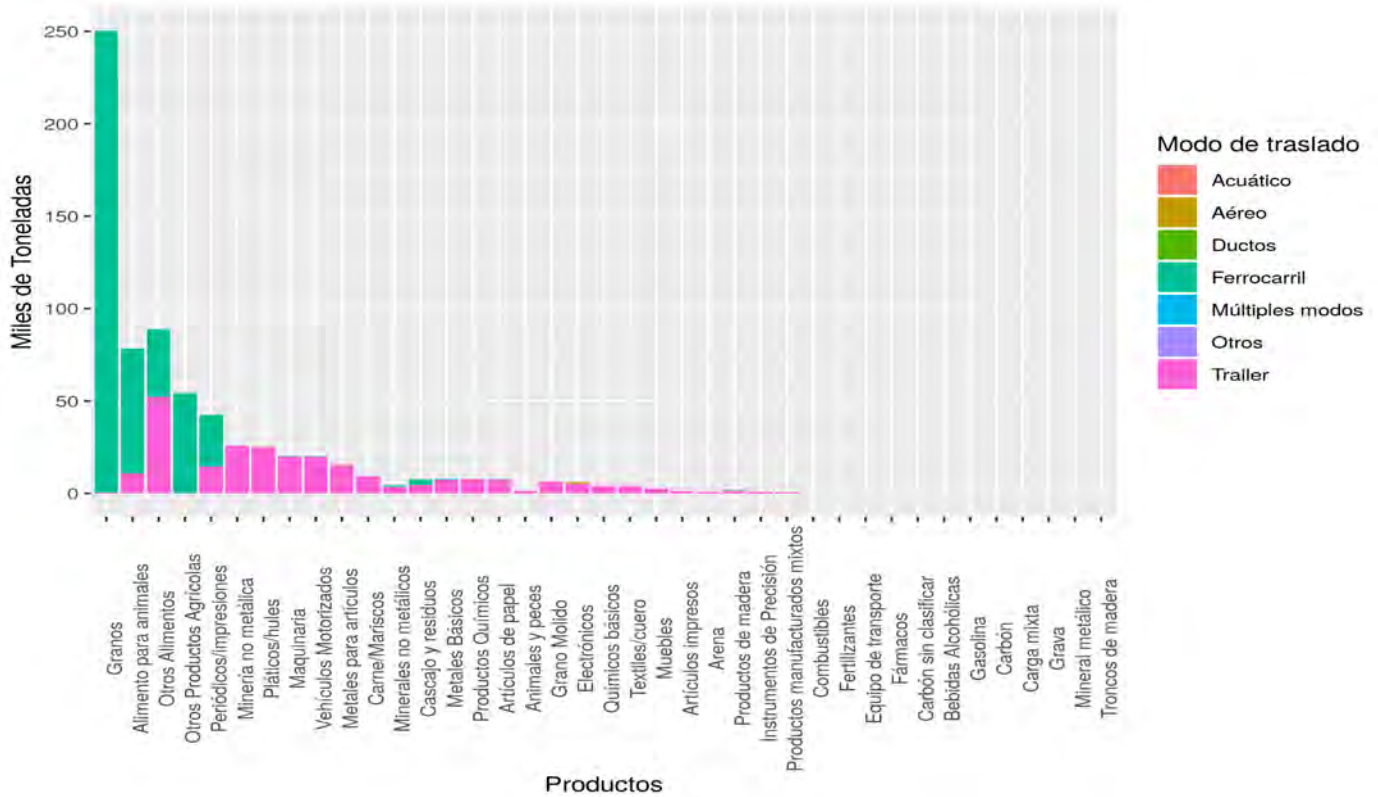
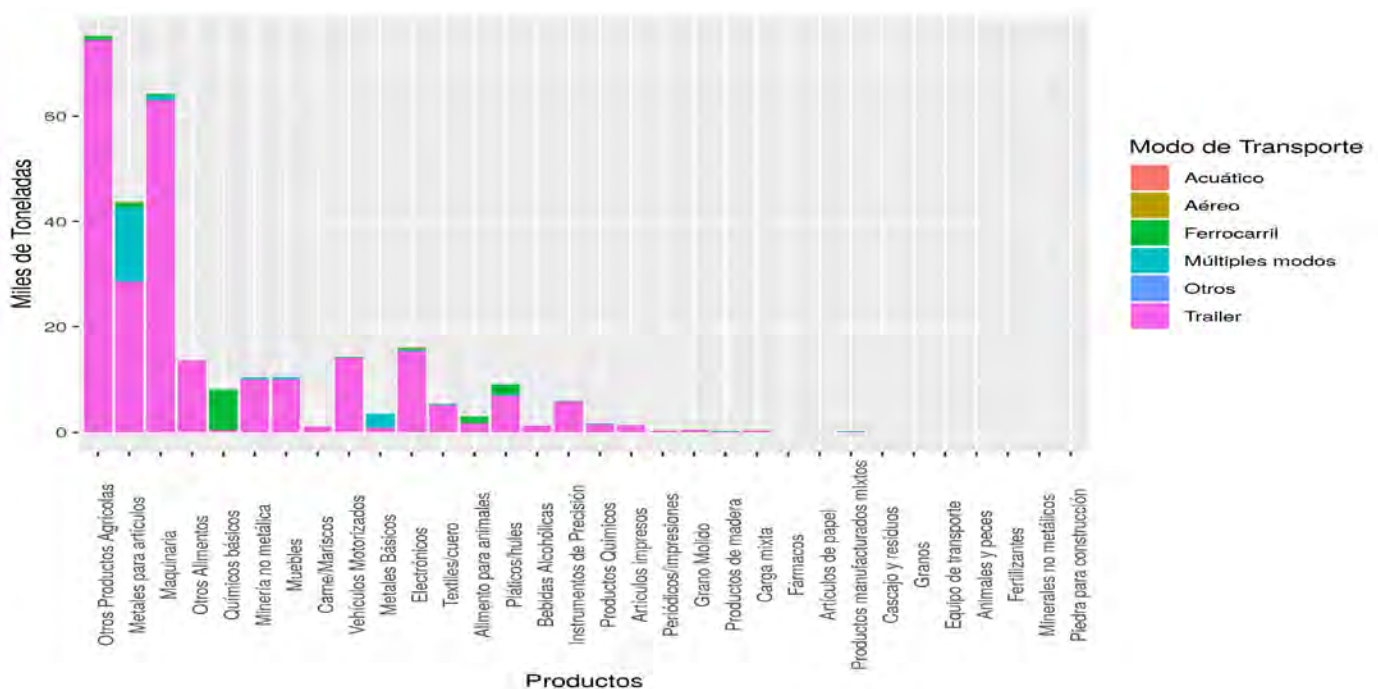


Figure 3.
Exports from Minnesota to Mexico by product and means of transportation, 2017



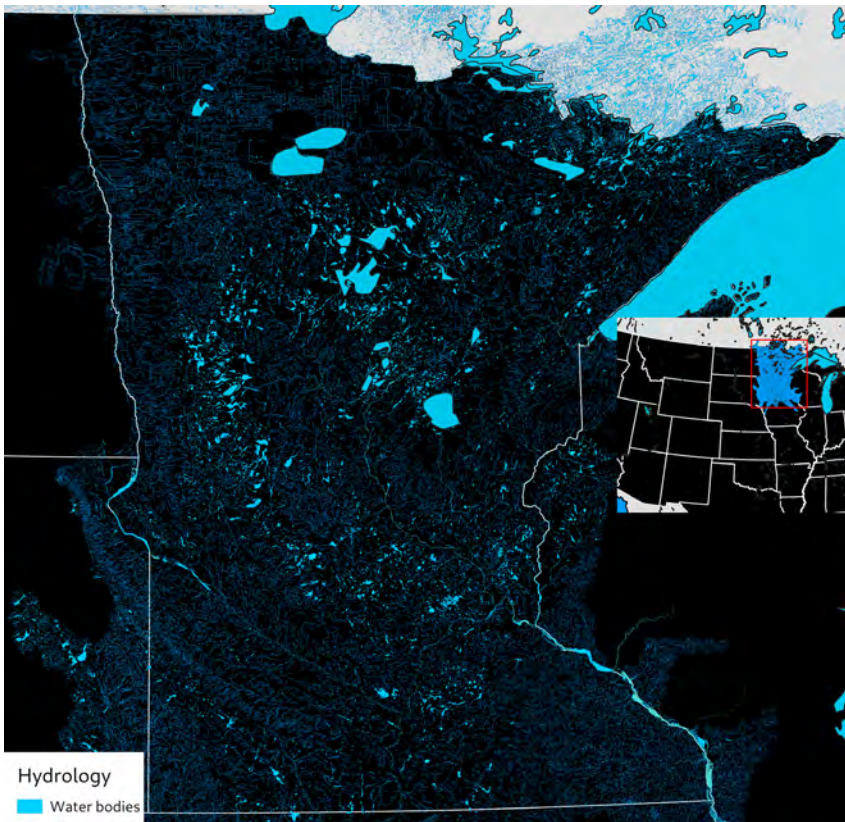
Source: Made by the authors with data from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Freight Analysis Framework V4 [shapefile]. <https://faf.ornl.gov/fafweb>.

Figure 4.
Imports to Minnesota from Mexico by product and means of transportation, 2017



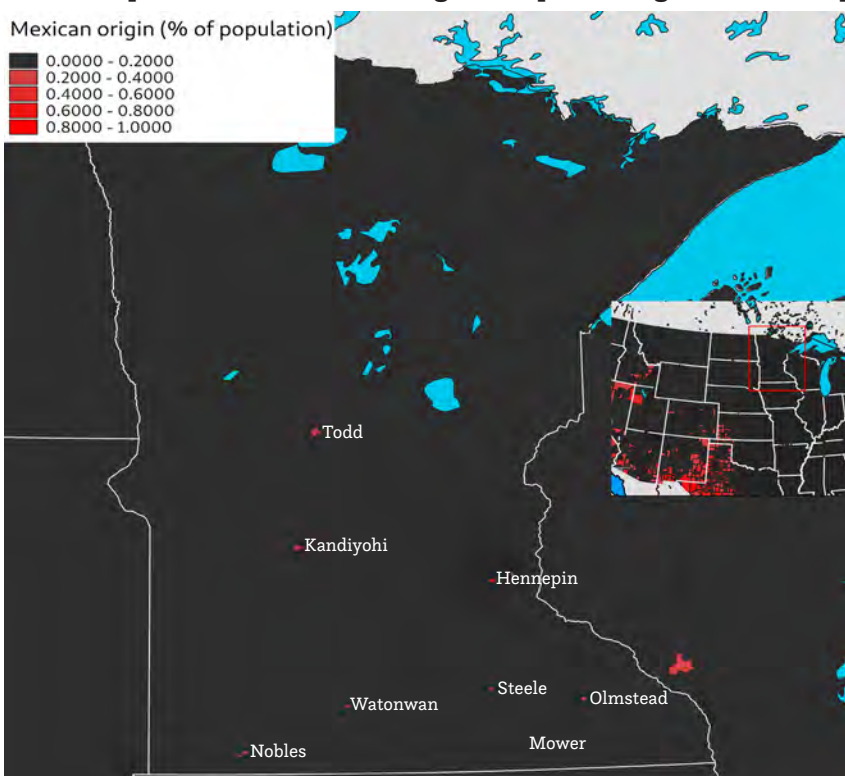
Source: Made by the authors with data from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Freight Analysis Framework V4 [shapefile]. <https://faf.ornl.gov/fafweb>.

Map 10.
The lakes of Minnesota



Source: Made by the authors with data from the Minnesota IT Services. Raster Elevation Data and Shaded Relief Maps for Minnesota [raster]. <http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/chouse/elevation/raster.html#state>. USGS. NHD V1.0 [shapefile]. <https://viewer.nationalmap.gov/basic/?basemap=b1&category=nhd&title=NHD%20view#>.

Map 11.
Population of Mexican origin as a percentage of the total population in Minnesota, 2013-2017



Source: Made by the authors with data from: Manson, Schroeder, van Riper y Ruggles (2018). IPUMS National Historic Geographic Information System. Versión 13.0 [data-base]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. <http://doi.org/10.18128/Do50.V13.0>.

and execution of the 1851 Treaty of Traverse des Sioux, the Dakota tribes of Sisseton and Wahpeton “ceded” their territories (southern and western Minnesota) to the US government. It can be stated that with this event the contemporary history of migration to Minnesota officially began. By 1857, the non-indigenous population had grown to nearly 100 thousand inhabitants (Cameron, 2010).

As seen in the previous chapter, by the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century a process of accelerated industrial and urban growth began, led by the cities of Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Kansas, Missouri, Minneapolis, and St. Paul. The resulting boom in the iron mining districts around Lake Superior in the US and Canada (known as the Iron Range) became the first great pull factor for an immigrant workforce which arrived in two stages and shaped the population distribution of Minnesota. The first wave brought immigrants mainly from Canada and northern Europe (Finland, Sweden, Slovenia, Norway, Germany, Ireland, Austria, and England). The second wave, which coincided with the region’s mining boom, saw the arrival of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. By the beginning of the 20th century, 85 percent of the mining workforce in Minnesota was of European descent. The Finns made up the largest group of immigrants born abroad in the state (Lavigne, n.d.).

However, according to MNCompass.org, contemporary migrant Minnesota is characterized by being home to nearly half a million immigrants. While this number is proportionally much smaller than the migrant population of other states, today 18 percent of children living in Minnesota were born abroad or are the children of foreigners. It should be noted that most of this immigrant population lives in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and St. Paul) metropolitan area, and that the majority of them come from Mexico, Somalia, India, Laos, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Thailand (Hmong), China, Korea, Liberia, and Canada (Luizzi, 2016).

4. MEXICANS IN MINNESOTA

According to the American Community Survey, the Latino community is the largest immigrant population in Minnesota, closely followed by the Asian community. Mexicans represent the largest group of Latin Americans born outside the United States, followed by the Guatemalans and Salvadorans. (Figure 5).

Looking at the population of Latin American origin, on the other hand – which includes foreigners and the children of Latin American foreigners born

in the United States– the largest group again comes from Mexico, followed by the population from Central America, South America and Puerto Rico (Figure 6).

In both cases, the Mexican community remains the largest. If we also look at the population of Mexican origin in relation to that originating in Latin America, we notice that, in contrast to map 10, it is the largest and is present in practically every county in Minnesota (Map 12). In fact, according to data from the Minnesota Department of Health, between 1990 and 2010 the Latin American population grew at a rate of 364.4%, followed by the African-American population, with a growth rate of 189%, and by the Asian population, which grew 177.8% during the same period. The white population, on the other hand, grew only 9.5% (Minnesota Department of Health, n.d.).

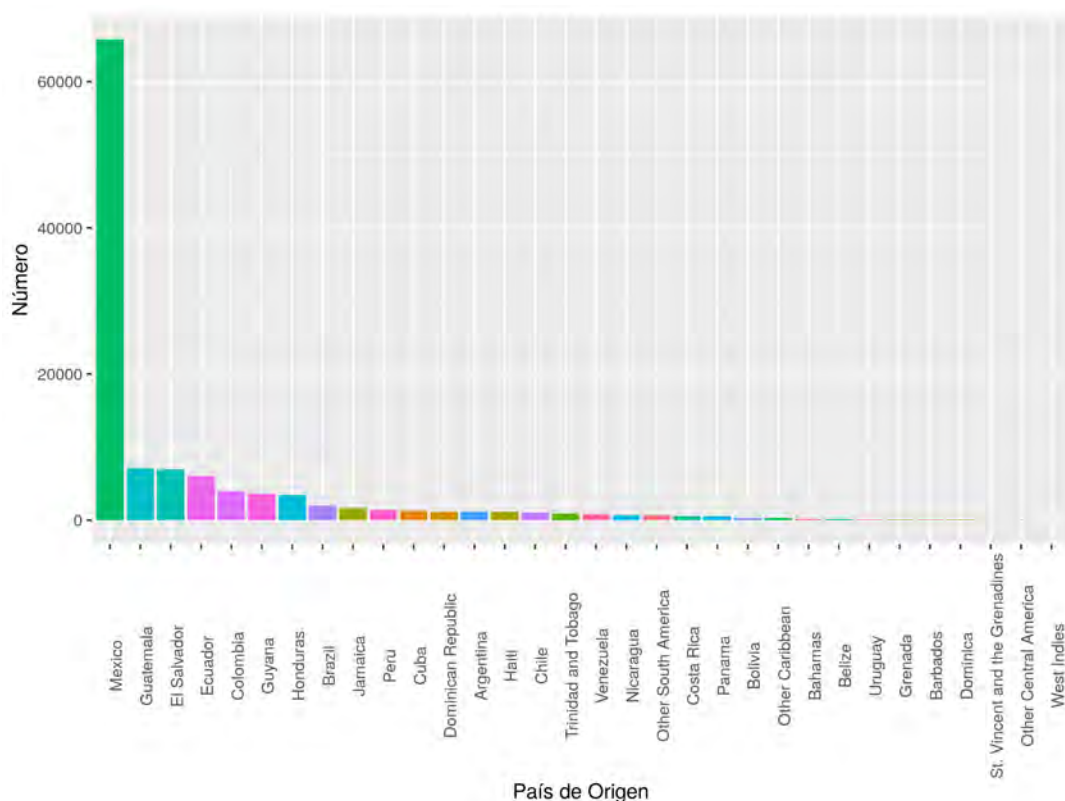
According to Dennis Valdés, the first migration wave from Mexico occurred between 1910 (Mexican Revolution) and 1940 (World War II). However, records at the Minnesota Historical Center show that the first Latin American individual to establish residence in the state was a Mexican by the name of Luis Garzón. In 1886, while touring with an orchestra he was a member of, Garzón fell ill in Minneapolis and had to stay to recover. After he got well, he fell in love with a woman from this city and decided to settle there (Kolnick, n.d.).

The case of Luis Garzón was rather unique considering that Mexicans were mostly regarded as agricultural workers suited for short-term temporary jobs. This belief explains why during this period the three fastest growing and hence most important industries in Minnesota—railroad construction, meatpacking, and the young sugar beet industry—recruited Mexican laborers en masse from Texas and directly from Mexico (Valdés, 2005). In fact, the areas in which Mexicans settled in Minnesota were determined by the conditions and requirements of its work centers.

Although Minnesota’s railroad industry was the first to attract Mexican workers, these migrants were not as numerous as in Chicago and other cities in the southern United States (Valdés, 2005). However, as we can see on Map 13, to this day the state’s Mexican settlements correlate closely to the railway lines. This is also due to the fact that the railroad is the main means for transporting goods out of Minnesota (Figure 1).

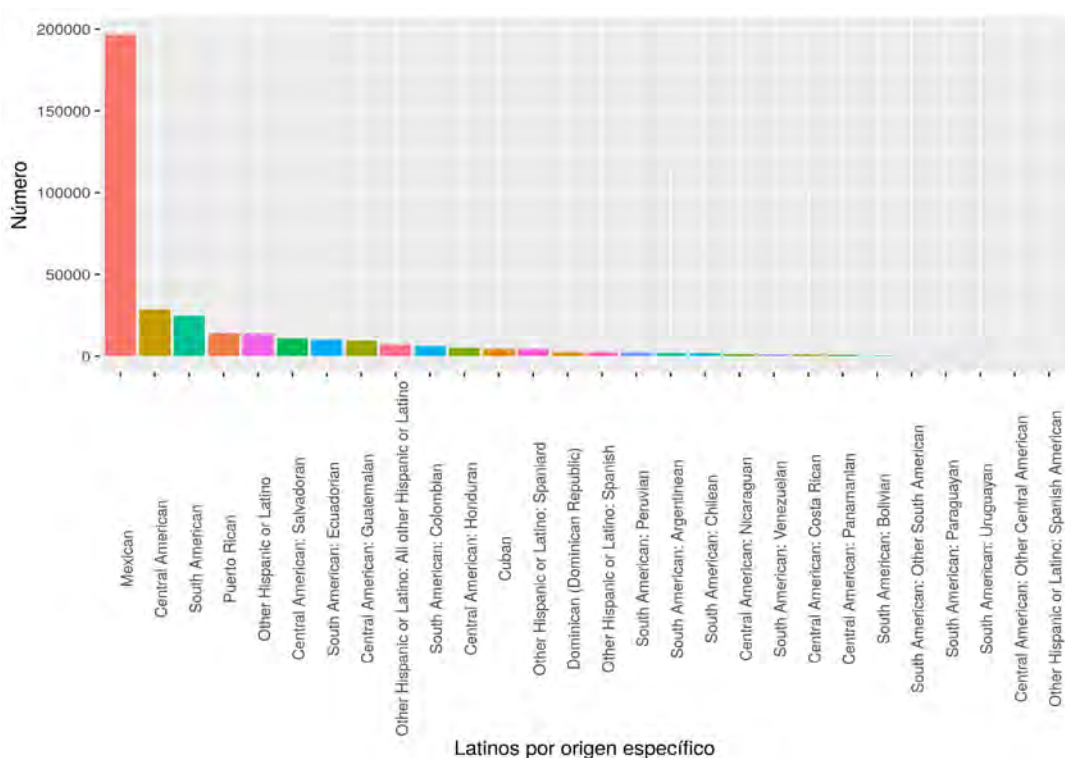
Despite the fact that Mexican immigrants were initially hired for agricultural jobs, their lives in Minnesota were actually split in two depending

Figure 5.
Foreign born population in Minnesota,
by Latin American country of origin, 2013-2017



Sourde: Made by the authors with data from: Manson, Schroeder, van Riper y Ruggles (2018). IPUMS National Historic Geographic Information System. Versión 13.0 [database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. <http://doi.org/10.18128/Do50.V13.0>.

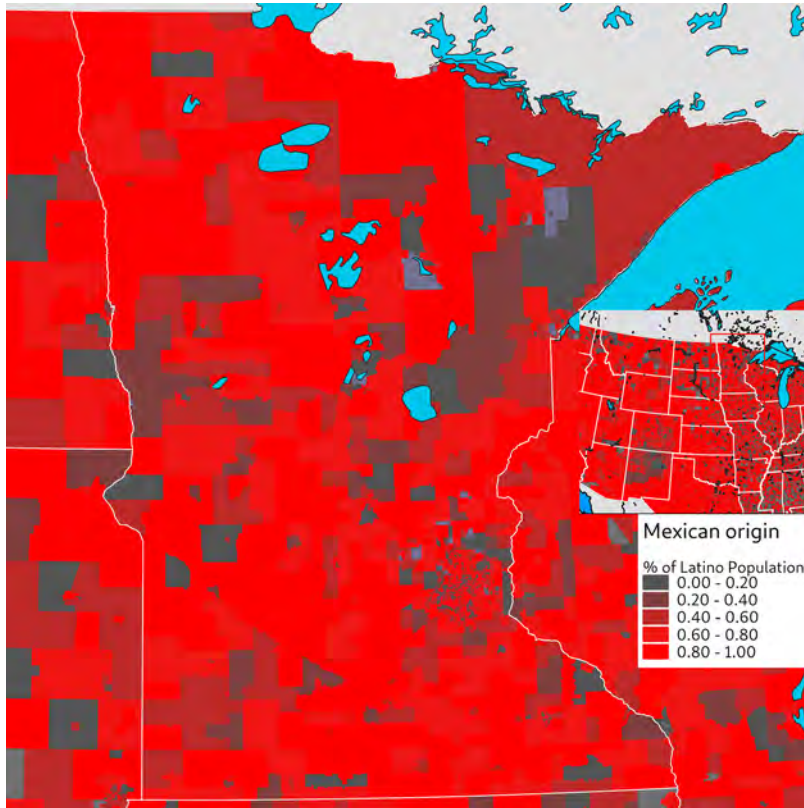
Figure 6.
People of Latin American origin in Minnesota (born in the U.S. and abroad),
by region of origin, 2013-2017



Sourde: Made by the authors with data from: Manson, Schroeder, van Riper y Ruggles (2018). IPUMS National Historic Geographic Information System. Versión 13.0 [database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. <http://doi.org/10.18128/Do50.V13.0>.

Map 12.

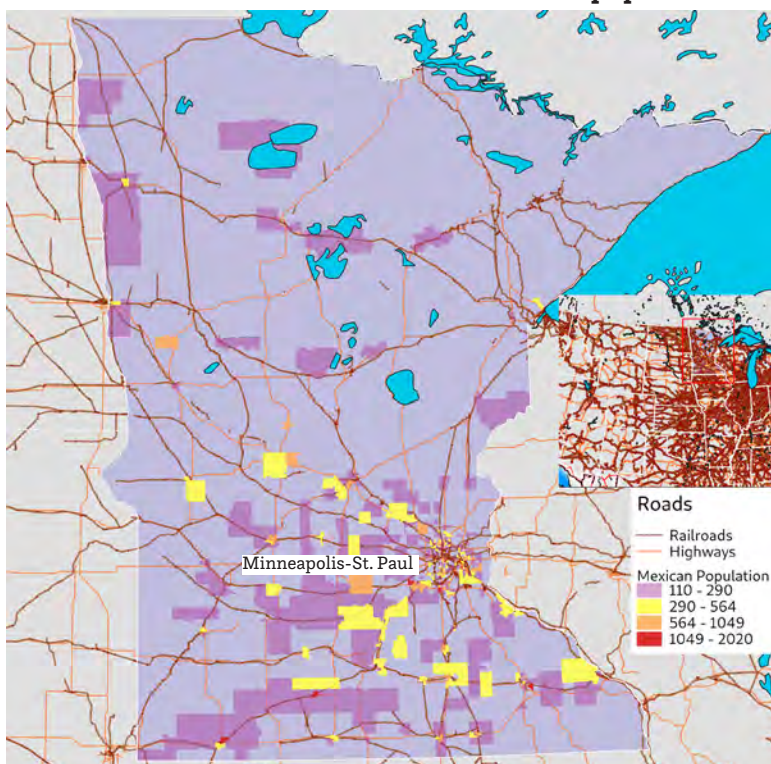
Mexican population as a percentage of the population of Latin American origin in Minnesota, 2013-2017



Source: Made by the authors with data from: Manson, Schroeder, van Riper y Ruggles (2018). IPUMS National Historic Geographic Information System. Versión 13.0 [database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. <http://doi.org/10.18128/Do50.V13.0>.

Map 13.

Railroad network and Mexican population settlements in Minnesota, 2013-2017



Source: Made by the authors with data from: Manson, Schroeder, van Riper y Ruggles (2018). IPUMS National Historic Geographic Information System. Versión 13.0 [database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. <http://doi.org/10.18128/Do50.V13.0>.

on the season: during the planting and harvesting time Mexicans lived near the agricultural fields and during the off-season they moved to the cities, primarily Minneapolis and St. Paul, to work in other activities. It is not surprising then that the settlements where the Mexican population is currently the most concentrated also coincide with Minnesota's agricultural areas (Map 14).

The meatpacking industry, for its part, is closely linked to two specific circumstances according to Valdés: on the one hand, the industry expanded thanks to the development of the railroad, which ushered in new transportation and refrigeration techniques, allowing for innovations and improvements in animal slaughter facilities along with an increase in productivity; and, on the other, the migration of various sectors of the population from rural to urban areas—including Mexican agricultural workers—who started consuming greater quantities of meat. For this reason, Mexican migrant workers, especially those living in cities, found significant job opportunities in this sector, as their settlement patterns also track Minnesota's meatpacking localities, as seen on Map 15.

However, it is the sugar beet industry which attracted the largest number of workers from Mexico. One reason why the population from south-east Morelos constitutes the most numerous group among these workers is perhaps because this region in Morelos is an important producer of sugar cane.⁶ As Dennis Valdés (2005) points out, with the growth of the sugar industry in Minnesota, companies like American Crystal Sugar Company (formerly Minnesota Sugar Company) and others began to hire workers from outside the state. By 1928, more than 7,000 Mexican immigrants were working in Minnesota's sugar beet fields and the sugar industry:

During the sugar production season, workers were either housed in camps near sugar beet factories—including Chaska, East Grand Forks, and Albert Lea—or in makeshift homes and old houses in the farms where they worked. When the season ended, they usually returned to the southern United States for the winter. However, more and more sugar companies encouraged their workers either to live permanently near the fields, or at least move to St. Paul or Minneapolis.

⁶ During 1880-1910 the global sugar industry experienced a growth surge due to the increasing demand for sugar in the cities. In this context, by the end of the 19th century Morelos's sugar industry contributed 56% of the total production of sugar in Mexico (Ávila, 2002: 51).

(Valdés, 2005: 5)

Although today most of the population of Mexican origin in Minnesota works in the service sector (and, therefore, less and less in agricultural activities), we can still see that the location of many of their settlements coincides with Minnesota's beet production and sugar industry areas, as seen on Map 16.

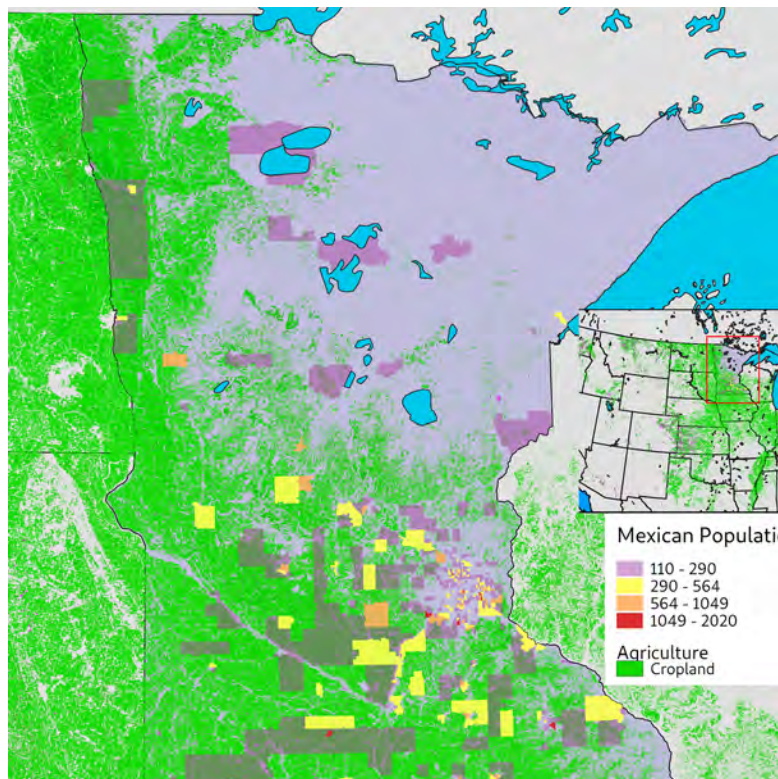
After World War II and until the end of the 1960s, Mexican employment began to diversify. On the one hand, the importance of the sugar beet industry in Minnesota's agricultural output began to diminish, pushing some farm workers towards other types of crops. On the other hand, Mexicans increasingly turned to the meatpacking industry, which led to their settlement in Minnesota's urban areas. Finally, when Mexican men began to enlist in the United States armed forces, Mexican women entered Minnesota's labor force, occupying jobs in ammunition production, aircraft factories, packaging plants, and the textile industry, among others. Likewise, businesses began to hire from Mexico again for agricultural, manufacturing and railroad jobs. Because of this, the Mexican population in Minnesota was rapidly becoming the largest immigrant population in the state (Valdés, 2005).

Despite the limitations inherent in any estimate based on consular ID card numbers,⁷ this information allows us to broadly track the origins of the Mexican population in Minnesota.⁸ This information enables us to determine that most of today's Mexican population in Minnesota comes from the Mexican

⁷ According to the Mexican Department of Foreign Affairs [Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores], the Mexican institution that issues these documents, consular ID cards are official identifications granted to Mexicans residing abroad regardless of their immigration status. However, it can only be issued and delivered to those individuals applying for it at the Mexican embassy or consulate in the country where they live. The limitations of the analysis based on this information are precisely due to the fact that many migrants in the U.S. do not apply for it, whether because of lack of knowledge or of fear, based on their status as undocumented immigrants.

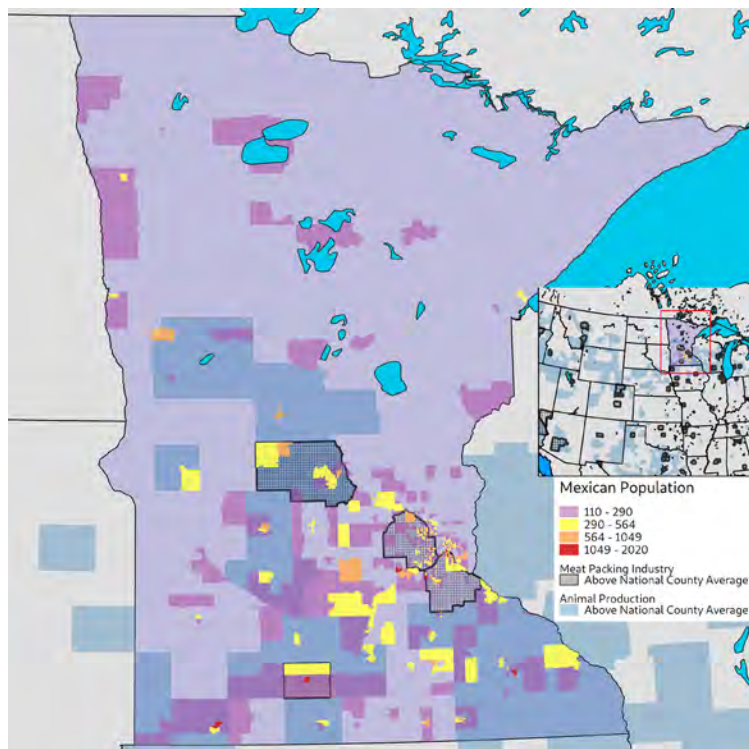
⁸ The consular jurisdiction of the Mexican consulate in St. Paul where it exercises its functions includes the states of Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and the counties of Douglas, Bayfield, Burnett, Washburn, Sawyer, Polk, Barron, Rusk, St. Croix, Dunn, Chippewa, Pierce, Pepin, Eau Claire, Buffalo, Trempealeau, Jackson, La Crosse, and Monroe in the state of Wisconsin. Although consular ID cards therein granted include the entire jurisdiction, this work only considered ID cards issued to persons of Mexican origin who resided in Minnesota.

Map 14.
Cropland and Mexican population settlements in Minnesota, 2013-2017



Source: Made by the authors with data from: Manson, Schroeder, van Riper y Ruggles (2018). IPUMS National Historic Geographic Information System. Versión 13.0 [database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. <http://doi.org/10.18128/DO50.V13.0>. Departamento de Agricultura de Estados Unidos (USDA). National Cropland [raster]. https://www.nass.usda.gov/Research_and_Science/Cropland/Release/index.html.

Map 15.
Location of meat packing plants, cattle production above National average and Mexican population settlements in Minnesota, 2013-2017



Source: Made by the authors with data from: Manson, Schroeder, van Riper y Ruggles (2018). IPUMS National Historic Geographic Information System. Versión 13.0 [database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. <http://doi.org/10.18128/DO50.V13.0>. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census [database]. <https://www.bls.gov/cew/downloadable-data-files.html>.

states of Morelos and Puebla, as seen in Figure 7, and particularly from the municipalities⁹ of Axochiapan, Cuautla, Tepalcingo, Jonacatepec and Ayala, in Morelos, and Jolalpan, Chietla, and Huehuetlán el Chico, in Puebla (Figure 8).

Additionally, this coincides with the fact that the municipalities of Puebla and Morelos receiving the largest remittances per capita (as seen on Map 17) comprise a region between the two states, with an intense migration flow to Minnesota; this is also one of Mexico's most important sugar producing regions.

The information presented here can be understood for the most part, through the migratory flow occurring between 1980 and 2010. According to several interviews and bibliographic sources, it can be divided into three phases. The first occurred between 1985 and 1995, while Mexico was preparing to enter NAFTA. The second was between 1995 and 2000, exactly after the 1994 crisis hit and NAFTA entered into force. The third took place between 2000 and 2010, coinciding with the presidency of Vicente Fox (2000-2006), a period when on average one Mexican emigrated from Mexico per minute and when the im-

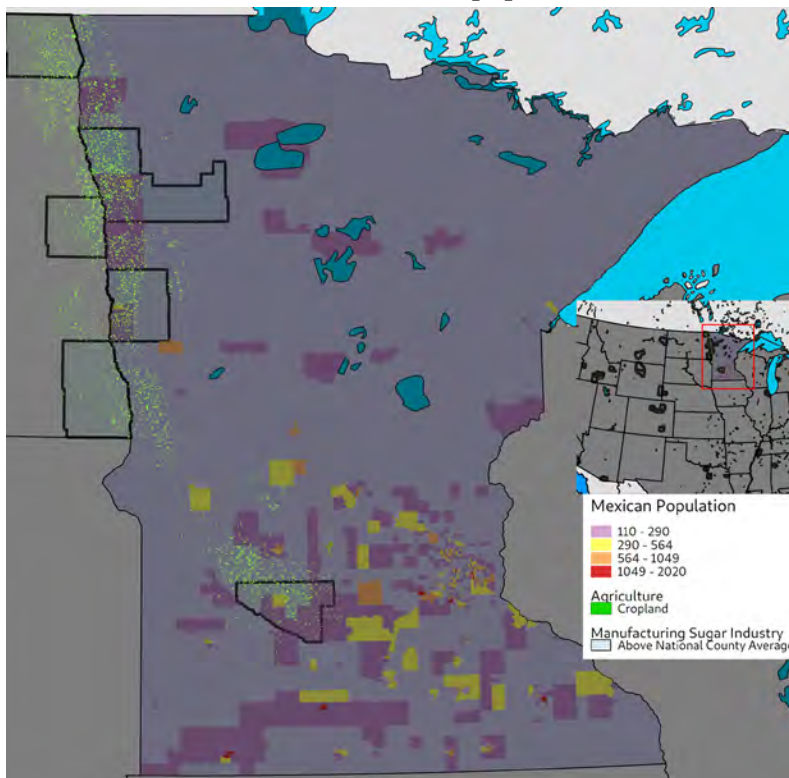
⁹ Municipalities are the basic territorial administrative units that constitute a state. A municipality in Mexico is roughly equivalent to a county in the United States, differences notwithstanding.

pacts of NAFTA were felt most as protectionism for Mexico's main basic agricultural products (corn and beans, along with powdered milk) came to an end. It should also be mentioned that this period coincided with the so-called "War on Drugs" initiated in Mexico by former President Felipe Calderón (2006-2012), which led to a dramatic surge in the levels of violence throughout the country.

It should be noted that among the population of Mexicans in Minnesota, including those who arrived during this period, the percentage with "naturalized" immigration status (namely, those whose stay in the United States was not at risk), gradually decreased even as Minnesota's Mexican population was increasing, as seen in Figure 9.

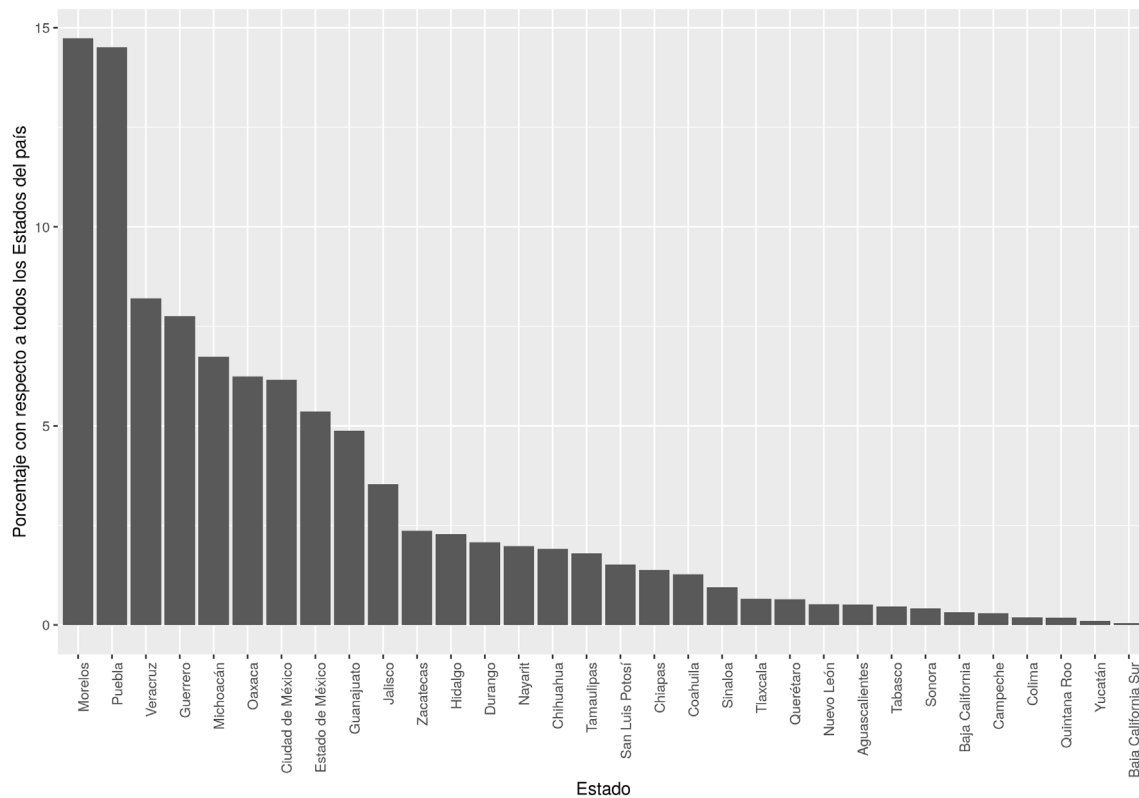
As we have noted, the activities of the population of Mexican origin in Minnesota became diversified within the state such that Mexicans today reside primarily in the Twin Cities: Minneapolis and St. Paul. In fact, the extraordinary increase in the Mexican population in the Twin Cities and other smaller communities in the area during this period (late 20th century) took the state government and demographers by surprise. According to the Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment Through Research organization (HACER), the Mexican popu-

Map 16.
Location of beetroot production, sugar production above National average and Mexican population settlements in Minnesota, 2013-2017



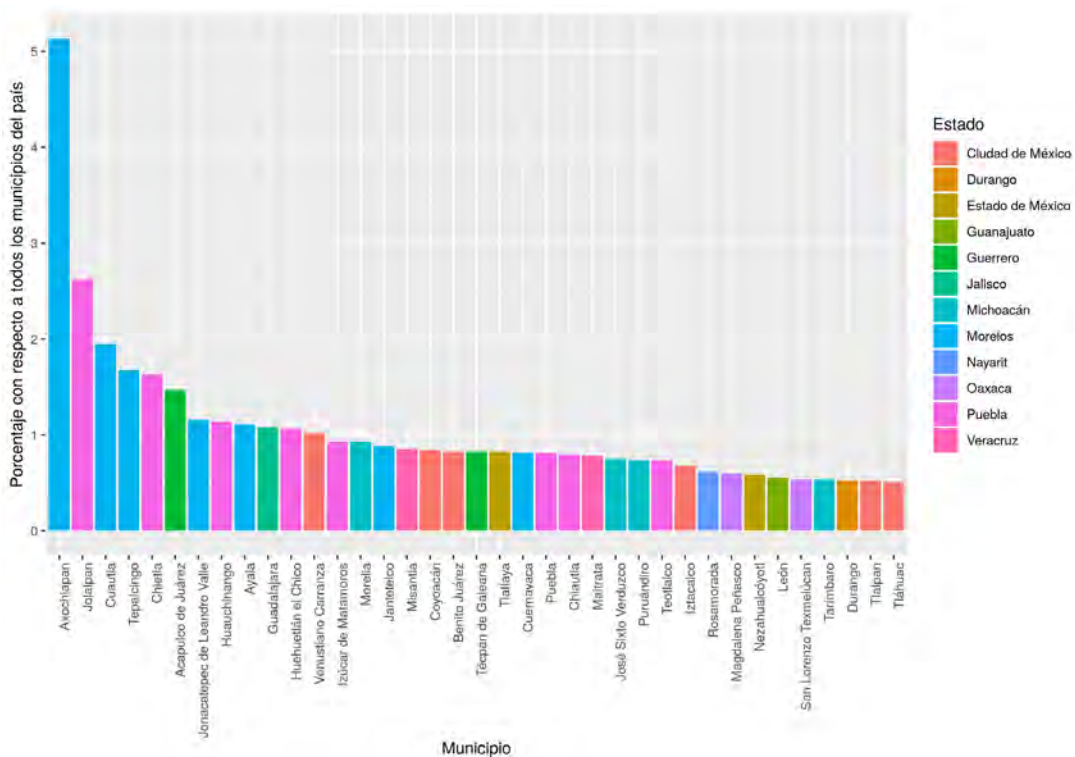
Source: Made by the authors with data from: Manson, Schroeder, van Riper y Ruggles (2018). IPUMS National Historic Geographic Information System. Version 13.0 [database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. <http://doi.org/10.18128/Do50.V13.0>. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). National Cropland [raster]. https://www.nass.usda.gov/Research_and_Science/Cropland/Release/index.html.

Figure 7.
Percentage of Consular IDs issued by the Mexican Consulate in St. Paul
to Mexicans in Minnesota by state of origin, 2016



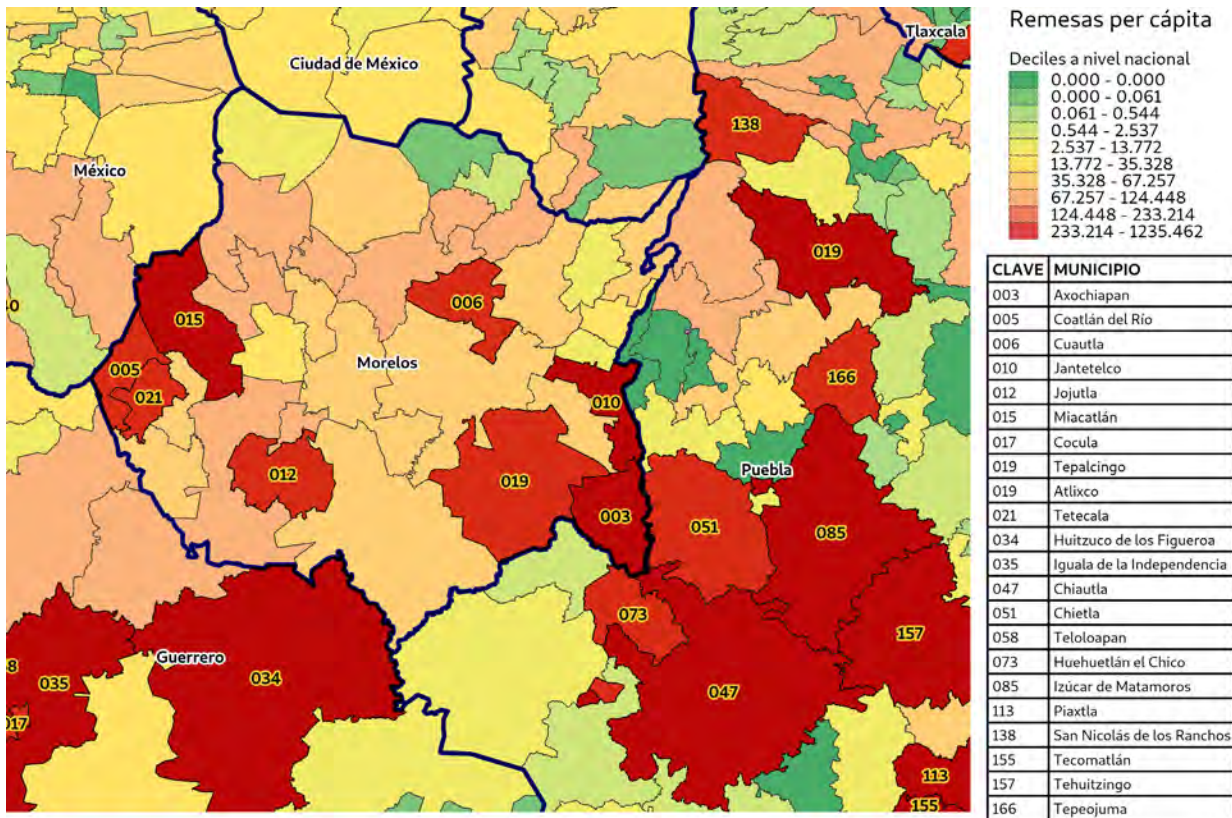
Source: Made by the authors with data from the Instituto de Mexicanos en el Exterior, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico.

Figure 8.
Percentage of Consular IDs issued by the Mexican Consulate in St. Paul
to Mexicans in Minnesota by municipality of origin, 2016



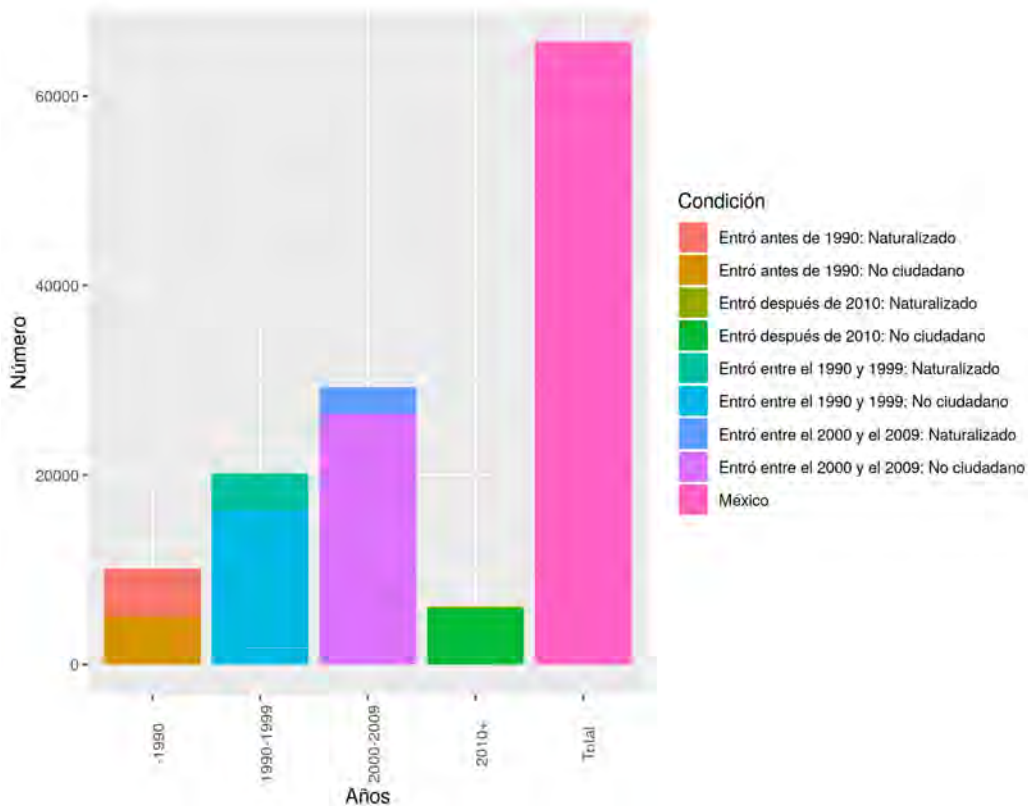
Source: Made by the authors with data from the Instituto de Mexicanos en el Exterior, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico.

Map 17.
Per capita remittances received by Mexican municipality, by decile, 2018



Source: Made by the authors with remittances data from the Bank of Mexico.

Figure 9.
Mexicans in Minnesota by year of arrival and legal status, 2013-2017



Source: Made by the authors with data from the American Community Survey.

lation was underestimated by up to 50% in the 1999 census (Valdés, 2005: 57). The series of Maps 18a, 18b and 18c shows the growth of the Mexican community in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

If we consider the area's total population, we can observe in Map 19 that Mexicans constitute up to 10% of the inhabitants in places like Lake Street, Southwest Minneapolis, and West St. Paul. If we only look at the population of Latin American origin, the Mexican community is the most represented and is practically present throughout the area as well (Map 20).

5. THE FACES BEHIND THE DATA

We cannot deny that the magnitude of the migratory flow from Mexico to the United States occupies a very significant place in our binational relationship and should be at the forefront of both countries' political agendas. But even more, it should be part of the social agenda of our transnational communities. Let us think of migratory flows not only as economic, political or even academic problems, and open the door to the possibility of understanding them as community matters that must be part of the dialogue between the US and Mexican communities. For, as we have seen, our roots while distant are also very deep.

Each of the corridors from a point of origin to a specific destination forms threads that together foreshadow a binational social fabric. In this sense, the most visible threads, by their size and brightness (the struggles waged by Mexican migrants in the United States, for example, for fair wages and labor rights, the artistic and cultural transformations they have generated in the United States, like the Chicano Movement, the mutual support and protection organizations they have formed, among others), are generally those that run from a state or municipality in Mexico to California, Texas, Illinois, New York and, more recently, to Nevada, Connecticut, or Washington. There are places in Mexico where people speak of OaxaCalifornia, Chicagoacán, Puebla York, Conetico and, why not, Mi Nezota.

When the analysis of the corridor from Morelos to Minnesota was conceived, it immediately generated surprise and great curiosity. In Mexico we could not help but wonder, why Minnesota? What is it about Minnesota that attracts people from Morelos? The first thing we thought of was the weather: "what are people from a place as warm as Morelos doing in a place as cold as Minnesota?"

Through an exercise in self-criticism, we realized that the questions we were asking ourselves were the

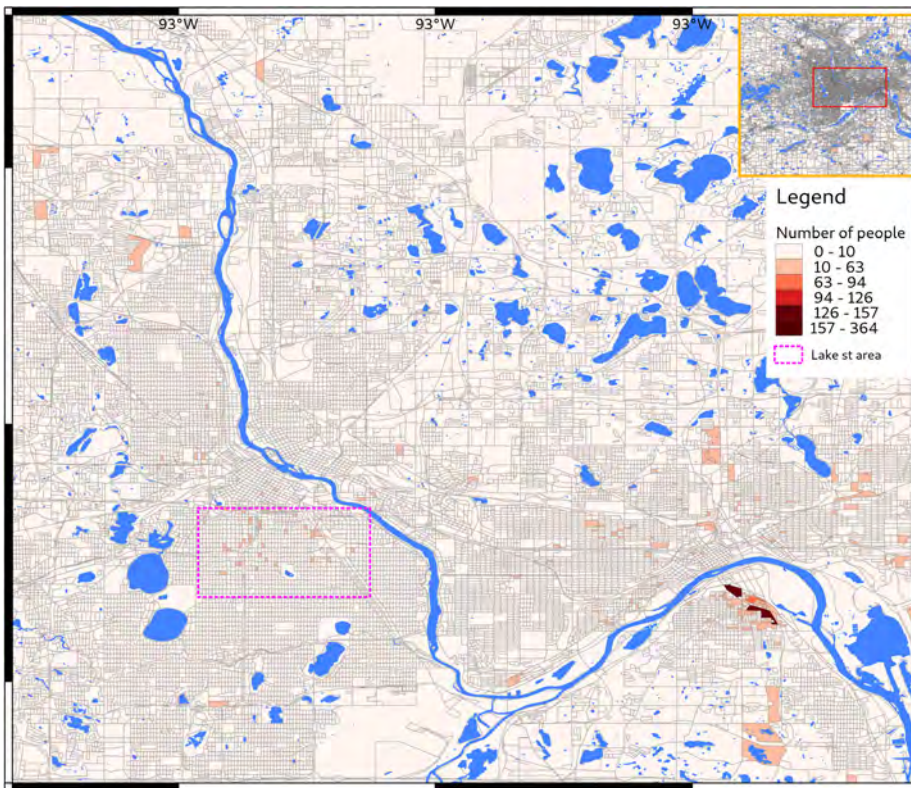
product of many gaps: not understanding that some smaller corridors were as important as those leading to places like California, for example; our lack of knowledge about this very far away state that is Minnesota (which shares a border with Canada and is very far indeed from Morelos in southern Mexico) and especially of the motives driving the people of Morelos there. The challenge for us as researchers was exciting. It was like discovering a fine thread that shone within the migratory fabric that binds us and that has been woven by our migrants. For our migrant peoples their community has become "just as much here as there," and they are the ones who strengthen, rebuild, reinvent, and sustain it wherever they go. This why their practices, celebrations, cuisine, and presence become a focus of a social and cultural transformation that must be taken into account, on a par with the social expressions of other migrant communities, local communities and those of the indigenous peoples of Minnesota.

This is how we understood that the migrants themselves, not the scientists and data, were going to be our teachers and guides for carrying out this work. The answers were in the migrants who are there, on their way there and those who came back. This is their story and we only want to show that "the land belongs to those who work it," as the most well-known Morelense, Emiliano Zapata, once said. And *Morelenses* have worked hard there and here, and they are the ones who have built the transnational community that is showcased here. It belongs to them, and there is room inside for all of us.

As our graphs and maps indeed show, Minnesota's Mexican community is very small in absolute terms. In other words, the number of Mexicans in Minnesota is not very large when compared to the total populations of Mexico, Minnesota or Morelos, for example, or even the populations in cities like Los Angeles and Chicago (Figure 10).

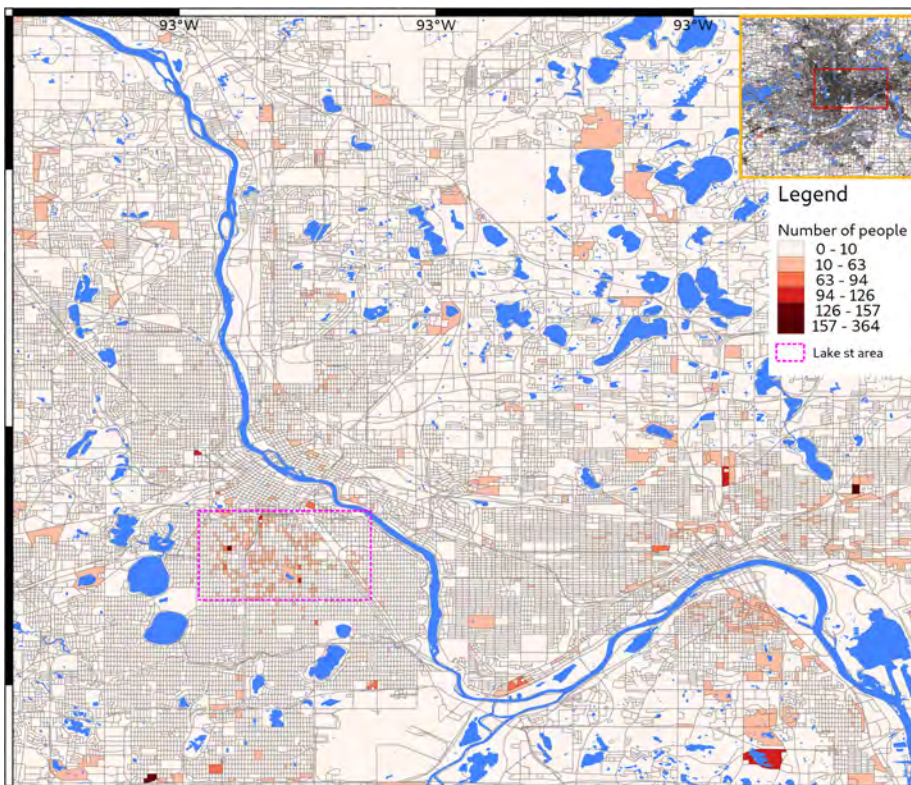
Nevertheless, the population of Mexican origin in Minnesota is very significant in relative terms. By this we mean it is important relative to (as a proportion of) the whole or total population within a given territory. Following this, while the Mexican population in Minnesota may represent a very small percentage of the total population residing in the state, at the same time it can represent a very large percentage of the foreign population residing in Minnesota. Both descriptions are accurate while expressing different relationships derived from the same phenomenon (the number of Mexican men and women residing in the state of Minnesota at a given time).

Map 18a
Population of Mexican origin in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area, 1990



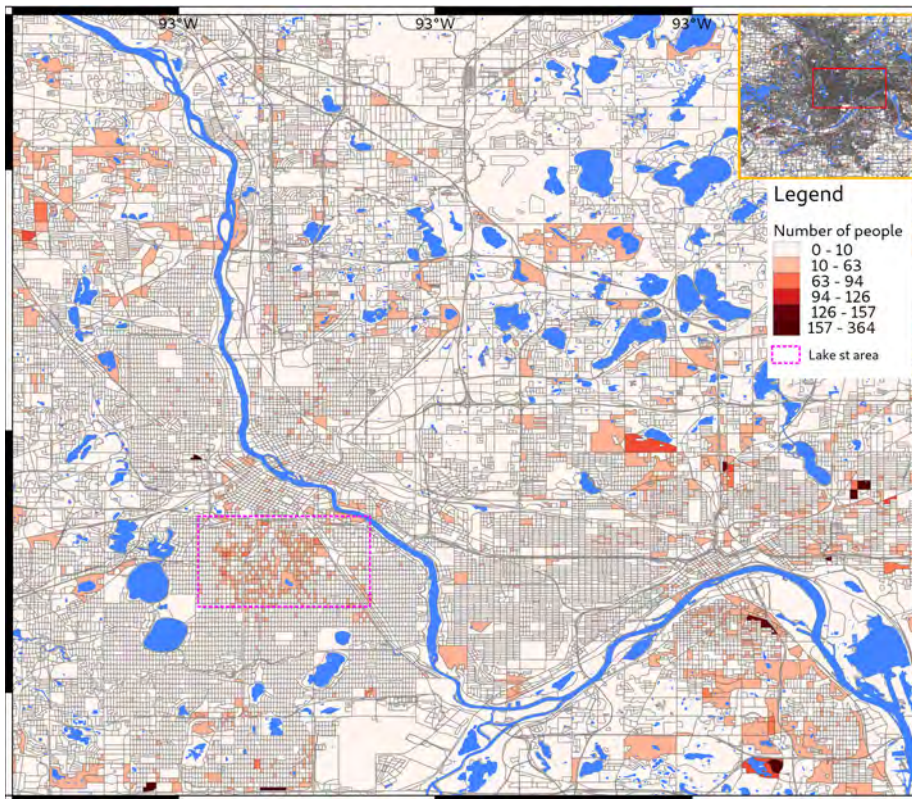
Source: Made by the authors with data from: Manson, Schroeder, van Riper y Ruggles (2018). IPUMS National Historic Geographic Information System. Version 13.0 [database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. <http://doi.org/10.18128/Do50.V13.0>.

Map 18b
Population of Mexican origin in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area, 2000



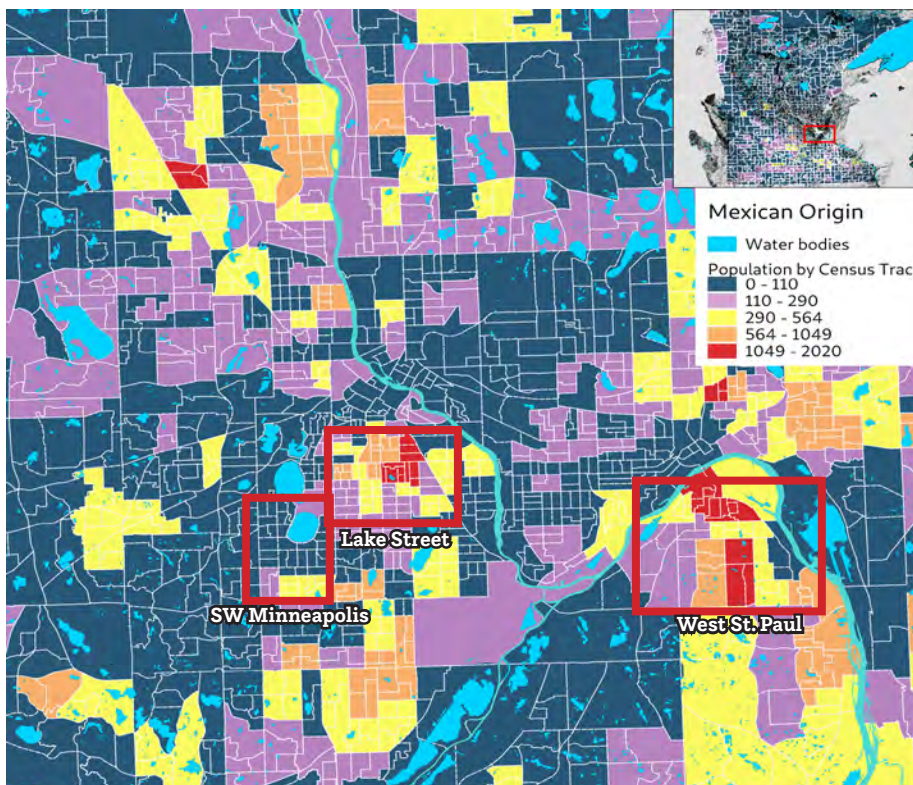
Source: Made by the authors with data from: Manson, Schroeder, van Riper y Ruggles (2018). IPUMS National Historic Geographic Information System. Version 13.0 [database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. <http://doi.org/10.18128/Do50.V13.0>.

Map 18c
Population of Mexican origin in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area, 2010



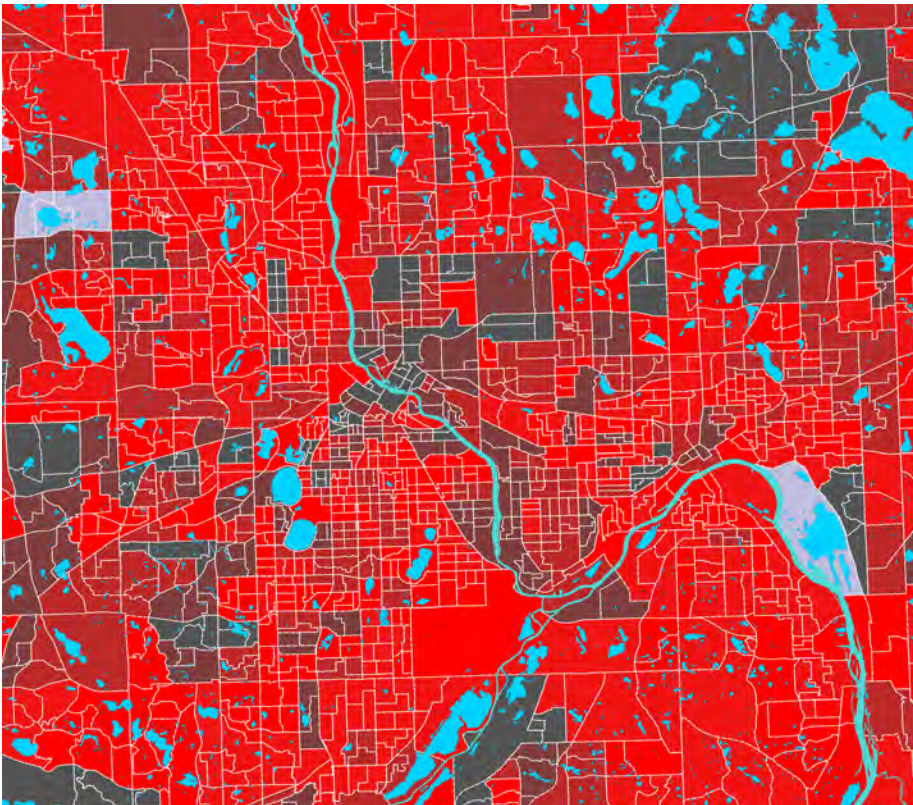
Source: Made by the authors with data from: Manson, Schroeder, van Riper y Ruggles (2018). IPUMS National Historic Geographic Information System. Version 13.0 [database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. <http://doi.org/10.18128/DO50.V13.0>.

Map 19.
Mexican population as a percentage of the total population in the Twin Cities area, 2018



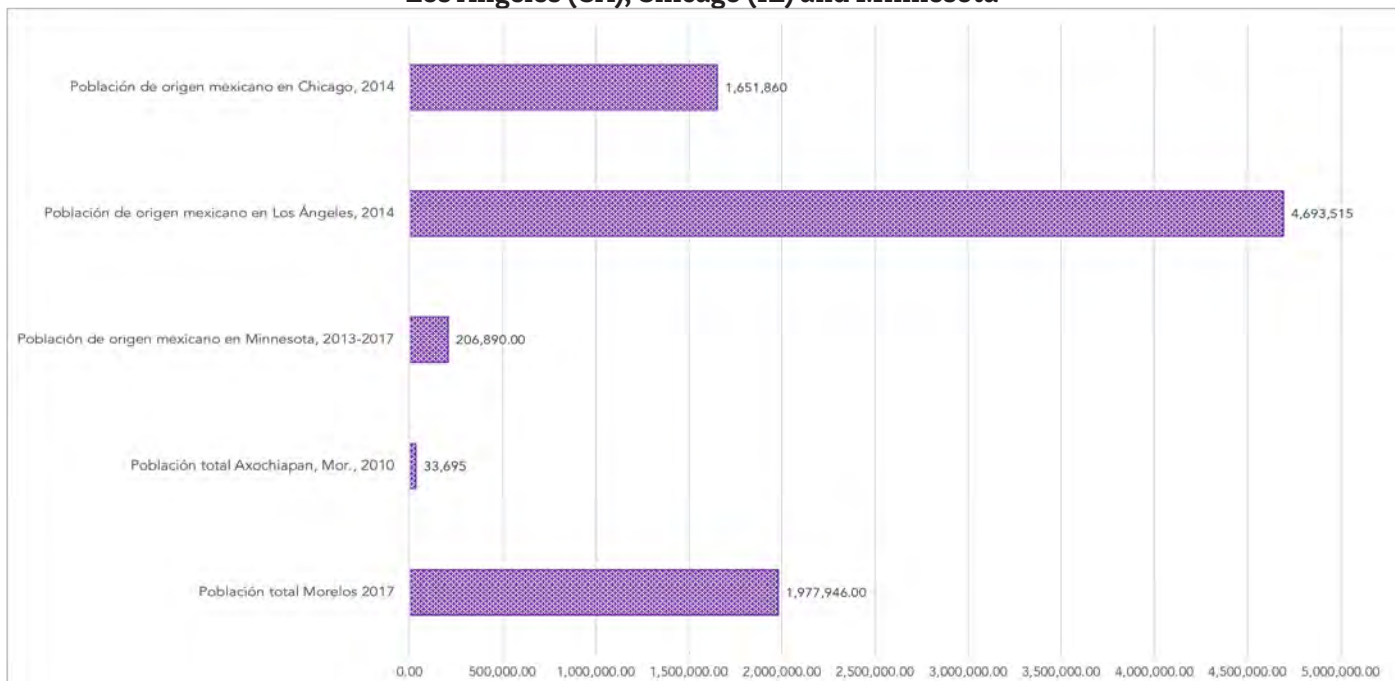
Source: Made by the authors with data from: Manson, Schroeder, van Riper y Ruggles (2018). IPUMS National Historic Geographic Information System. Version 13.0 [database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. <http://doi.org/10.18128/DO50.V13.0>. Metropolitan Council. Generalized Land Use 2010. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/us-mn-state-metc-plan-general-landuse2010>.

Map 20.
Mexican population as a percentage of the population of Latin American origin
in the Twin Cities area, 2018



Source: Made by the authors with data from: Manson, Schroeder, van Riper y Ruggles (2018). IPUMS National Historic Geographic Information System. Version 13.0 [database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. <http://doi.org/10.18128/DO50.V13.0>. U.S. Census Bureau. Tiger/Line [shapefile]. <https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/shapefiles/index.php>.

Figure 10.
Population of Mexican origin in Morelos, Axochiapan (Mor.),
Los Ángeles (CA), Chicago (IL) and Minnesota



Source: Made by the authors with data from: Consejo Nacional de Población (for the data in Mexico about 2017 projections); MNCompass (for the data on Mexican population in Minnesota between 2013-2017); and Pew Research Center (obtained through IPUMS for data on population of Mexican origin in Los Angeles and Chicago in 2014).



Illustration by Rini Templeton.

Then, for example, we can conclude that:

1. The Morelos population in Minnesota is significantly greater than the population from any other Mexican state and even greater than the population from any other Latin American country. In other words, Morelos is the main place of origin for Mexican migrants in Minnesota and for migrants from anywhere in Latin America.
2. The Morelos population in Minnesota comes chiefly from Axochiapan. According to some estimates and interviews conducted by our research team in Minnesota, the population of Axochiapan living in Minnesota, particularly in San Pablito (St. Paul), is estimated to be approximately one third the size of the total population currently residing in Axochiapan, Morelos.

We can then affirm that the migratory flow between Morelos and Minnesota is significant when looked at from a different. Let's think about it this way: the number of people from Axochiapan currently residing in Minnesota is the equivalent of one third of Axochiapan's population, and almost seven out of ten Latin American immigrants in Minnesota come from Morelos. It is also relevant owing to the fact that Morelos is the second smallest state in terms of territory, and the 23rd smallest among the 32 Mexican states in terms of population. It is not surprising then that there are more Mexicans in the cities of Los Angeles, California, and Chicago, Illinois, than in the entire state of Morelos, as seen in figure 10. This is why, regardless of how small the number of *Morelenses* in Minnesota is, proportionally they represent a considerable part of Morelos' entire population. How does this small Morelense population become relevant in the United States, Minnesota and the Twin Cities? In several ways, but a very apparent and important one for the inhabitants of Morelos is economic: migrants from Morelos in the United States (including those

who go to Minnesota) contribute to the support of families and communities through remittances, as can be seen in chapter 3. This takes place within a context of low wages, policies that have led to the impoverishment of rural households, and the lack of opportunities for young people in the state of Morelos and in communities like Axochiapan.¹⁰

That said, as we mentioned at the beginning of this report, migratory history did not begin yesterday. All civilizations are the product of large or small migrations and reflect the totality of and relationship between various cultures, resulting in the creation of a community or collective identity. In other words, civilizations and communities are too, among other things, the product of reinterpretations that render them complex multi-cultural entities. Wherever they are, migrants do not passively acquire the space they inhabit but rather transform it, opening the door for the reinvention of the communities and neighborhoods that receive them (Davis, 2000). The Twin Cities are a vivid example of this (Maps 21 and 22 and Boxes 1 to 4).

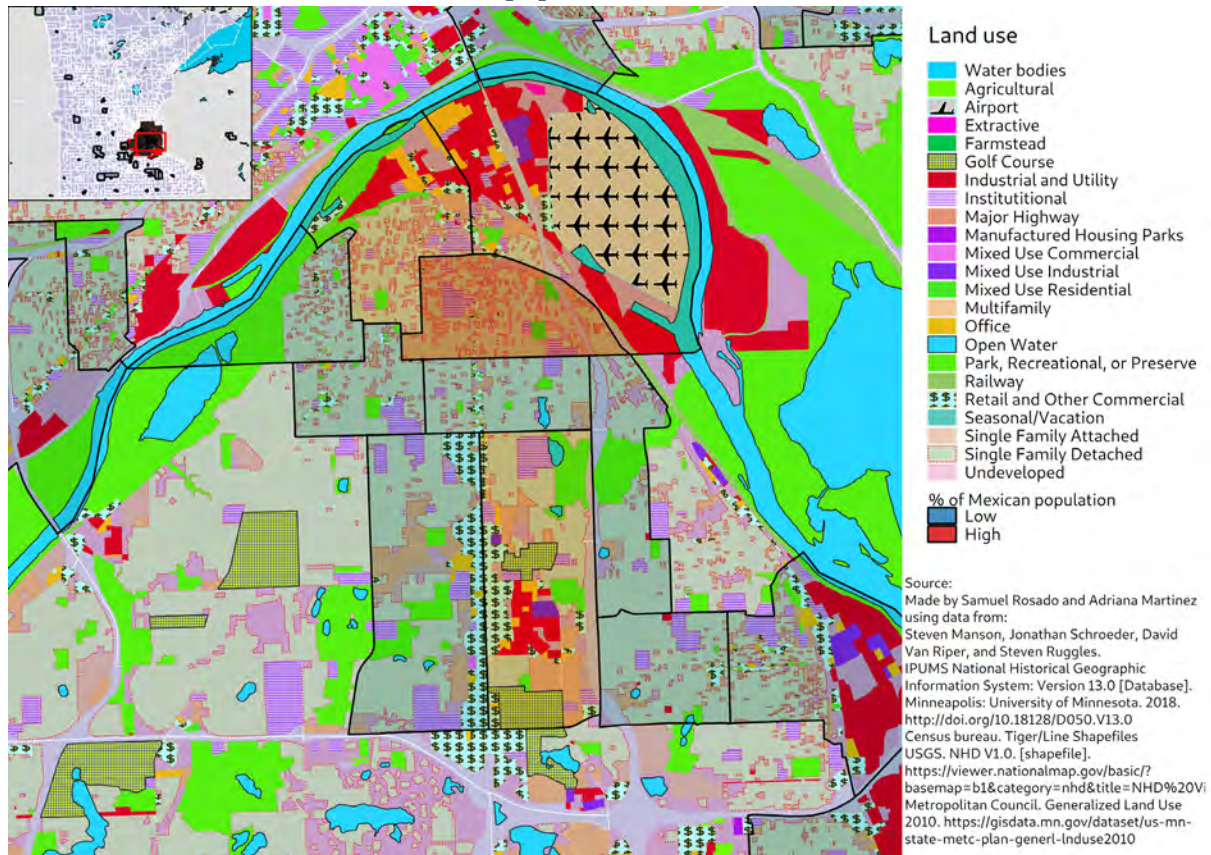
Box 4.

¹⁰ According to data from the Bank of Mexico, in 2019 alone the municipality of Axochiapan, Morelos, received 63.17 million dollars in remittances, the equivalent of approximately 1,216,490,000 pesos, in terms of the prevailing exchange rate in 2019. This figure is 40% higher to the total amount of remittances sent to Axochiapan in 2013, a sum of 45.01 million dollars (or 574.76 million pesos in that year's exchange rate). Over the period of seven years that elapsed between 2013 and 2019, Axochiapan received 379.32 million dollars in remittances. During the same period, all the municipalities in the state of Morelos together received 4,196,23 billion dollars. This means that, for 2019, 9% of all remittances sent to the state of Morelos (which amounted to 702.56 million dollars) was sent to Axochiapan.



Illustration by Rini Templeton.

Map 21.
Land use and Mexican population settlements in St. Paul, MN



Map 22.
Land use and Mexican population settlements in the Lake Street area, Minneapolis, MN

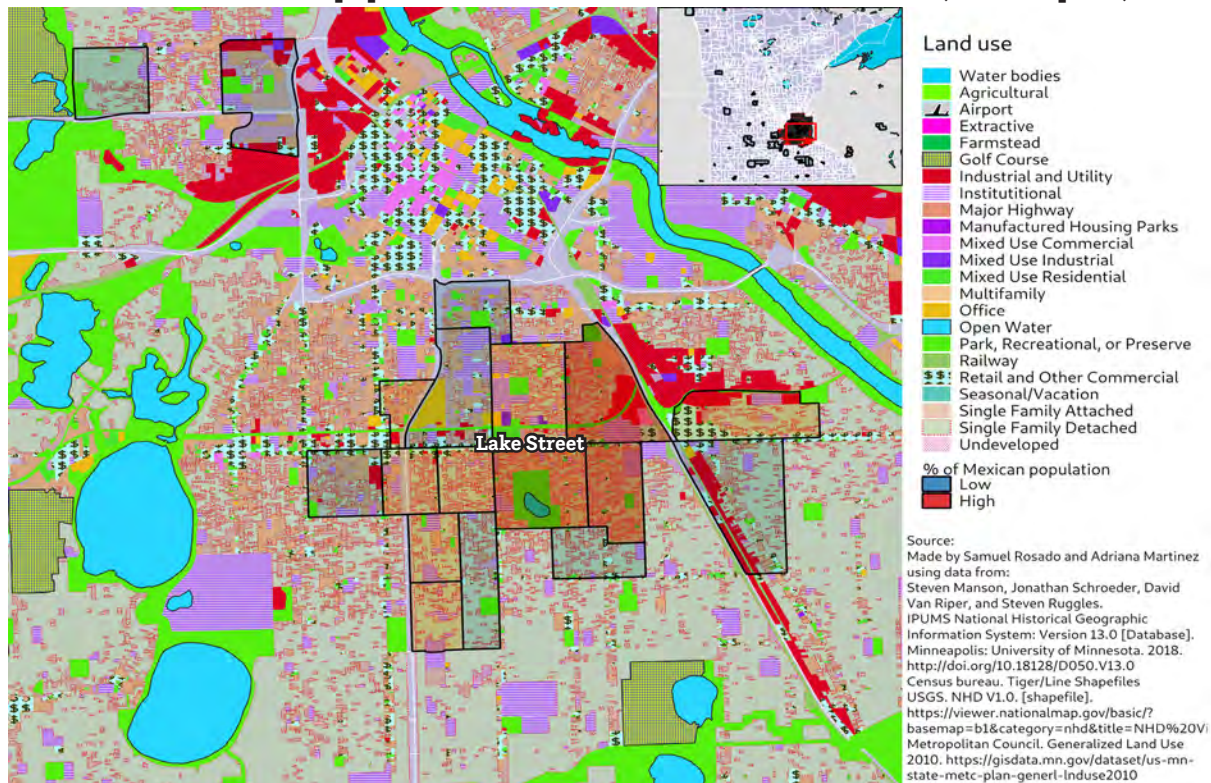




Photo: Club Cuernavaca -
Axochiapan - Morelos

Box 1.

It's that there was a lot of work here in those days, a lot of work. My brother told me "come on vacation." I didn't want to, I was fine there, "come on vacation, I'll pay for your vacations," and then I came. Vacationing, I bring my music, and I said, while vacationing I go to work, that's why I went to work, but it was my vacation. It went well, I just came back for my things and I came here. As I was one of the first with this music, there was a business boom between '98 and '99.

My coworkers would tell me: "I bought a house, why don't you buy a house." I told them: "I grew up with music." But they said, "No, that's not going to go anywhere." I said: "well, I'll stay there with the music", and six months later I opened another store and another and another and I started buying the properties where I played my music, I mean, like that building. Yes, it was a very prosperous time.

— *And is it not the same anymore? Why?*

Well, I think because there are already a lot more people, there is more competition, more people have migrated from other places, for example, from other states. I remember when I got here too, in '99, but I had lived in Texas for 10 years and I used to hear everybody there say that they came here because there was a lot of work and it was very well paid, so they came from other states, for example from Texas [and] California because they were saturated with Latinos and here there were none, here they were begging people to work. So that's how they started coming, first one then another who called another, and sometimes whole families wound up here, but it is because this state was very prosperous in terms of work and well paid jobs.

Don Luis. Entrepreneur in St. Paul, 50 years old

Box 2.

Do you intend to return [to Axochiapan] one day?

Well the pension they give is not enough to live on here, so to live well on the pension, only in Mexico. Someone told me: "Well, you are from here now, you have your papers, you already became a citizen and everything. You are from here now, your children were born here and everything."

My body is here, but my mind is there. Well, it's a dream to return one day, that is why it is like being [in both places].

Right now I have land [in Axochiapan], and right now we are going back and forth [between both places]. That is why I tell my husband that when we can no longer be here, we will return to Mexico. But he says to me "Don't you want to stay here?" And I say "God forbid."

Well, it's very expensive. And I had a personal experience, someone I knew died. We weren't close but I knew him. He was diagnosed that he had to use a pacemaker, but he did not get it, because it's expensive, so he just went to work, to be able to return to Mexico one day, but he didn't make it, he died. He had nothing, there was no money to pay.

— *In the end, who paid for it?*

His family had to rely on the Mexican consulate. The consulate helps in everything, as long as you are Mexican. Their help is very good, they do not discriminate, there is no favoritism, the aid is dealt with through them. In other words, if we reach old age, older than I already am, we don't have to die here, it's cheaper in Mexico, I think.

Doña Valentina, an immigrant in St. Paul, Minnesota



Illustration by Rini Templeton.

Box 3.

When I was in Mexico, after my husband and I returned from the United States, I ran into my cousins in Axochiapan and began telling them: “my husband wants to go to the United States but I don’t want to go back anymore,” and they said to me: “Minneapolis is very nice, there is a lot of work there.”

— *Do you plan to return to your community in the future?*

We always think about it, but we like being here. We have our house and we have work. We attend to our work because we like it, we like to serve people. When we first got here, we became like a bridge for people, because when clients needed help, they looked for me. Because of different circumstances, I made contacts in the hospital, so when people needed something I looked through my list. So I would direct them to where they could get free food, to a dentist where they wouldn’t be charged so much, things like that. We don’t want to go back anymore because we like where we live, we like our home and this city is our community now. It is where my children grew up and my grandchildren were born. What is there to go back to?

Couple from Axochiapan, in Minneapolis, Minnesota



Industry (1883). Sculpture at the Chicago Board of Trade. Photo: Adriana Martinez.

The Market has played a very crucial role in the development of Lake Street. In the mid-90s, the migrant community here, Latino, mainly Mexican, was struggling with a series of issues such as unemployment, abuse in the workplace, wage theft, being hired and not paid, and so on. And since people did not have papers, obviously they were abused more. So instead of just complaining, they began to organize to carry out this project.

This is how the idea began, first off as, “why don’t we start our own business? Why are we not the ones guiding our own destiny?” Many of these people had had informal business experience in Morelos and Mexico City and elsewhere, since as we know in Mexico “I put a table outside my home and I have a business.” Here (in the United States) it is not like that. So technical assistance was needed, and educational training in regulations (for example, health codes are very strict). All that needed to be learned, and most of them had not had a formal business like the one they now have here.

Finally, in 1999, Mercado Central was opened. When they first found this property they saw it was ideal for setting up the market. There was nothing else like it. The property was made up of three connected buildings, and all three were in awful shape. There had been no investment in this corridor (Lake Street) either, it was devoid of economic activity, most of the storefronts were closed. There was nothing here because the zone was dangerous, but the area’s tenants group formed a cooperative, and so they were the ones who developed the project.

Eduardo Barrera, manager of Lake Street Central Market, Minneapolis, Minnesota



Illustration by Rini Templeton.

Now we can finally understand the nuances that make Minnesota a migratory destination: on the one hand, its location in the Midwest grants it a central role in terms of agricultural and industrial production, as well as being an exit point for the regional market to the rest of the world. Likewise, the hospitality shown to the different international communities that have chosen this state as their home, whether by free and voluntary decision, as a refuge or through some type of forced displacement, accounts for the very diverse community that lives in Minnesota.

Up to this point we have seen that the community of Mexican origin in Minnesota is significant, not because of the number of Mexicans there, but because of what they have contributed towards forming a very specific and very familiar transnational community. This relationship is so significant that Minnesota and Mexico are closely linked commercially and, at the institutional level, the governments of both states (Morelos and Minnesota) have jointly built programs to further strengthen their ties.

The commitment of the Mexican consulate in St. Paul is widely recognized by the Mexican community in Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has a specific program for the education of migrants, which aims to assist the sons and daughters of agricultural workers in overcoming education-

al disadvantages so they can complete their studies. In fact, until a few years ago, the MDE and the Mexican Ministry of Public Education engaged in a joint teacher exchange program, particularly from Mexico to the United States, so they could contribute to the pedagogical work that best served children with potential language difficulties. In addition, the work of the Migrant Clubs that seek to maintain a bridge between their communities of origin and those where they currently reside, should be mentioned.

Although the desire to build a closer community between Minnesota and Morelos is evident, it is certainly a relationship with many challenges ahead, and it is up to each individual to face them. One of the most important challenges in the case of Minnesota, has to do with the wage gap, and although the city of Minneapolis has approved raising the minimum wage to US\$15 an hour (by 2023), in reality Minnesota maintains a minimum wage of US\$10 per hour (adjusted for inflation) and is 4th among states with the largest wage gap between whites and Latin Americans, only preceded by Puerto Rico, Hawaii and North Carolina (Figure 11).

The migratory history that leads from Morelos to Minnesota is even now a very rich one, with intermittences, booms and many promises, but there is still much to be written and much to be built between both communities.



R.

Illustration by Rini Templeton.



Josefina Aguilar,
(Oaxaca, 1945-)
Autorretrato con familia.
Polychromatic clay.
Collection of the National
Mexican Art Museum,
Chicago.
Photo: Adriana Martínez.



CHAPTER 3.

THE VOICES AND THEIR REASONS: THE MIGRANTS FROM MORELOS

M-I-G-R-A-T-I-ON:

Nine letters and a bunch of meanings for each person. For my mother it meant opportunities to study. For my father it meant: Going out to provide us with food. For my sister it means: Getting to know. For me it means: An opportunity for a new life.

Nadia. University student from Morelos, with a migrant father.

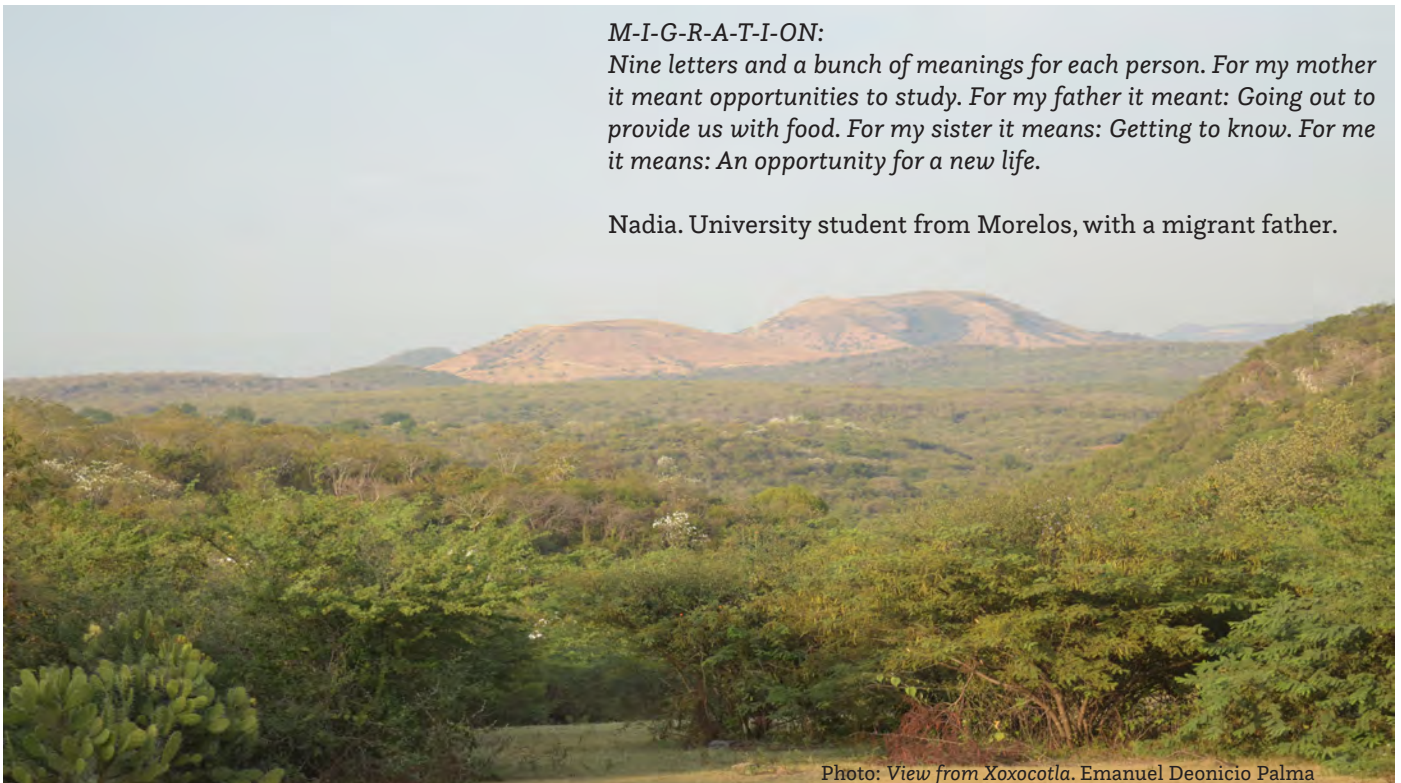


Photo: View from Xoxocotla. Emanuel Deonicio Palma

It is time for us to talk about people. We have considered it relevant to leave this analysis of Morelos migrants until the end, because we decided, in a logical way, that we first had to explain the context in which these people live, travel and dwell.

In the first chapter we have seen the migratory history shared by Mexico and the United States, which has built a relationship of mutual dependency and a structure that interconnects, in many ways, both countries, their territories and their people. In the second chapter we have seen the causes of the attraction of Mexican migrants towards the Midwest region and, particularly in the case we are now studying, towards Minnesota. Like this, we have been able to see that in our investigation, geographic location has a very important strategic role in economic and, above all, in migratory terms.

However, as we mentioned at the beginning of this Report, within the general context that overtakes us as individuals, and which activates mechanisms involving attraction and expulsion/displacement of workforce, there are also considerations, reasons, voices and feelings of those who are migrating and of those in their immediate social environment, that is, their families and communities, who take part in the process in a fundamental way. In this context, that of our own opinions and decisions, there is still much work to be done to make these voices more visible and to amplify their volume. It is not about giving a voice to those who supposedly don't have it, because history has shown us that they do have a voice of their own. It is about holding the microphone and helping their voices go farther, as well as their message, so their experience as migrants can have content, as well the implications this process has had in their lives and in the lives of those who accompany them from a distance.

In this chapter, we shall speak of male and female migrants: who they are, what they do, their reasons and motivations for staying or leaving; we'll talk about what they leave behind and what awaits ahead of them, far from their communities of origin and of many things that numbers and points on a map hide from us: what it means to be a migrant.

Just as in the previous chapter, we shall start by briefly explaining the contexts of Morelos: its history, strategic geographic location, social contradictions and, with all of this, we will try to show the circumstances that cause the displacement of its population. Like this, the main objective of this chapter is to share with our readers an x-ray of the state of Morelos as the place of origin of our migrants —who now

are also a part of the Minnesotan community or others in the US— as well as the place from which they have become displaced, especially in the last 40 years.

1. THE MORELOS CONTEXTS:

A CONTRADICTIONARY RECIPE

FOR SETTLEMENT AND MIGRATION

Territorially speaking, the state of Morelos is one of the smallest Mexican states. However, the life of the center of the country could not be understood without it: its closeness to Mexico City, the richness of its lands, its climate and natural resources, strategic geographic location, cultural wealth, inherited traditions which it reproduces and, above all, its people who are friendly and have dignity.

If the central region of Mexico cannot be understood without Morelos, Morelos cannot be understood without its contexts. This state is the result of multiple processes that were the origin of contemporary Morelos, which shaped its territory and influence the quality of life of its inhabitants. When one thinks about this Mexican state, it is common to refer to its pleasant climate, to Emiliano Zapata, Malcolm Lowry and the violence that whips it today; but Morelos is much deeper than what can be seen at first sight. Morelos is what happens on its territory, but it is also the community produced by the Morelenses, who make this a place to which one wants to arrive and get to know.

This section begins with its contexts: the history that gave it its origins, the socio-economic relationship that gave it a specific vocation and the violence it suffers, that is the result of its strategic geographic location, but also of a “war against drug trafficking” which triggered violence all over the country and generalized it, although in fact, it affected some regions more than others.

a) Brief historical context

Mexico's cultural richness is recognized worldwide: its cuisine, celebrations, languages, textile art, dances, etc. Although this wealth is very alive in the Mexican society and lives on in the form of its traditions, lifestyles, organization or collective decision-making, we cannot fail to mention that this richness was produced, to a great extent, by the original nations that inhabited this territory and that the community that forms the Mexican society today is, partly, the child and heir of that cultural wealth (Map 1). If in Mexico we say, “we are the children of corn”, it is because all those indig-

enous peoples developed the “milpa” or traditional corn field and gave birth to what we are today.

In Morelos, culture and history are two united and inseparable processes that help us understand this state; its contradictions, dynamics and riches. As Héctor Ávila says,

[...] The explanation about the construction of the regional spaces is found in the description and relational analysis of the historical, economic, geographical, sociological, cultural and political factors. None is independent of the others, but they all interact. Like this, a region does not exist nor is it created in a manner that is autonomous from its surrounding context; it reproduces within itself the characteristics of the historical-social formation of which it is a part. The analysis of spatial processes in Morelos greatly explains what happens there today (Ávila, 2002: 9).

So, when we try to begin to explain the present state of Morelos, we generally start by describing a place with a pleasant climate, spas with medicinal waters and a lush vegetation. And it's no wonder that Morelos was the destination for recreation, medicine, refuge and rest for celebrities such as Aztec emperors, Hernán Cortés himself (who turned the valley of Cuernavaca into his encomienda and place of residence) or Maximilian of Habsburg (Austrian emperor imposed on Mexico in the 19th century, amidst the heat of disputes for power between conservatives and liberals), to mention a few. Besides, until less than 10 years ago Morelos, and particularly Cuernavaca, was one of the main destinations for international immigrants who chose to retire in this state.

The territory of the present state of Morelos has its origin in the establishment and development of diverse pre-hispanic peoples who migrated from multiple regions of the mythical Aztlan (somewhere in northern Mexico and from some regions in the United States; this place would later be taken by Chicanos in the U.S. to reclaim their Mexican-U.S. identity), down to Mesoamerica and, in our case, reaching what we now know as the state of Morelos. The feature shared by all these civilizations, in spite of the temporal distance of their establishment in this zone is, on the one hand, their ability to inhabit and develop material conditions that allowed them to grow and transform the space; and on the other, that all of them, as original peoples of this region, are at the same time the product of multiple migrations from different cardinal points.

The set of peoples who inhabited, developed and transformed the Morelos territory, maintained their presence there thanks to the high degree of techni-

cal-scientific and agri-food development they had, which allowed them to prosper as important civilizations in the history of Mexico and Morelos. The development they reached as original peoples of present-day Morelos allowed them to flourish as civilizations and give birth to a complex society that was diverse and culturally rich.

At the beginning of this Report we stated that the milpa is one of the main ways in which the civilizations of Mexico understood that which pertains to community. However, the milpa, with respect to community productive technical development, allowed for settlement and growth of the population and transformed the economic, social and cultural dynamics which today form the identity of the Morelenses, as stated by Alejandro Vera (2018):

...culture is the memory of a people, which summarizes the result of its creative activity over time and translates into a set of ways of understanding and acting in reality in order to adapt and progress in a specific context, thus guaranteeing its existence.

After the Conquest of Mexico in 1521, not only did the flourishing of these societies in Morelos stop but, in that moment, history was marked by the plundering of indigenous lands and an enormous concentration of land ownership (*latifundio*), oriented towards sugar cane production. On April 17, 1869, the state of Morelos was founded and since then the Morelenses have not ceased to take care of this territory, which has always been theirs.

b) Social and economic context in brief: the city-countryside relationship

The diverse civilizations that settled in Morelos reached a notable level of technical and scientific development in agriculture and diverse uses of water which, together with the suitable climatic and geographic conditions, favored agricultural production in the territory. Like this, in pre-hispanic times, due to its natural diversity, the Morelos territory was divided into different productive regions; the north, which has forests and cold mountain climate, specialized in milpa production and, above all, in the exploitation of forest species. The lands in southern Morelos, thanks to its warm climate, specialized in cotton cultivation, while the lands in central Morelos, due to its mild climate, were used to produce and develop corn crops, as well as tomato, chili, amaranth and honey.

After the conquest of Mexico in 1521, these lands continued to be agricultural ones, although the cit-

Map 1.
La diversidad cultural de México



Source: Carlos Mérida.
Trajes regionales de México (1941-1945).
Taken from *La Razón*,
August 10th, 2019. <https://www.razon.com.mx/cultura/el-munal-celebra-diversidad-linguistica-de-mexico-en-exposicion/>.

Box 1.

The foundational myth of the last civilizations that migrated from the north and settled in central Mexico, then Mesoamerica, says that there was a place called Chicomoztoc, or “place of the seven caves”, where seven Nahua tribes lived; these shared a common linguistic root. Gradually, and one at a time, these tribes left their caves and settled for a while in Aztlan, before heading south. These seven tribes were the: Acolhuas, Tlaxcalans, Tepanecs, Chalcas, Aztecs, Xochimilcas and Tlahuicas (Smith, 1984).

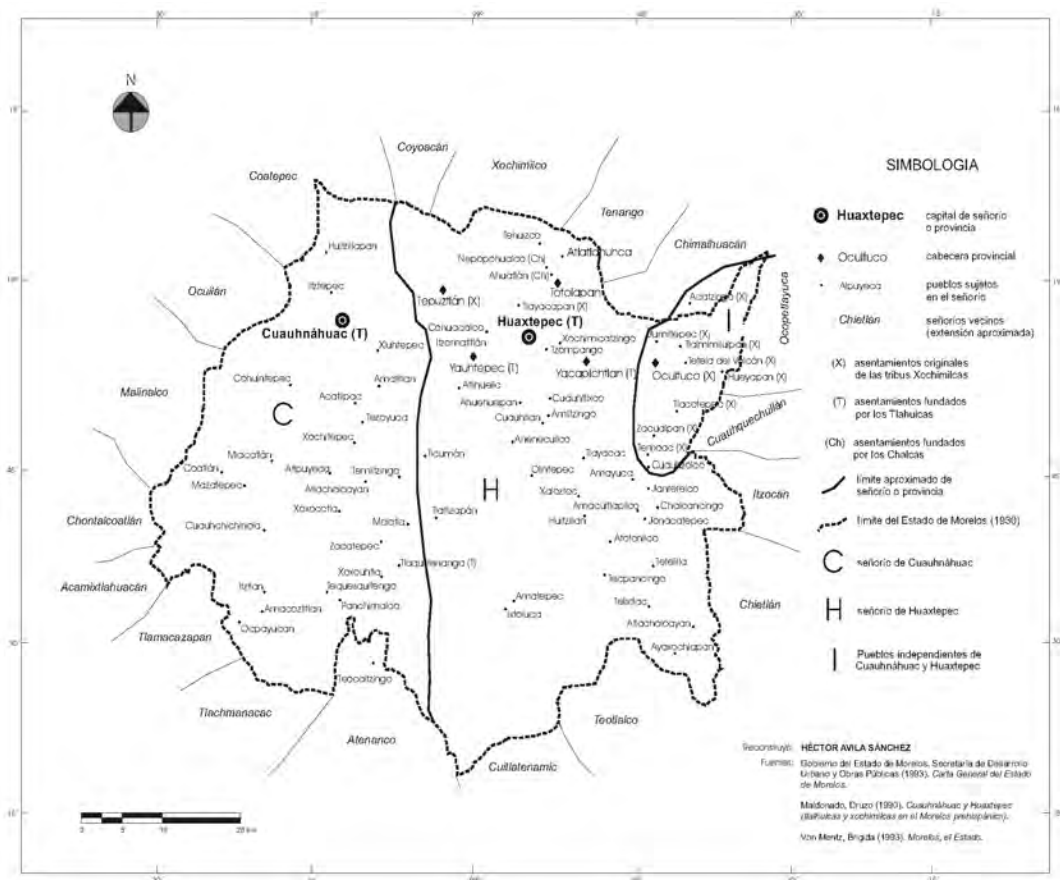
Of these tribes, the Acolhuas settled in the north-east region of the Valley of Mexico (territory of the State of Mexico presently known as Texcoco and part of Teotihuacan); the Tlaxcalans settled in the territories known today as Tlaxcala and south of Puebla; the Tepanecs settled north of Mexico City (in the zone known today as Azcapotzalco); the Chalcas established themselves in the south-east region of the Valley of Mexico (in what is presently known as the Valley of Chalco, on the slopes of Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl volcanoes); the Aztecs or Mexicas established their empire in Mexico Tenochtitlan (the territory occupied today by the central area of Mexico City) and, finally, the Xochimilcas and Tlahuicas were two tribes that mostly occupied what today is the southern region of Mexico City and the state of Morelos. (Tanck de Estrada, 2005).

The Tlahuicas reached the city of Cuauhnahuac (which today is Cuernavaca) and made this city their capital, although their domain occupied most of the territory of present-day Morelos. On the other hand, the Xochimilcas settled in the southern region of Mexico City, in what is known today as the district of Xochimilco, but they expanded towards northern Morelos to the present-day territories of Tetela del Volcan, Hueyapan, Tlalmimilulpan, Ocuituco, Jumiltepec, Zacualpan, Temoac, Tlayacapan, Totolapan, Tepoztlan and others (Map 2).



"The illustration depicts Chicomóztoc. Chicomóztoc means 'seven caves' (the place that represents the Aztecs' origin), and it was the nahuatl language word that described the mouth or the uterus. In the Aztec myth of creation, the Mexicas abandoned the entrails of the Earth and settled in Aztlán, from whence they acquired their name and migrated to the South in search for the sign on the place where they should settle again". Taken from: "Los orígenes de las tribus que se asentaron en México o en las cercanías". Tovar Codex (1546-circa 1626). John Carter Brown Library. Wikimedia Commons. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b8/Chicomoztoc-The_Origins_of_the_Tribes_that_Settled_in_or_Close_to_Mexico_WDL6717.png

Map 2.
The peoples settled in the current Morelos territory, 1519-1532



Source: Taken from Ávila, H. (2002). *Aspectos Históricos de la Formación de Regiones en el estado de Morelos (desde sus orígenes hasta 1930)*. Cuernavaca: CRIM-UNAM.

“We cannot think that migration is something negative. Our community and our culture itself, which we are trying to recover and reclaim, are the result of migrations. We are the result of several peoples who migrated to Xoxocotla.”

Marco Tafolla



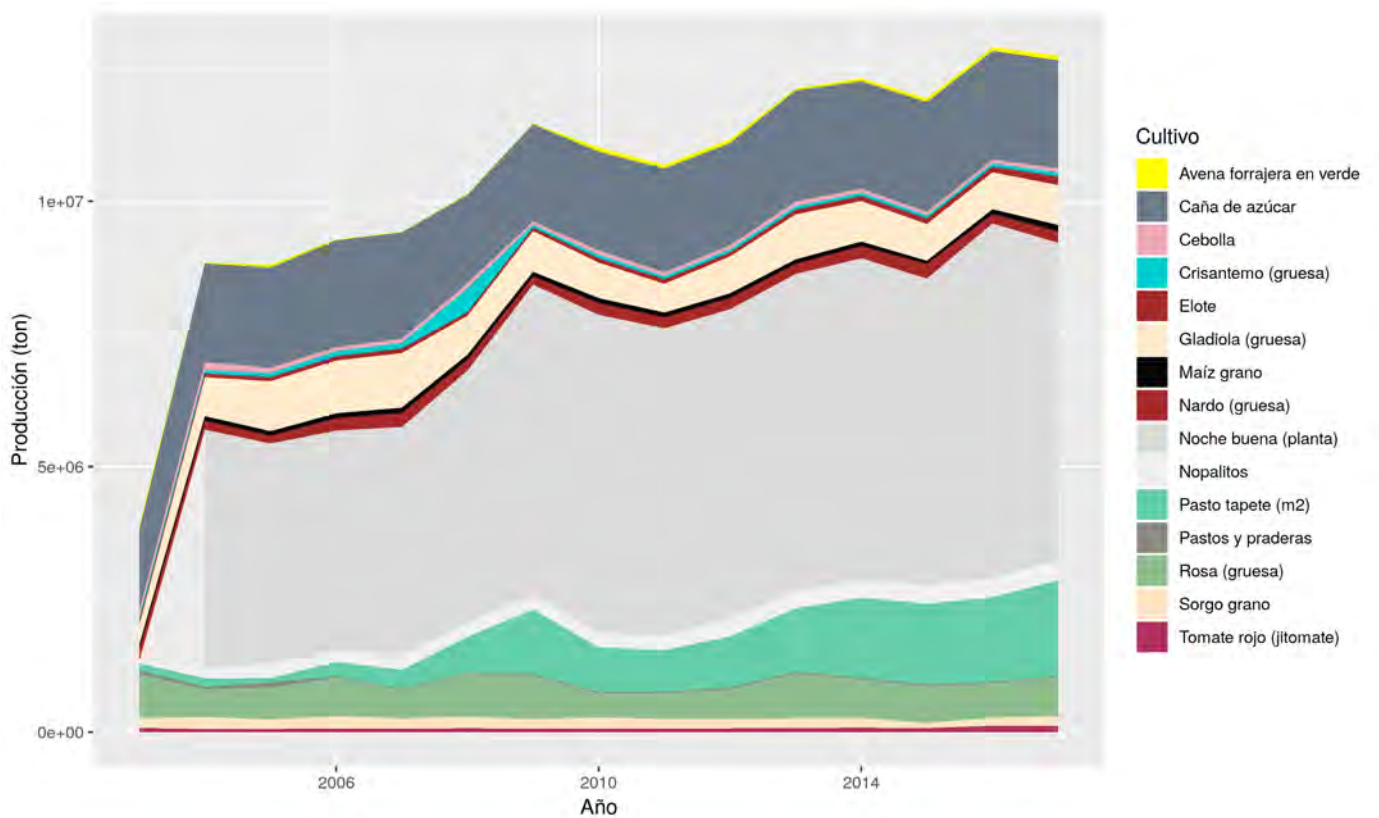
Statue of Emiliano Zapata on Lake Street, Minneapolis, MN.
Photo: Adriana Martínez

ies, such as Cuernavaca and Cuautla, started to grow. Besides, in view of the climatic conditions, natural wealth and technical progress in terms of hydraulics and agriculture in the state of Morelos, the Spaniards were able to introduce, with relative ease, new crops such as sugar cane, rice and peanuts, which gave them considerable income and made it possible for them to sustain local consumption as well as exports to Europe. Actually, during the 300 years of the colonial period, the indigenous territories of Morelos, like those in many other parts all over Mexico, were distributed as *encomiendas*, to become pillars of colonial administration. Several *encomiendas* in the state of Morelos were assigned to Hernán Cortés, and these successfully began the industrial production of wheat, barley and sugar cane.

Although over 80% of the population in Morelos currently lives in urban areas, we can say that since that time the state has been characterized by agricultural activity that continues today and that encompasses both industrial production and subsistence farming. For example, it was during the colonial period that the industrialization of sugar cane, barley and wheat production began, but it was not until the end of the 19th century that Morelos became the country's primary sugar cane producing state, with up to 56% of the total national sugar cane production (Ávila, 2002: 51). Currently, Morelos is not the major producer of any of Mexico's agricultural products, with the exception of nopal (prickly pear cactus). It does, however, produce a wide variety of crops, and it is among the nation's top ten producing states for avocado, amaranth, rice, squash, sugar cane, onions, agave, cucumbers, pears, sorghum, roses, green tomatoes (tomatillo) and blackberries (SIAP, 2016) (Figures 1 and 2). It is worth highlighting that, according to information from the Agricultural and Fisheries Information System (Sistema de Información Agropecuaria y Pesquera—SIAP), of the Mexican government's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Secretaría de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural), while Veracruz is Mexico's largest sugar cane producer, Morelos produces more tons per hectare. In addition, a type of rice known as Morelos rice is produced in this state and is considered a product with certificate of origin.

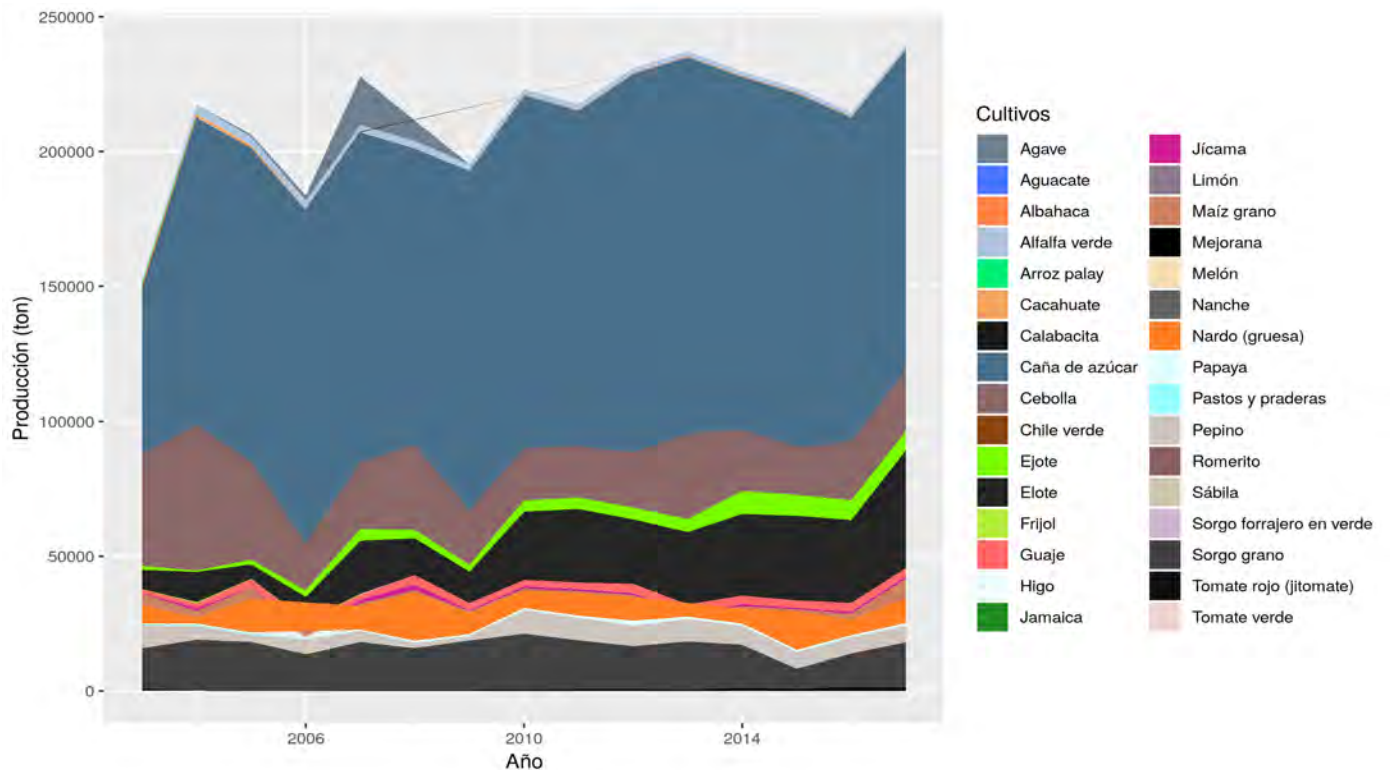
A particularly important characteristic associated with Mexico's agricultural and livestock production involves the structure of land ownership (Box 2). In 2015 there were 31,913 agricultural production units in Mexico divided among 29,554 *ejidos* and 2,359 agrarian communities. In Morelos there were

Figure 1.
Agricultural production in Morelos by crop, 2003-2017



Source: Made by the authors with data from the Mexican Agricultural and Livestock Information System (SIAP).

Figure 2.
Agricultural production in Axochiapan, Morelos by crop, 2003-2017



Source: Made by the authors with data from the Mexican Agricultural and Livestock Information System (SIAP).

Box 2. Land ownership in Morelos

There are three types of land ownership in Mexico: public, private and collective. The first refers to land owned by the State, such as national parks and various types of protected natural areas, and until very recently, beaches and the banks of national water bodies and watercourses (rivers). The second refers to land owned by individuals or companies, which have the right to acquire, rent or sell land. Examples of the latter include ownership of housing for multiple families or the productive land used by numerous agricultural or industrial producers, as was previously the case for the many sugar cane plantations in the state of Morelos (Saldívar, Gómez Maturano and Gómez Arellano, 2016). And the third is collective land ownership, which is divided into two different types: ejidos and agrarian communities. Collective land ownership is a particular characteristic of Mexico and is one of the major social achievements of the Mexican Revolution, enshrined in Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution of 1917. It was a result of the peasant struggle led by Emiliano Zapata but was not formalized until the Agrarian Reform of 1938 during the Lázaro Cárdenas presidency.

The ejido is a form of collective land ownership shared among a nucleus of the inhabitants of a given locality. After an allocation of land is received from the State, it is divided (as parcels) among its members (ejidatarios) to enable each of them to work individually and/or as a family. In the case of agrarian communities, land ownership is shared by all of the inhabitants, who work together in a collective manner, with the aim of preserving the community and its resources for the future. (As an example, as much as 40% of Mexico's forests are owned collectively, especially those owned by indigenous communities). Before 1991 Mexico's Agrarian Law contemplated three immutable legal conditions in relation to collective land ownership: 1) once an ejidatario or a community had received an allocation of land, it was theirs forever (the principle of imprescriptibility); 2) the ejidatarios, the ejido or the community receiving allocations of land from the State did not have the authority or right to sell them, but rather only to pass them on to their descendants (principle of inalienability); and 3) no ejidatario, ejido or agrarian community could lose their land through a legal proceeding associated with, for example, the payment of debts, or in other words, land could not be lost or turned over to others to cover one's debts (principle of non-seizability).

The intention of these three legal conditions for protecting collective land ownership in Mexico was to serve, among other things, to guarantee the production of inexpensive food and agricultural raw materials to support the post-revolutionary industrialization process; to consolidate a national project in which social conflicts around land ownership would diminish, while at the same time complemented by a social educational system (public schools, rural teacher training schools, technical schools and universities); and to preserve not only the culture of rural peoples, but also the country's natural and territorial wealth (forests, jungles, biological diversity and associated knowledge) (Benítez, 1978).



Illustration by Rini Templeton.



Old village of Xoxocotla. Photo: Emanuel Deonicio Palma

Box 3.

I went to the United States in 2001 because I wanted to get ahead and finish building my house. What I earned here at the pottery factory just wasn't enough, because they only paid me \$400 pesos a week. Before we left, we had only built one little room, nothing more, and my kitchen was made of sheets of cardboard. We built all of this [the house] while I was over there with my husband. So, my oldest son had to take care of his brothers and sisters, because we didn't have any other family to take care of all of my kids.

I left on a Saturday, and got to the United States on Tuesday. I arrived in Chicago with my cousin, but only for a while because we didn't get along. So, I went to live with a friend, and this brought my rent costs down. After a while, I went to Arizona, and I stayed there for four years. Then, I went to Tennessee because my husband was there.

Once we were together, my husband worked as a dishwasher and a strawberry picker. And I worked for years at a McDonalds, in a packing plant for bolts and a chocolate factory, but I also worked a second job as a babysitter. Actually, with both of us earning wages, it was easier. One of us worked to cover our expenses there, and the other worked to send money to our kids, to cover the costs of food, school, clothes and all of those things, because my children couldn't work, since they were still minors. Over there, you have to pay for everything, and prices are very high. So, you have to know how to manage your money, because if you don't, you won't be better off than here.

It's harder now. It used to be that presidents didn't deport people. Now they're building a wall to keep migrants from different places—not just Mexicans—from crossing. But there are more opportunities there, and jobs are well paid, plus over there they didn't discriminate against us for being older adults. There, we can work and earn the same as a young person. What I missed from Mexico were my children. If I could have, I would have taken them with me. The truth is I didn't think I would come back. Now that I'm back, it's really hard to adapt. Even though I had to keep my expenses down, so that I could send money to my children, I worked less there and earned more. Now, I'm just like before, although my kids have grown up, and almost all of them have married and are making their own way. Now I'm the one providing for my family with the little that I earn, because my husband can't find work because of his age, and what you get paid here is very little for the long hours you work. The truth is I didn't want to come back, and if we could, we would go back to the United States, but it's very difficult for us now.

Doña Inés, 60 years old (originally from Guerrero, currently living in Morelos)

205 ejidos (common lands) and 25 agrarian communities, together covering 362,783 hectares (3,627.83 square kilometers), equivalent to 73.3% of the state's total territory, while in the whole country, collective land ownership represented just over 51% of the nation's territory (Morett-Sánchez and Cosío-Ruiz, 2017).

In these production units, farming communities do not only carry out activities associated with food and feed production, livestock and forestry; they also engage in diverse economic activities such as crafts production (in 5% of ejidos in Morelos), the extraction of construction materials (in 7% of ejidos and communities in Morelos), fishing (in 2.1% of ejidos in Morelos) and tourism (in 8.1% of ejidos and communities in Morelos) (Morett-Sánchez and Cosío-Ruiz, 2017). As a consequence of the emigration of the male population to other cities within Mexico or to other countries, women's participation in agricultural land ownership has increased. At the national level, 78.8% of those responsible for agricultural production units are male, and 21.2% are female. In 2015 Morelos was the state with the 7th highest percentage of female participation in agricultural and livestock production (SIAP, 2016: 13).

Regarding the relationship between rural areas and cities in Morelos (as well as in many other Mexican states) we can speak of a transition process in which cities have grown at the expense of the overexploitation of resources in rural areas including: water, food (with increasingly fewer workers but more demand for food), forests, minerals and many environmental services. We would thus conclude, as stated by Beatriz Canabal Cristiani,

the growth of cities has resulted in, on the one hand, the incorporation of previously rural ancient villages that sometimes conserve open spaces for agricultural and livestock production, [...] and] on the other hand, [that] urban expansion has extended to lands in ecological reserve areas, making them territorial reserve areas for housing through a speculative real estate market, in part for people with economic resources, and in other areas, where there is more litigation, for irregular settlements occupied by rural migrant workers (Canabal, 2005: 165).

As we can see in Map 3, while the urban areas in Morelos cover much less area than the land agricultural lands, the distribution of the Morelos population between urban and rural is 84% and 16%, respectively. We can thus state that agricultural activity in Morelos has generated its identity and its roots, even though not all of the rural population engages in some type of agricultural activity. Mixed within

the rural and urban populations, we also find the indigenous population, which moves between the two worlds (indigenous languages are still spoken in Morelos, including Nahuatl, Tlapanec, Mixtec and Zapotec). Indigenous people are generally the population with the highest incidence of poverty in Morelos and in Mexico overall.

Thus, what becomes apparent as Morelos' urban-rural context is a close relationship of coexistence in which urban dynamics subordinate rural dynamics which, at the same time, do not offer the population the opportunity to live with dignity and economic stability.

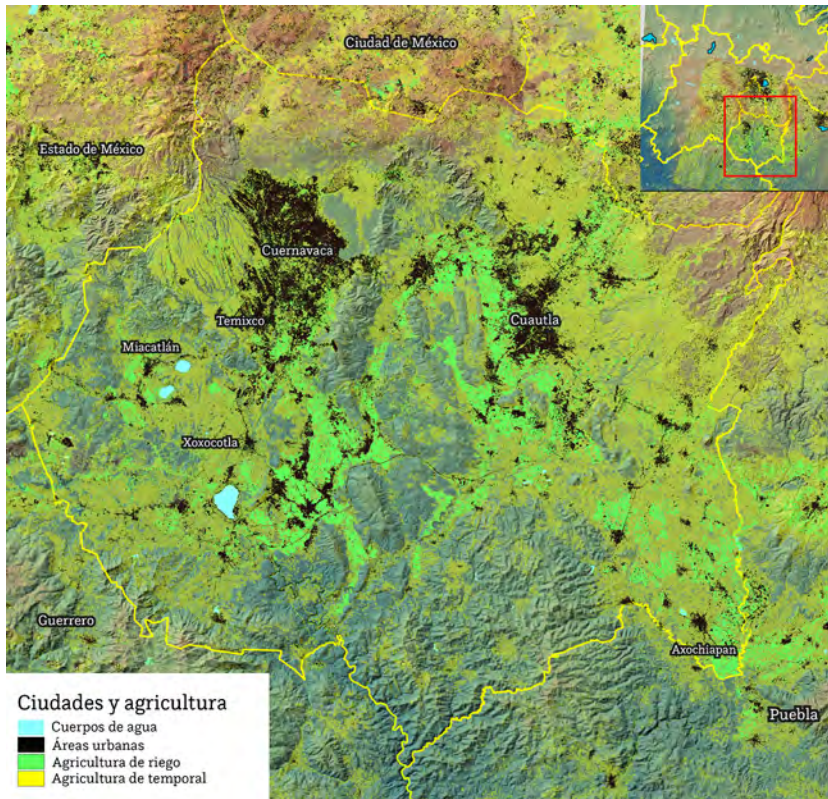
c) Brief context of the violence in Morelos

On December 1, 2006 Mexico's new president, Felipe Calderón, announced that his security strategy would consist of "declaring war on organized crime", stating: "I know it will not be quick or easy to reestablish security. It will take time, and it will cost a lot of money, and unfortunately, even human lives. But you can be certain that I will be at the frontline of this battle. This is a battle we must fight, and united, we Mexicans will prevail over crime" (Hernández, 2016). Not many at that time imagined the serious consequences this announcement would have for social stability and for the security conditions of the population.

The Calderón administration's strategy was to deploy the Mexican army throughout the entire country to confront an enemy whose power for armed conflict and scope of territory were not actually known by the government—and in a context marked by deep levels of corruption in the highest spheres of government and politics. The results of this strategy are now well known: the government did not win the war, and it has not prevailed over organized crime and not even over any cartel in particular. Above all, the big losers in this war are communities and the civilian population.

Mexico's criminal gangs, which have been confronted by the various administrations since 2006, not only have an enormous capacity for attack, but also have enormous economic power. In 2009, for example, Joaquín el Chapo Guzmán appeared for the first time in the famous Forbes list of the world's richest men. Ironically, this occurred in the middle of the "war on drug trafficking" and when multiple Mexican cartels were already operating in over 51 countries, according to information from the DEA (Almaraz, 2017).

Map 3.
Distribution of urban and rural spaces in Morelos, 2019



Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI (2010 Population Census, Digital Elevation Model and Geostatistical Framework). Image taken from Landsat-8. United States Geological Survey (USGS).



View of the Popocatepetl volcano from Axochiapan, Morelos. Photo: Adriana Martínez.

According to the US Congressional Research Service (CRS), there were four main cartels in Mexico in 2006. However, the immediate result of this ill-advised “war” was to create instability, causing organizational changes in the criminal groups that led to their fragmentation. This increased levels of violence, as the groups engaged in disputes over territories and trafficking routes to the United States (CRS, 2019). As a result, the security policies implemented during the last 13 years have had to face not only four criminal organizations, but instead, nine major cartels and 36 smaller groups (González, 2017). And all of these groups are fighting for control over territories and potential territories for their operations, production, commercialization, transportation and profit.

One of the most devastating results of this “war” is the harrowing number of premeditated homicides in the country. During Felipe Calderón’s administration (2006-2012), a total of 121,035 violent deaths were officially recorded. During the administration of former president Enrique Peña Nieto (2012-2018), this number was 150,992 (Lara, 2018). And during 2019, the first year under current president Andrés Manuel López Obrador (who seeks to distance his security policy from those of the two previous administrations), 35,588 violent deaths were counted (Barragán, 2020). Thus, we can consider a total of 307,615 deaths to have resulted from this policy. And this is all without even considering the increase and expansion in the incidence of high-impact crimes associated with organized crime, such as premeditated murder, torture, disappearances, arms trafficking, extortion, money laundering, kidnappings, human trafficking and extrajudicial assassinations (Hernández, 2016).

Although Mexico’s northern and southwestern states have been most affected by the violence unleashed by this “war against organized crime,” the state of Morelos has also recorded a significant increase in the incidence of violence throughout this same time period. According to various official and unofficial sources, violence in Morelos has steadily increased, to the extent that the state ranked second in the incidence of high-impact crime in 2019 (Semáforo, 2020) (Map 4).

As we stated at the beginning of this section, the increase in violence in Morelos is a specific manifestation of the effects of this security policy. And while there are many reasons for emigration in Morelos, varying in accordance with the political, economic and social context in any given time period, we would be remiss if we did not point to the violence afflicting this state as a factor that is currently intensifying

and reinforcing the primary causes of the displacement of Morelos’ population, as we will see in the coming pages.

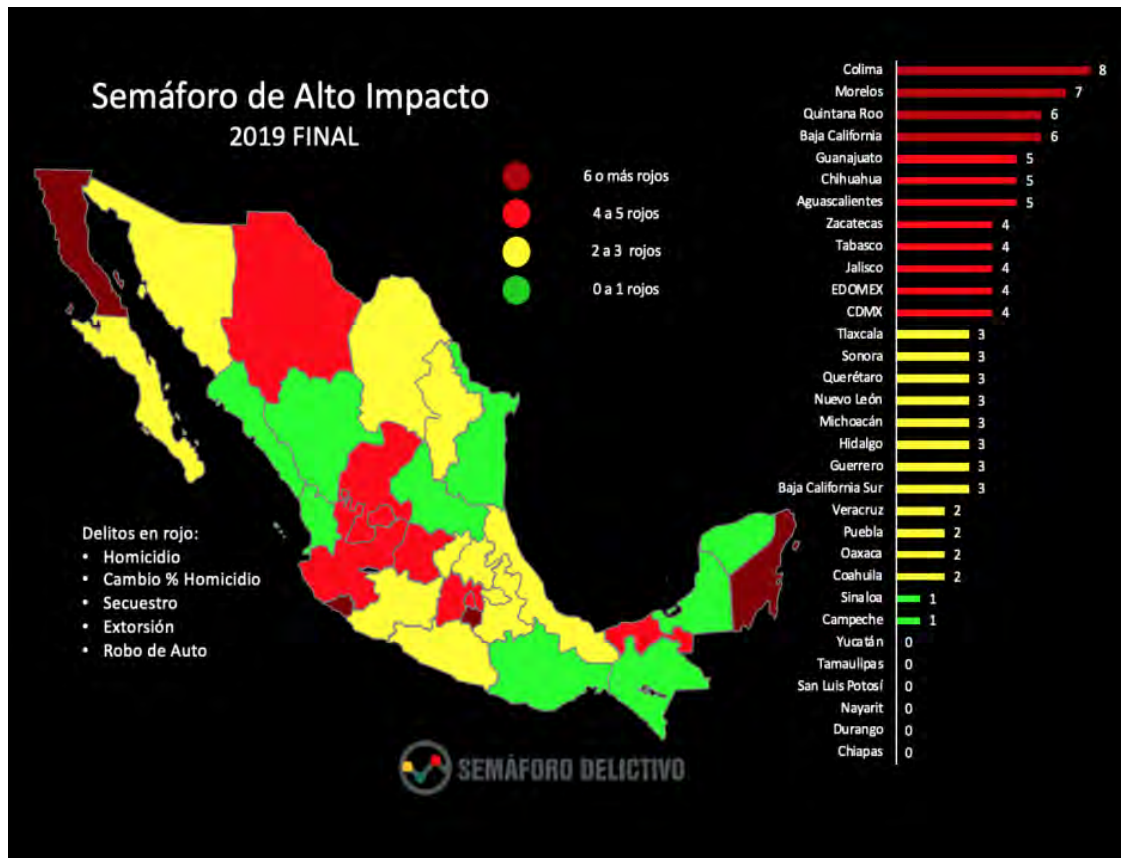
d) For every cause of attraction, there is also a cause of displacement/expulsion

As we have seen thus far, it is the contexts we find in Morelos that, on the one hand, have made the population’s settlement possible, and have allowed the society to flourish, with all of its cultural manifestations. On the other hand, these same contexts have shaped the conditions that, in some cases, make it impossible to live with dignity in this state.

In the case of Minnesota our analysis demonstrated that it is a set of political, social and economic factors that created the conditions that have attracted immigrants to this state throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Nevertheless, these factors do not adequately explain the mass arrival of immigrants to certain destinations in the United States (such as Minnesota, in particular). The emigration of persons to places outside their communities of origin involves individual and community processes that are not inscribed in the rationalist logic of the “perfect economic agent” who makes cost-benefit calculations to arrive at the decision to emigrate. Rather, this decision entails, above all, the consideration of personal, family and community needs that always have emotional, identity-focused significance.

Our analysis of contexts is thus helpful in understanding the factors that shape the reasons for the displacement of the Morelos population and that complement the reasons immigrants are attracted to the United States, and to the particular place we are addressing here, Minnesota. We are not suggesting, however, that there are definitive reasons that are beyond the influence of individuals or that predetermine them, as if they were merely passive actors. Rather, we find a series of conditions that address the needs in the more structural economic, political or social processes within which individuals are inserted, and which individuals adapt, transform and resolve, depending on the historical circumstances.

Map 4.
High impact crimes, according to the National Map of Criminal Practices, 2019



Source: Taken from the National Criminal Semaphore.

“I would leave because I have no opportunities here to advance my career as a social psychologist. Besides, the feeling of insecurity is so strong that, for me, as a young woman, it is a big risk to go out to the street, to school or to return home. That is why I would leave.”

College student from Miacatlán, Morelos. Collective workshop on youth and migration



Foto: Adriana Martínez

2. MORELOS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH MEXICO AND THE WORLD

a) Morelos and its strategic position: between Mexico City and the world market

As we saw in the case of Minnesota, geographic location is important, specifically with respect to other states and the global market. In the case of Morelos, not only is its geographic location significant due to its close proximity to Mexico City, but it also has certain similarities with Minnesota.

According to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía—INEGI), the total population of Morelos in 2015 was 1,912,211, with 51.9% female and 48.1% male, and with approximately 2% identifying as indigenous, some speaking an indigenous language. In terms of land area, Morelos covers 4,879 square kilometers, making it the third smallest state in Mexico, larger only than Mexico City and the state of Tlaxcala. (In fact, Morelos is so small and Minnesota so large that Morelos would fit slightly over 46 times in Minnesota.) In addition, Morelos has 37 political-administrative units known as municipalities (Map 5).

In terms of its geographic location, Morelos borders to the north and west with Mexico City and the state of Mexico, to the east with Puebla, and to the south with Guerrero (Map 6). In terms of its region, it is located within the Southern Sierra Madre mountain range (Sierra Madre del Sur) and the Transversal Neovolcanic Axis (Eje Neovolcánico Transversal), the latter of which, according to the Geography Institute (Instituto de Geografía) of Mexico's National Autonomous University (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México—UNAM), constitutes the main area where Mexico's population, agriculture and industry are concentrated (Map 7).

Together, all of these characteristics described so far paint a picture of the small state of Morelos as a territory distinguished by profound complexity in terms of geography, nature, the economy, society, culture and migration. As we mentioned in the previous chapter, Morelos has a certain similarity to Minnesota with respect to the role they play as “satellite” states. This means that the dynamics of these two states frequently respond not only to their own internal processes but are rather subordinated to the dynamics in other states that are economically or politically more important in their region or country.

Just as Minnesota is located near Chicago, one

of the most important cities for the US economy, Morelos is positioned within the area of influence of Mexico City, the most important city in Mexico, economically speaking, as well as the world's sixth largest city (Khokhar, 2016). A fourth of Mexico's total national GDP is produced in the Valley of Mexico Metropolitan Area (Zona Metropolitana del Valle de México—ZMVM), which encompasses all of Mexico City plus 59 municipalities in the state of Mexico and one in Hidalgo. In addition, until after the mid-20th century, over half of the country's industry is concentrated in this area. Thus, we can see that Mexico's central region, with its adjacent cities and dynamics revolving around the ZMVM, has been established as a strategic area for the country's economic development (Rendón and Godínez, 2016).

With NAFTA's signing and the implementation of an open trade policy, Mexico's economy had to re-adjust the industrial settlement and dynamics in the country, as well as the nation's foreign trade policy. Consequently:

Mexico has signed 12 Free Trade Agreements with 46 countries, 32 Agreements for the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments with 33 countries, and 9 agreements within the framework of the Latin American Association of Integration (Secretaría de Economía, 2016);

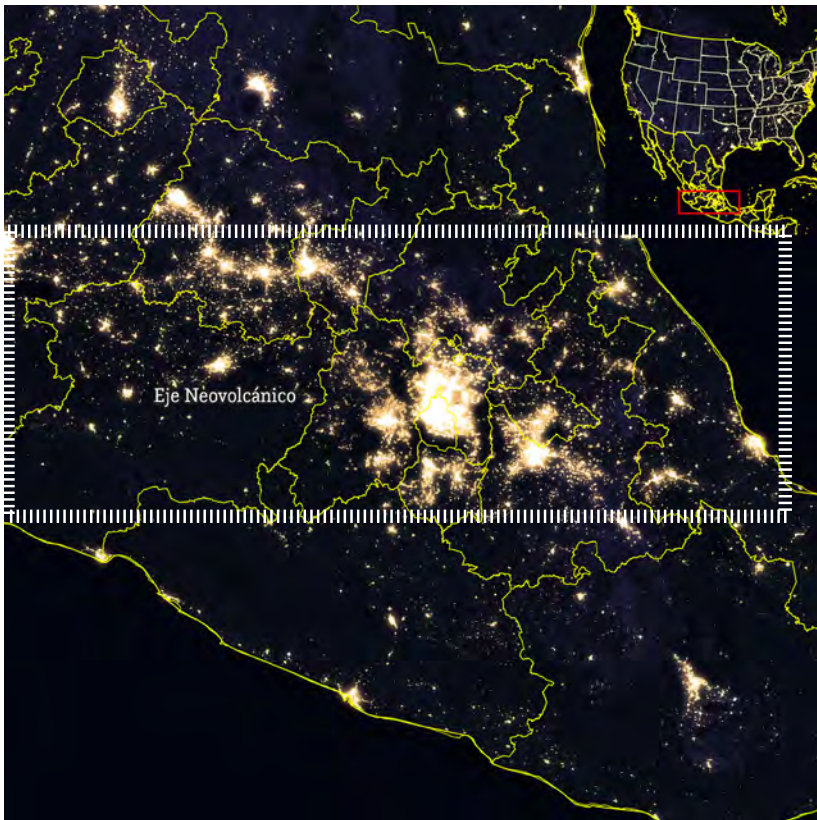
Domestic economic policy sidelined the promotion of national capital investment and regional economic organization to instead focus on a policy of attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and restructuring infrastructure to connect with foreign markets (Map 8).

The policy of attraction of the FDI (thus neglecting the development of national industry) makes it necessary to generate advantageous conditions that allow the Mexican government to make setting up

“ I like my state (Morelos). I like the food; I like the fact that I know everyone in the town where I live; I like the weather; and I like the fact that, even though I don't have a wage-paying job, I never go hungry, because the land my father left me produces all kinds of fruit and I can plant corn and other things. I'm not interested in leaving, but I understand that things here are very difficult because of the violence and lack of jobs.”

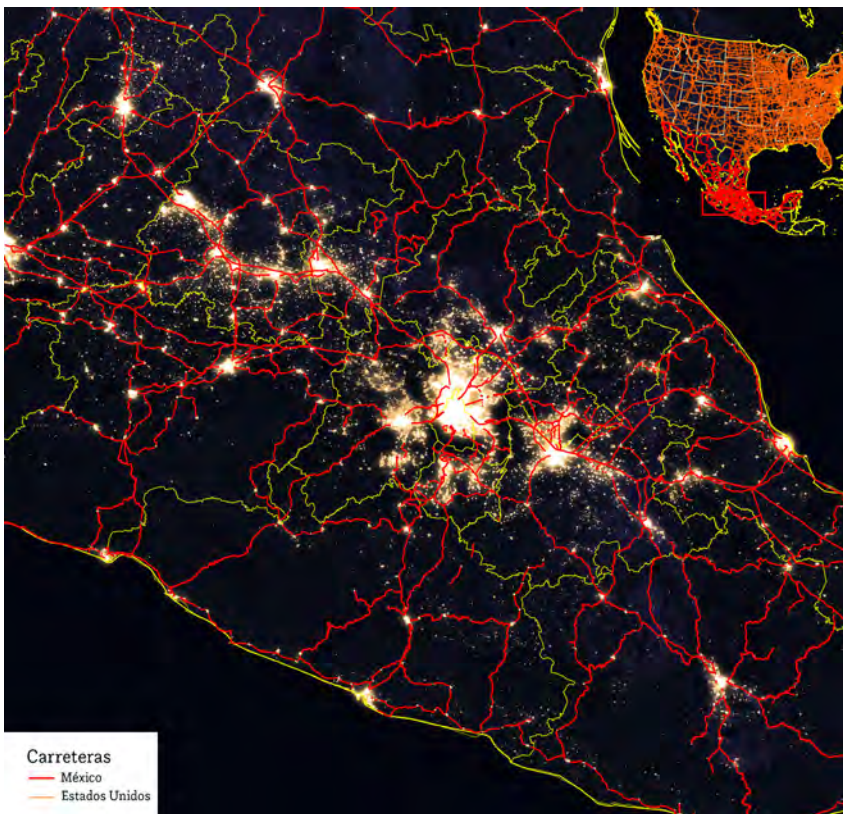
Alberto, 28 years old, native of Xoxocotla, Morelos.

Map 7.
Nocturnal map of Central Mexico's metropolitan region
and the Neovolcanic Transverse Axis



Source: Made by the authors with data from NASA. Black Marble [raster]. https://www.nasa.gov/topics/earth/earth-month/earthmonth_2013_5.html.

Map 8.
Nocturnal map of the urban areas in Central Mexico and the highway network



Source: Made by the authors with data from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Freight Analysis Framework V4 [shapefile], <https://faf.ornl.gov/fafweb/>; INEGI. Red Nacional de Caminos [shapefile], <https://www.inegi.org.mx/app/biblioteca/ficha.html?upc=889463674641>; and INEGI. Marco Geoestadístico [shapefile].



Photo: Emanuel Deonicio Palma

business in the country attractive to foreign investors. Therefore, since NAFTA's signing, the country has also initiated a legal restructuring process with the aim of facilitating labor and environmental deregulation processes, in order to reduce production costs of investments by maintaining wage restraint, on the one hand, and accumulating, storing and accessing cheap raw materials, on the other. As a result of this policy in Mexico, the country has lost approximately 34.68% of its forests (equivalent to 353,000 square kilometers of land area); over 70% of its water bodies (rivers, lakes, underground water bodies) are highly contaminated, with particularly the population under 20 years of age affected by different types of cancer, as a consequence of their exposure to the toxic pollution generated by environmental deregulation (TPP, 2016).

Labor deregulation policies resulted in a set of social consequences, for which workers were left paying the price. According to a now-extinct agency of the Mexican government that was in charge of promoting foreign investment in our country, ProMéxico, the labor costs (wages) of Mexico's labor force are 54% below the level in Poland and 88% cheaper than in Canada, making its labor costs among the cheapest in the world (ProMéxico, n.d.). This effect is significant for our study if we consider—as we will see in the coming pages—that one of the main reasons for emigration in Mexico involves low wages and lack of work.

Mexico's open trade policy transformed the country's transportation infrastructure. On the one

hand, the railway system and industry ceased to be a consolidated, nationally owned productive branch, as it became fragmented and transferred to US companies (Saxe-Fernández, 2002). On the other hand, as a consequence of the latter, together with international global trade policy, the new transportation infrastructure was restructured to connect the global market and not the regional dynamics within the country.

In this context we can understand the central role played by Morelos with respect to Mexico City's Metropolitan Area (ZMVM) and the global market. Morelos' proximity to this metropolis makes it a necessary transit zone to gain access to Mexico City from the south, and also provides Mexico City with an expeditious point of exit from its industrial areas to the country's most important ports connecting to the Pacific basin (Map 9).

For this reason, just as Minnesota has a connecting function for the agricultural and industrial production concentrated in Chicago, Morelos has a similar function with respect to Mexico City and its ring of cities. In fact, its territory serves as a gateway that opens or blocks passage to the region's most important city. Both Minnesota and Morelos have thus become strategic areas for the distribution of goods (connecting multiple markets), and consequently, for important migration (emigration and immigration) regions. Nonetheless, their geographic and economic conditions have also allowed them to develop their own industries, linked to regional dynamics on the basis of their local production.

b) Morelos, a state of origin for migrants: our study area

The role played by Morelos as a place where the population emigrates is determined by factors that are generally economic in nature. The dynamics imposed on the population by Mexico's economic policies have played a central role in the way this has taken shape, as we saw in the previous section. It is clear that the reasons for emigrating are diverse and vary over time and context, but as we will see in the following pages, and as we ascertained in most of the interviews conducted, the reasons for emigration generally involve the economic situation of those emigrating.

As we have seen thus far, Morelos has enormous wealth due to its natural, geographic, social and cultural diversity. Consequently, it would be an exaggeration, to say the least, to imply that all of the communities in Morelos are witnessing the displacement

of their inhabitants. Similarly, to suggest that all of those who emigrate from Morelos do so for the same reason and to the same place would contradict what we have presented in this report. This reality presented a challenge for us when we began our investigation and made it necessary to seek a method that would show us where and with whom to begin. An advantage in our favor was that we were looking for a specific type of migrant: those who go to Minnesota. This focus allowed us to also identify other characteristics, perspectives and positions of the communities we studied with respect to migration, as expressed by the men and women participating in the workshops and through individual interviews. We realized that all of the voices we heard were important for this report: the voices of those who emigrate (regardless of their destination), of those who do not want to migrate, of the families that stay behind, and of the young people looking for answers in a panorama that appears to be natural but is not. We found that young people in Morelos live constantly with the possibility of emigration—stashed in a backpack—with or without the blessing of their parents, who generally want the best for them in a country that seems to have little to offer.

We decided to listen to everyone, but also to look closely at communities in Morelos with a higher incidence of migration. The factors we took into consideration to define our study area are as follows:

As we saw in the previous chapter, based on our analysis of the Consular IDs issued by the Mexican Consulate in St. Paul, Minnesota, we determined that the largest Latin American communities of immigrants in Minnesota come primarily from Axochiapan, Morelos. However, when we conducted our analysis from the perspective of communities in Morelos, we used information on remittances sent through the Bank of Mexico to determine the localities where remittances were received, and which received more remittances than others.

If we look at Map 10, we see that the municipalities receiving the most remittances include Axochiapan, as well as two neighboring municipalities in Morelos and six others in Puebla, thus forming a region of intense emigration. As we saw in the previous chapter, this information coincides with the municipalities of origin for the largest Mexican communities in Minnesota, especially those in Twin Cities.

In addition to municipalities in southeastern Morelos, we can also see in Map 10 that some municipalities in the western part of the state, such as Miacatlán, Tetecala and Coatlán del Río, as well as the

cities of Cuautla, Cuernavaca and Jojutla, also have high levels of income from remittances.

3. MIGRATION IN MORELOS:

THREE DIFFERENT FACES OF THE SAME WORLD

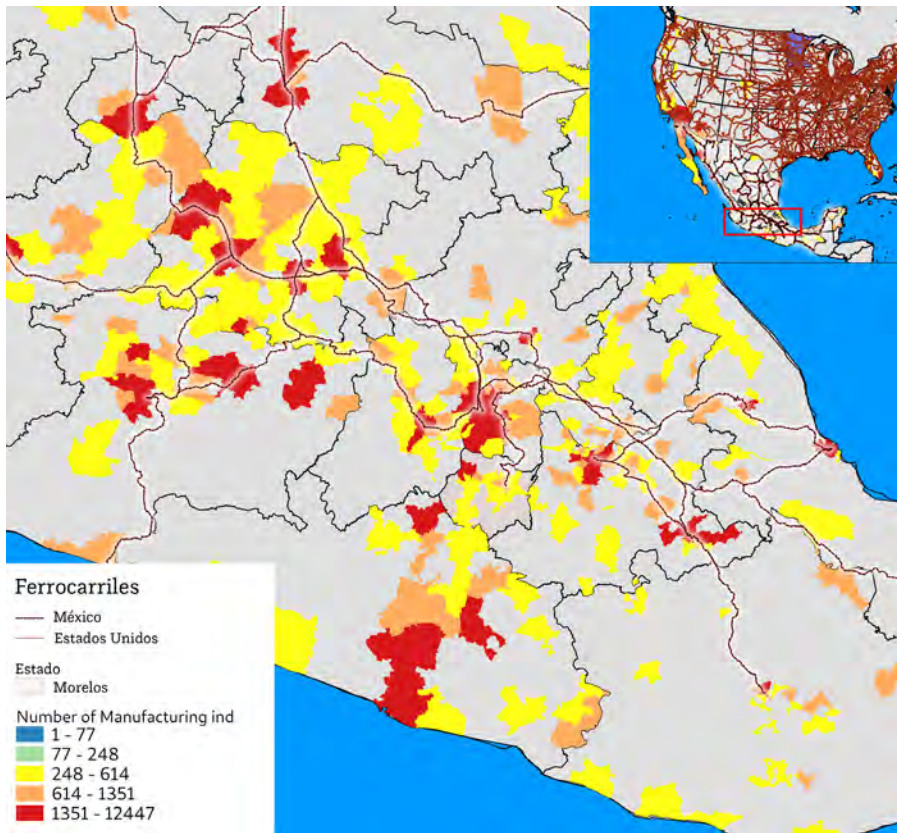
As part of the work for this project, we carried out a series of workshops in various locations of several municipalities of the state of Morelos with the main objective of discovering how migration is envisaged in the collective imagination. As academics say, we look for the different ways in which the phenomenon is perceived by the people. Along the way, we were able to find some friends who helped us understand that most Mexicans experience migration as something that is present in our daily lives, but which, for some reason, we are unable to face head-on.

In almost all the workshops that we held in Morelos, especially with young people, we could see how the different faces of migration are experienced. Because of its natural environment (its climate, its relative abundance of water and forests, etc.), its strategic geographical location (its proximity to Mexico City, to the Pacific coast, to the regional markets of the Crown of Cities, etc.), its internal contradictions, and the rooting it produces in its people, Morelos is an area where all forms of migration coexist. At the same time, it is a destination for international and inter-state immigrants; it is a transit point for Central American migrants, as well as for Mexicans who strive to reach the United States; it is a population-exPELLING state and a place of return for migrants who are natives of Morelos (and in some cases, for others who are not natives).

As an illustration of this, in one of the workshops that we conducted in Miacatlán, Morelos, with 28 young university students who were between 19 and 23 years old, we learned that:

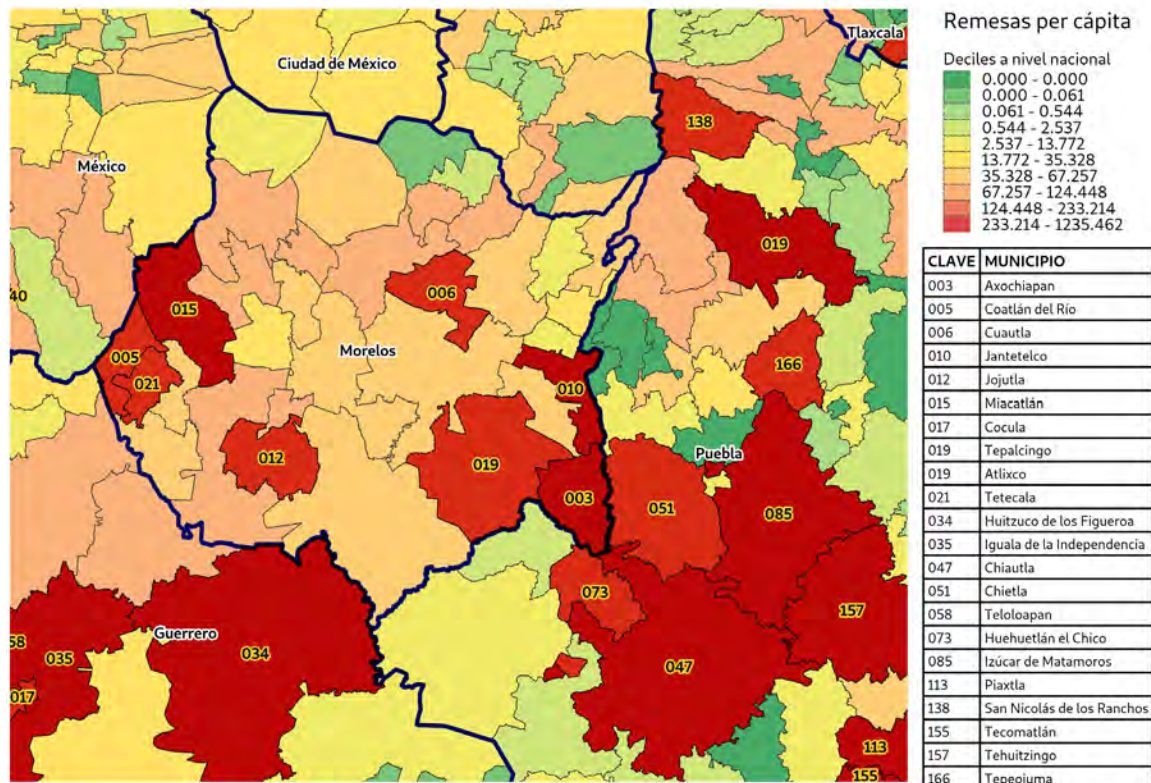
- 90% said they liked living in Morelos;
- 25% are from a state other than Morelos (mainly from Guerrero and the State of Mexico);
- 64% would migrate to the United States if they could;
- 50% would go to some other country if they could choose between the United States and elsewhere;
- 57% would migrate to the United States, but would seek to return to Morelos;

Map 9.
Railroad network in Central Mexico and manufacturing industry, 2018



Source: Made by the authors with data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Tiger/Line [shapefile]. <https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/shapefiles/index.php>. Geocomunes. Sistema Nacional Ferroviario [shapefile]. INEGI. DENE y Marco Geoestadístico [shapefile].

Map 10.
Per capita remittances by municipality, 2018



Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI. Marco Geoestadístico [shapefile] y Banco de México. Sistema de Información Económica [base de datos]. <https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=1&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CE81&locale=es>.

- 85.7% have a family member living in the United States; and
- 32% have a family member who is a returnee migrant.

We obtained almost the same results in most of our workshops, except for those that we carried out in Xoxocotla, Morelos, where the majority of the young participants assured us that they had no problem with traveling and getting to know other places but that, faced with the option of emigrating, they would prefer to stay in their community.

This interaction with them made us realize that the migratory complexity of Morelos was much greater than it seemed at first sight. In the following sections, we will explain each of the faces of migration in this state.

a) Morelos as a destination for migrants

Morelos is an important interstate center of migration attraction for a number of reasons. These arise from the characteristics we have already described above, for example, the fact that through most of the year Morelos is a place with a mild climate, and, in general terms, its landscape is attractive for both visitors and residents. Also, its geographical location gives it a strategic advantage because, although it is not part of the Metropolitan Area of the Valley of Mexico, its proximity to it guarantees free access to, and exit from the main city in the country. However, this does not explain the deep causes of international and interstate immigration in Morelos, given that, according to data obtained by the National Population Council, since 1985, Morelos not only expels people but, historically, more people immigrate into this state than emigrate from it (Conapo, 2017) (Figure 3).

These are some of the causes of immigration in Morelos:

Because it is a state strategically located “within the crown of urban expansion that surrounds Mexico City” (Ocampo, 2015), its internal dynamics are subordinated to the needs of this urban expansion. Accordingly, both the industrial and service activities of its main cities (Cuernavaca, Cuautla, and areas of influence), as well as its agricultural and livestock activities attract populations from marginalized locations in several neighboring states, mainly from Guerrero, the State of Mexico, Puebla and Oaxaca (Figure 4). As reported by Nashelly Ocampo (2015: 129), following the 1985 earthquake, part of Mexico City’s population migrated to Morelos, while, at the

same time, “the growth of export agriculture in this state [promoted by the signing of NAFTA] attracted a significant flow of cheap migrant labor from other states, such as Guerrero and Puebla.

Part of the interstate migratory flow coming into Morelos regards this state as a temporary and transit point before heading north and, potentially, to the United States. In fact, during the interviews conducted for this project with returnee migrants—several of them from Minnesota—who reside in Morelos, we discovered that one of the most important migratory flows to Morelos had its origin in Veracruz, another sugarcane-producing state, and that both these states share sugar production with Minnesota.

After the beginning of the “war on drugs,” migration routes from southern Mexico to the United States were diversified as a result of the strengthening of Mexico’s southern border and of the control measures to prevent Central American migrants from traveling by rail (on a train known as “The Beast”), and Morelos



Photo: Emanuel Deonicio Palma

“As young people, we live with migration all the time. My parents instilled in me the idea that I should study so I can get out of the country, so things would be better for me and so I could get ahead.

*Andrés, 20 years old.
University student. Cuernavaca, Morelos.*

became one of the most important alternate routes. According to the Ministry of the Interior's Unit for Migration Policy, Registration and Personal Identity (Unidad de Política Migratoria, Registro e Identidad de Personas, Secretaría de Gobernación) (2020: 14), “the majority of flows across the center of the country on their way to the northern border, go through the states of Puebla, Morelos, Tlaxcala, the State of Mexico, Mexico City, and Hidalgo.”

Also, Morelos has traditionally been an important recipient of foreign immigration due to its climatic conditions and cultural life. Although the magnitude and the countries or regions of origin of this sector of the migrant population vary over time and in global contexts, Morelos is still one of the preferred destinations for European and American foreigners, to live in retirement and one of the preferred destinations for the Latin American community to live, work, and study (Rodríguez and Cobo, 2012) (Figure 5).

Thus, people not only come to Morelos from other states in search of work, but also from Mexico City and other countries, for various purposes that are not necessarily labor-related. We may conclude that the immigration tradition in Morelos is very deep and has generated links between Morelos and several places in Mexico and across the world. In Cuernavaca, for example, until less than 10 years ago there were Spanish language schools for foreigners; every year, various communities, like those in the municipality of Tepalcingo, welcome American university students for academic stays in their communities. There are also several study and cultural centers to which distinguished intellectuals have come, including Eric Hobsbawm, Ivan Illich, Diego Rivera, Malcolm Lowry, Chavela Vargas, Erich Fromm, and John Steinbeck, and even such controversial political figures as the ex-Shah of Iran, Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, who briefly resided in Cuernavaca after his overthrow in 1979.

The regions where the interstate immigrant population, foreigners, or Mexicans returnees from the United States regularly settle are also the regions with the highest migratory intensity and reception

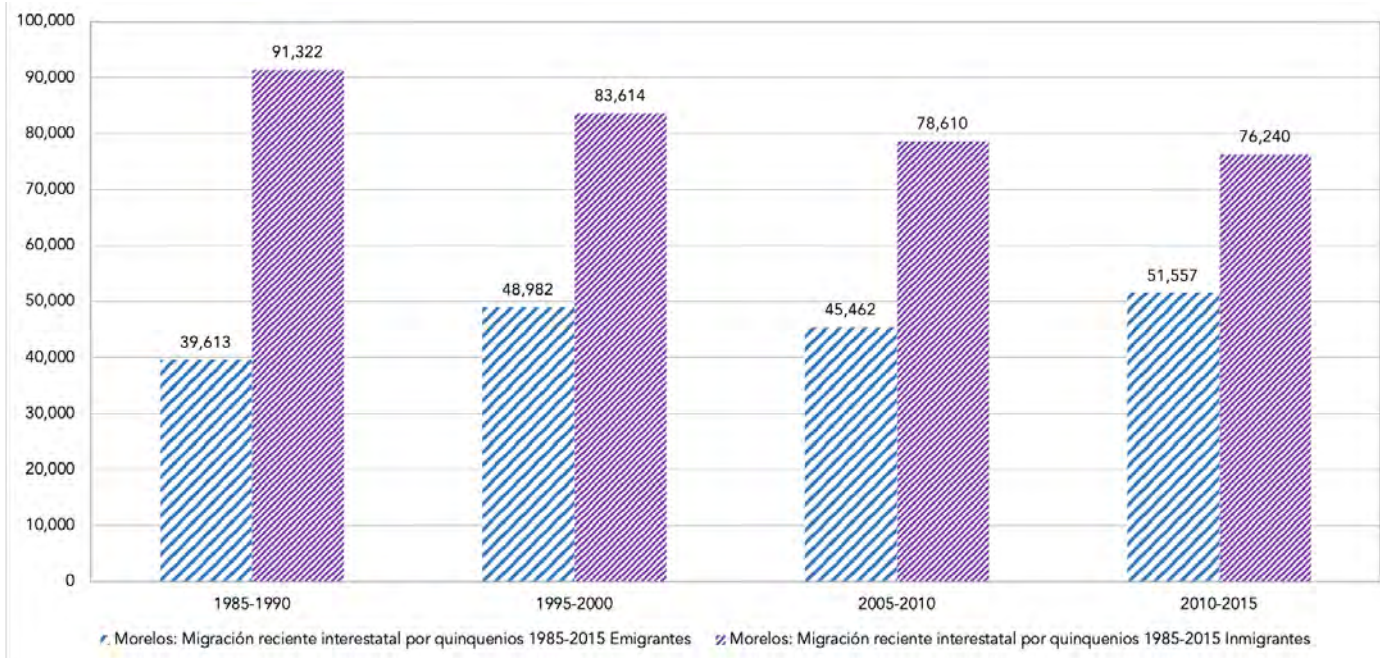
of remittances, mainly, the two largest cities in the state: Cuernavaca and Cuautla.

b) Morelos as a place of expulsion and displacement

In the Introduction to this Report, we saw that the UN's International Organization for Migration observed that international movements of people around the world were on the rise. Although the IOM recognizes the difficulty in predicting an estimate of the pace and scale of migration, this fact indicates that the rate at which migratory flows are increasing on a global scale is higher than anticipated and that the causes that drive people to migrate suggest that the world is in a phase of increasing wars and political, economic, social and environmental conflict.

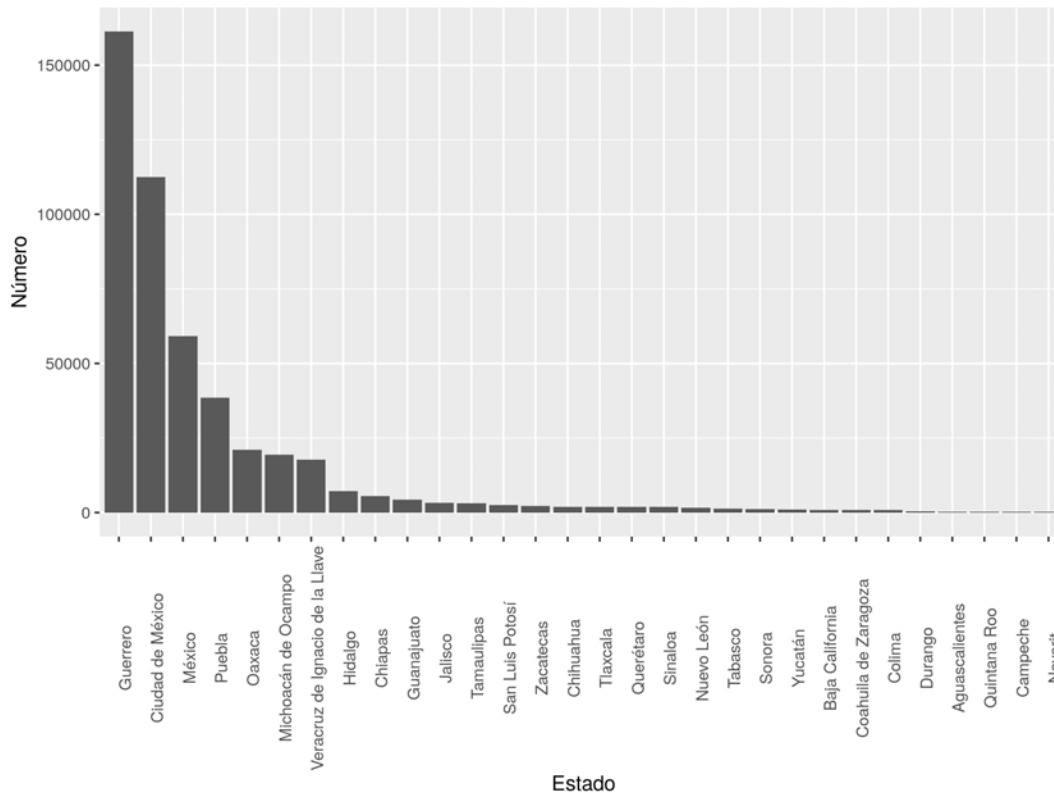
In structural and systemic terms—which help us to establish migratory patterns and changes in those patterns—, we can identify the causes of migration as adjustments or unbalances in the social, economic, and political conditions that determine the reproduction of families and communities. Such alterations prompt a search for individual or collective strategies, such as emigration, in order to deal with the situation. The reasons why people abandon their communities of origin are varied; the considerations that mediate between the need and the decision to migrate are complex, and, finally, the decision is rarely subject to a preconceived scheme of cost-benefit analysis by the migrants, as some economic theories claim (Ocampo, 2015). In fact, in most cases, the migration process is affected, on the one hand, by the capacities of the migrants' support network, and on the other, by the eventualities and intermittent nature of the journey to the destination. These factors affect or bring about changes in the initial intentions of those who migrate in ways that are completely unexpected and cannot be predicted by any research. Evidently, this circumstance renders the task of migrantologists difficult, since many of these data cannot be found in the academic literature or among the available statistical data. What committed research can do is identify significant elements of expression of a change with respect to previous situations, or else the formation of common patterns that are manifested, for example, in changes in the demographic composition of the communities of origin, the emergence of groups that organize parties or celebrations with a clearly local flavor in certain regions of the United States, or the increase in the economic weight of the remittances received by a certain locality starting from a specific point in time.

Figure 3.
Recent immigration to and emigration from Morelos, five-year periods, 1985-2015



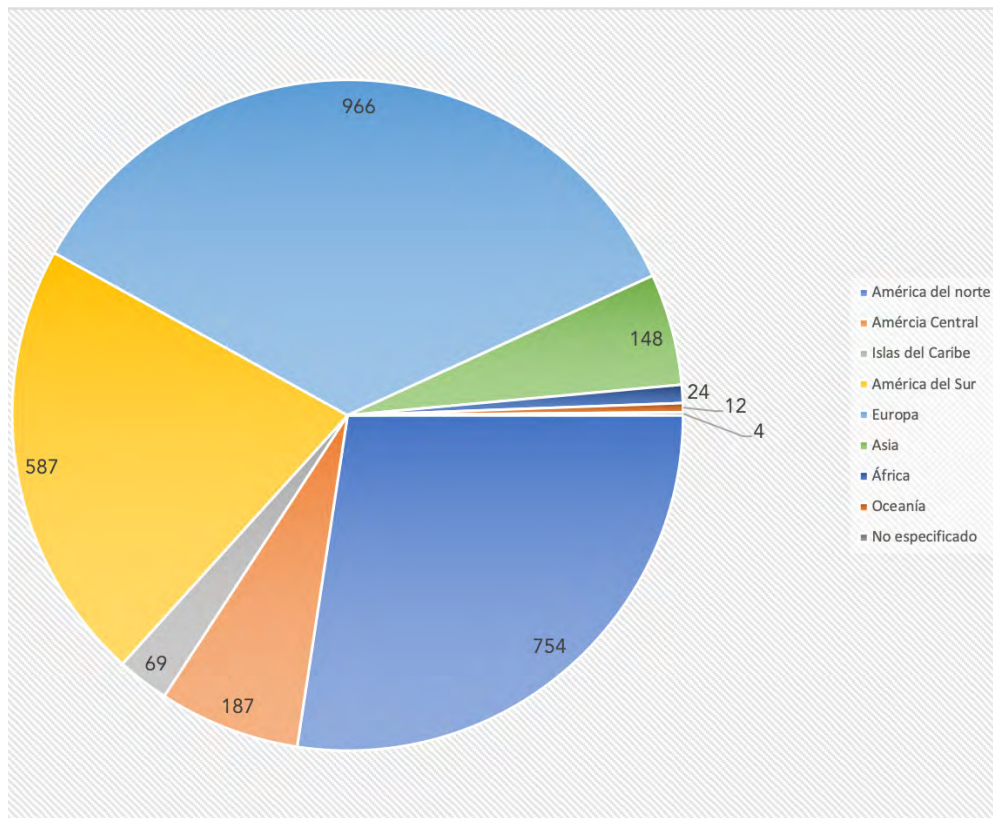
Source: Made by the authors with data from Conapo, 2017.

Figure 4.
Interstate migration in Morelos by state of origin, 2014



Source: Made by the authors with data from the National Demographic Dynamic Survey (Enadid) 2014.

Figura 5.
Foreign born population in Morelos by region of origin,
with some legal status in 2009*



* The different migrant categories are: **Non-immigrant**, **Immigrant**, and **Immigrated**. The “Non-immigrants” are those who reside temporarily in Mexico as students, because of a diplomatic or religious mission, visitors and economic dependents. “Immigrants” are those foreign born persons who entered the Mexican territory legally and aim to establish their residence in Mexico; and the “Immigrated” are those foreign born persons who have already acquired rights to settle permanently in Mexico.

Source: Made by the authors with data from: Centro de Estudios Migratorios, Instituto Nacional de Migración, Secretaría de Gobernación, 2012.

Based on these considerations, we may say that there are multiple and diverse conditions in Morelos that make it a population-expelling state subject to national and global structural and systemic causes already widely described throughout this report. However, the reasons why people from Morelos migrate can only be found in the answers of the migrants themselves.

While it is true that the structural economic conditions and violence within the Mexican national territory constitute a scenario in which it is difficult for the people of the communities of Morelos to carry out their daily activities with full freedom and to develop their abilities, it is also true that the global economic conditions of frank competition under the premise of “free trade” between countries, placed Mexico in conditions of disadvantage that worsened the living conditions of the most vulnerable Mexicans; in this case these are the indigenous people, the farm workers and the young people, especially of the poorest among all of these (Peña and Ocampo, 2019).

Part of the problem has to do with the distribution of industrial economic activities and communications infrastructure within the state. As shown

in Map 11, most of the manufacturing industry is concentrated in the region that connects Cuernavaca with Jiutepec, Yautepec, Cuautla, and, from there, with the state of Puebla. This area includes, for example, the largest industrial corridor in the state, known as CIVAC (Industrial Corridor of the Valley of Cuernavaca), which houses companies in the automotive, auto parts, chemical, food and beverage industries, among others. However, it is also clear that the manufacturing activity has extended to form, more recently, a corridor that runs from Cuernavaca to the south of the state, practically all the way to the border with Guerrero.

The expulsion of the population from Morelos makes sense if we consider that the national economic policy has concentrated on attracting Foreign Direct Investment, which, despite its increasing participation in the economic activity of Mexico since NAFTA came into force, has not created as many jobs as were originally promised. Rather, in Morelos, as in many other states in the country, foreign investment has served to push part of the population towards emigration, since the profits generated by such investment are not reinvested in the country and do not generate benefits for the local population, as

Box 4.

“Everyone at some point had to move from their home, community, municipality, or state, or even outside the country. But all this goes beyond that. In my community there are many families who decide to go to the US because they cannot find work, are not well paid, and cannot afford to pay for their family expenses. In the worst case, they leave their families behind and don't come back because they couldn't cross the border, or because they were cheated, swindled, or were victims of human trafficking [...] But what has marked me most since childhood, I think, has been the absence of my father. Since I can remember, my father has always been away from home, working in different states of the Mexican Republic [...] also, I remember that my father once tried to cross the border; someone —I don't know whose nephew— convinced him. My mother said that my father was crazy, but he was determined. He said good-bye, saying that he loved us, and that he was leaving only because he wanted the best for us. We didn't hear from him for several months, until one day we heard them shouting in town “Carmen Sánchez, report to the phone booth, you have an urgent call”. And what a surprise, our father was in jail! He was caught trying to cross the border for the third time and needed money to get out. My mother replied, how was she to send him any money when she had none, and we were barely surviving? We had no choice but to wait for him to be released. It was a while before I saw my father again, but as they say, only life knows why it didn't allow him to cross over. He could have died, but I'm grateful because, although it's been hard, he has remained with us.

Lucero, 30 years old, university student. Native of Guerrero, resident of Temixco

Saskia Sassen warned since the 1980s (Sassen, 1985). If we also bear in mind that the growth of industrial activities requires the growth of urban areas and the expansion of the service sector at the expense of rural areas, the resulting situation in the case of Morelos is that “decapitalization and yield issues have turned the primary sector into a net expeller of the labor force” (Chiatchoua, Neme and Valderrama, 2016) toward the cities or to the United States. In other words, the logic of the state's economic activity and its communication networks is not geared toward the employment needs and activities of the local population, but rather toward the need to transfer the output of the state to markets where it can be sold, with an ever increasing precariousness for the local population and the absence of a solid internal market.

This becomes even more problematic if we consider that Morelos has an important demographic bonus¹ (State Population Council, 2016) that cannot be utilized because, on the one hand, the agricultural sector has been neglected and, on the other, not enough jobs are being generated for this population

to exercise a professional activity or trade in their community of origin, which leaves them the sole option of emigrating. In the Map 12 series, we can see that, on the one hand, the population in Morelos is very concentrated in Cuernavaca and Cuautla and, on the other, that there is, indeed, a demographic bonus in all the population settlements within the state. In fact, in the smaller localities of the state, the population between ages 15 and 29 adds up to more than 40% of the total number of inhabitants.

Furthermore, as we can see in Figure 6, a large part of the population of Morelos is made up of children (ages 0 to 14 years), and most of the working-age population is engaged in unpaid activities such as housework (without remuneration), are studying, retired, or unemployed, or have sought employment and have been unable to find it.

This occupation pattern is still prevalent, judging by the data presented by municipality (Figure 7). Thus, the two Figures show that the greatest weight of the economic support of families in Morelos falls on a continually decreasing proportion of agricultural and service workers and, to a lesser extent, on manufacturing workers. In a labor market that offers ever fewer jobs, under increasingly precarious wage conditions, it is logical that a significant part of the income of the state's population comes from family remittances sent from the United States, as shown

¹ The demographic bonus is a phenomenon that occurs when the number of people of working age, ranging from 14 to 59 years of age, exceeds the dependent population (children and the elderly). In other words, when there are demographic conditions in which society is more productive.

in Map 13. Here we can see that only two of the 37 municipalities in the state do not receive remittances while, as we can see in Map 14, only a quarter of the municipalities has the highest volume of remittances per capita. In fact, data from the Bank of Mexico show that in 2019, ten municipalities in the state concentrated 80% (561.73 million dollars) of the total income of Morelos from remittances that same year, which in total amounted to \$702.56 million dollars. According to Figure 8, these municipalities are, in descending order of income: Cuautla (\$131.84 million dollars), Cuernavaca (\$124.21 million dollars), Axochiapan (\$63.17 million dollars), Jiutepec (55.35 million dollars), Jojutla (46.30 million dollars), Temixco (32.02 million dollars), Yautepec (30.51 million dollars), Puente de Ixtla (27.38 million dollars), Miacatlán (26.38 million dollars), and Jantetelco (24.58 million dollars).

Given the high income from remittances and the demographic bonus of Morelos, what we can infer is that Morelenses are highly productive laborers living in conditions that do not allow them to work. During the workshops held with young university students in Miacatlán, Temixco and Cuernavaca, one of the main reasons that the young people gave for their intentions to emigrate (mainly to the United States) was that, in Morelos, they would not have the possibility of developing professionally or of finding educational programs or offers that would allow them to grow. This can begin to be explained by the fact that, as shown in Figure 9, the largest part of the state's population has only secondary education, relegating professional studies to fourth place. In fact, many of the young people who participated in the workshops are the first in their respective families to have carried out university studies.

Figure 10 shows the population's schooling pattern in the ten municipalities with the highest income from remittances. These replicate the reality of the state, with the exception of Cuernavaca, Cuautla and Jiutepec, but this is because these are the main urban municipalities of the state, where the higher education institutions are located.

The combination of all these factors (demographic bonus, lack of jobs, low salaries, and little possibility of professional development for young people) explains why the average age for Morelenses

at the time of their first emigration to the United States is 27, which applies to both men and women. Also, according to surveys conducted between 2013 and 2017 by the College of the Northern Border of Mexico (Colegio de la Frontera Norte) with Morelos residents who intended to cross the border into the United States, the average age was 33, regardless of whether it was the first attempt or a subsequent one (Figure 11).

According to the same source (Figure 12), between 2013 and 2014, the main reasons why people from Morelos migrated were low income, lack of employment, and some mentioned violence in their places of origin, while for the 2015–2017 period the main reasons remained fundamentally economic; however, this time the component of family reunification was added (Figure 13). This element is significant because it expresses the construction of migratory support networks based on family structure. It highlights the fact that those Morelenses who sought to cross the northern border between 2013 and 2017 intended to reunite with siblings or members of their extended family. Interestingly, few

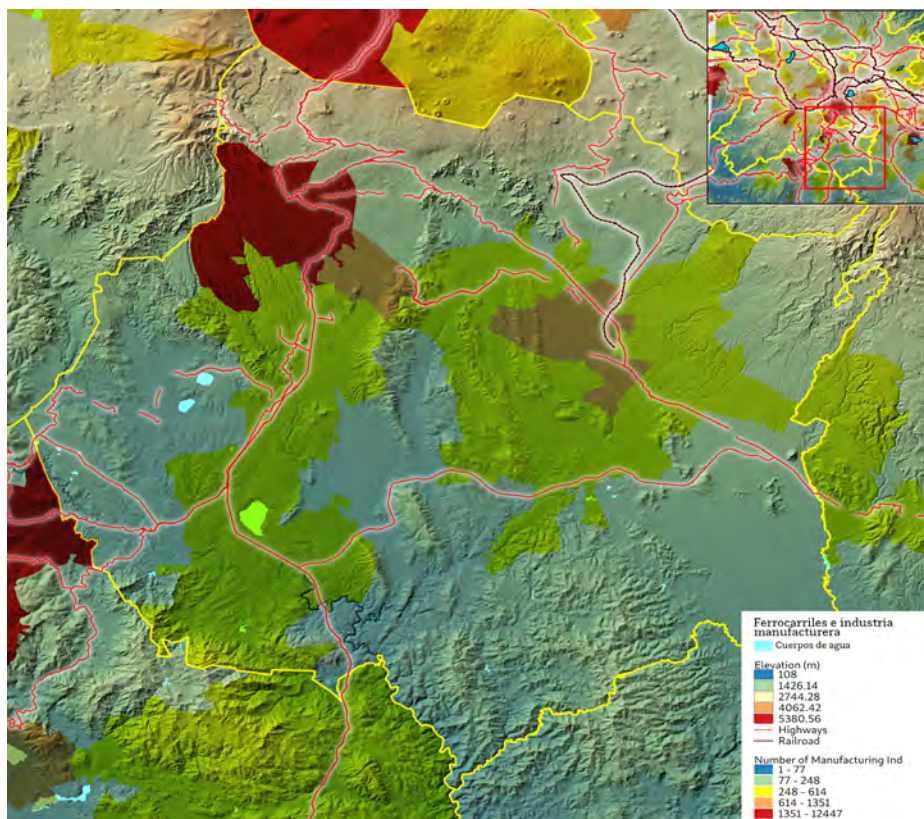
Morelos migrants seek to rejoin their biological parents if these reside in the United States (Figure 14), but rather choose to reunite with siblings, cousins, or in-laws.

Finally, between the first and last migration of people from Morelos to the United States, in the 1943–2019 period, the largest migration wave occurred between 1994 (the year NAFTA came into force) and 2008 (the year when the global crisis broke out). The main destinations to which people from Morelos migrate are Minnesota, California, Texas, and New York, as can be seen in Figures 15a and 15b.

It goes without saying that the context surrounding Morelos' migratory processes is permeated by the emotions of the Morelense women. The young people of this time are the synthesis of the most intense dynamics in the migratory history of Morelos, since, while they are children of migrants, on many occasions their only possibility is to emigrate themselves. However, is this really their only option? At the end of each workshop, we asked the participants whether, if the conditions existed in their communities of origin to carry out and develop the activities that most satisfied them, within a context of freedom

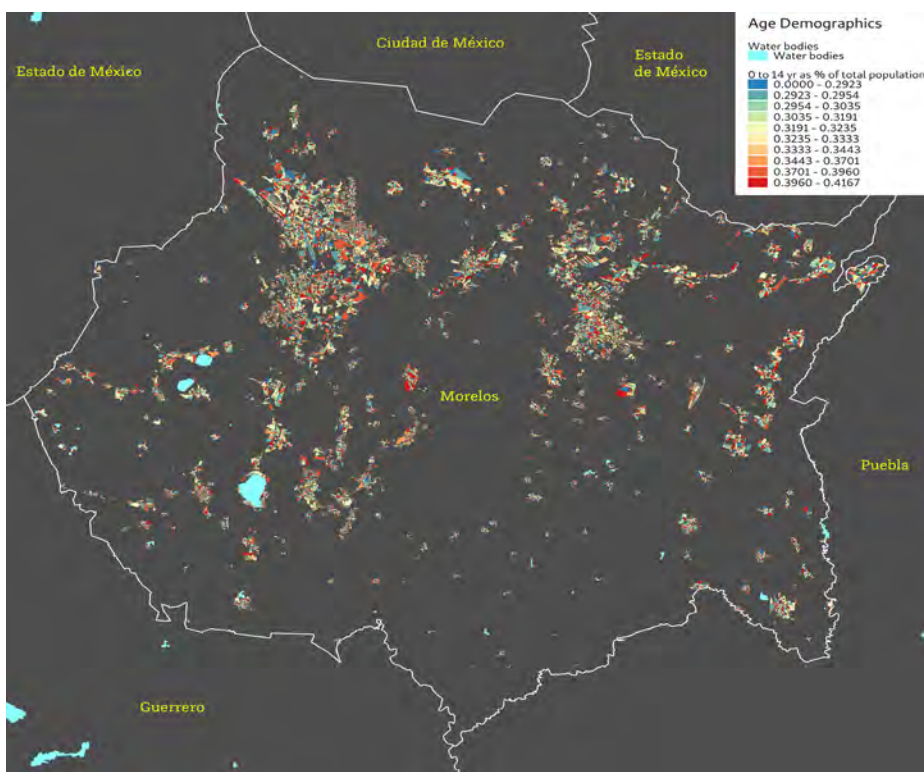


Map 11.
Distribution of manufacturing industries, highway and railroad infrastructure in Morelos



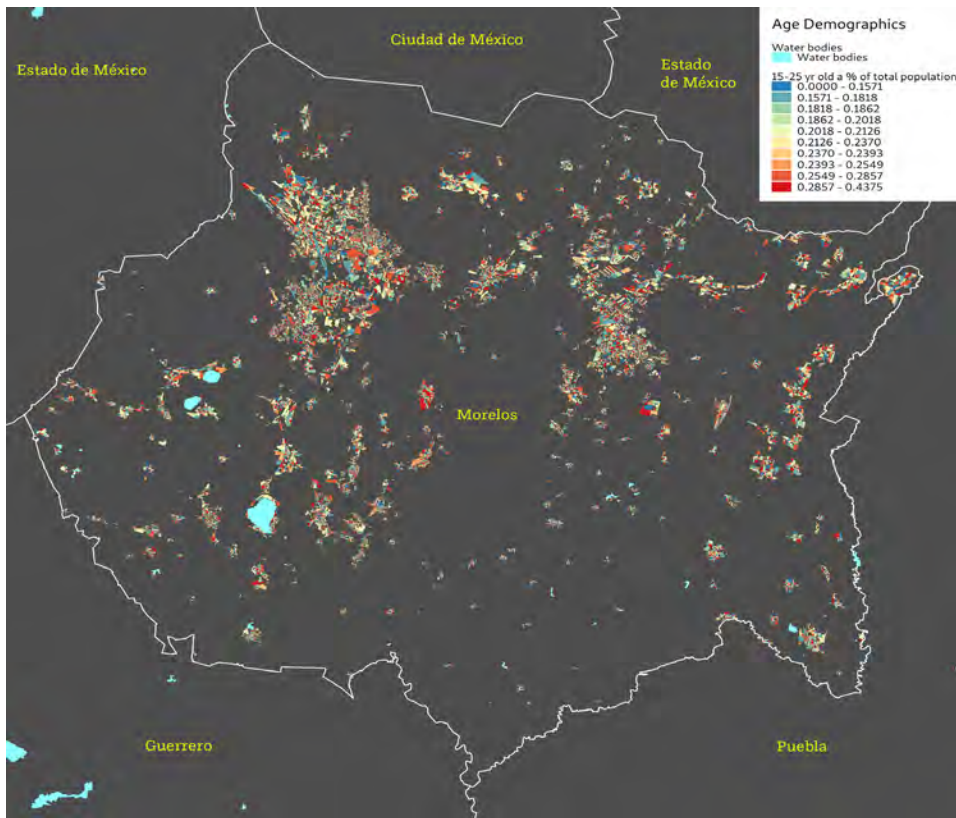
Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI. Population Census [database], Geostatistical Framework, DENUE y National Road Network [shapefiles].

Map 12a.
Demographic map of Morelos.
Percentage of population between 0 and 14 years of age by block, 2012



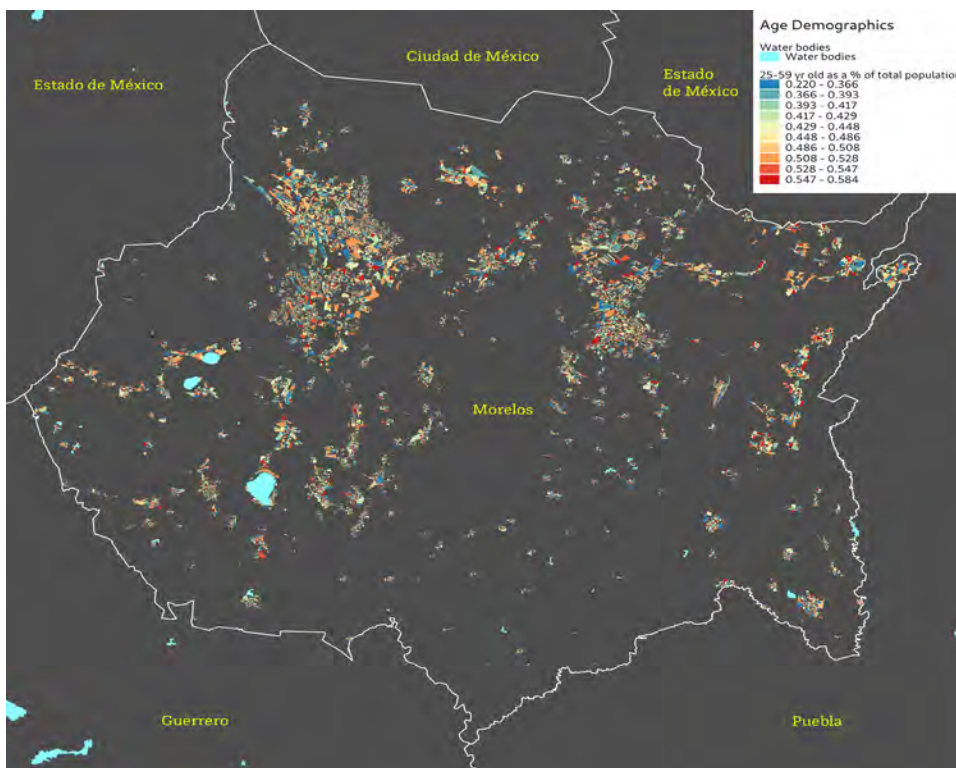
Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI. Population Census [database], Geostatistical Framework [shapefile].

Map 12b.
Demographic map of Morelos.
Percentage of population between 15 and 25 years of age by block, 2012



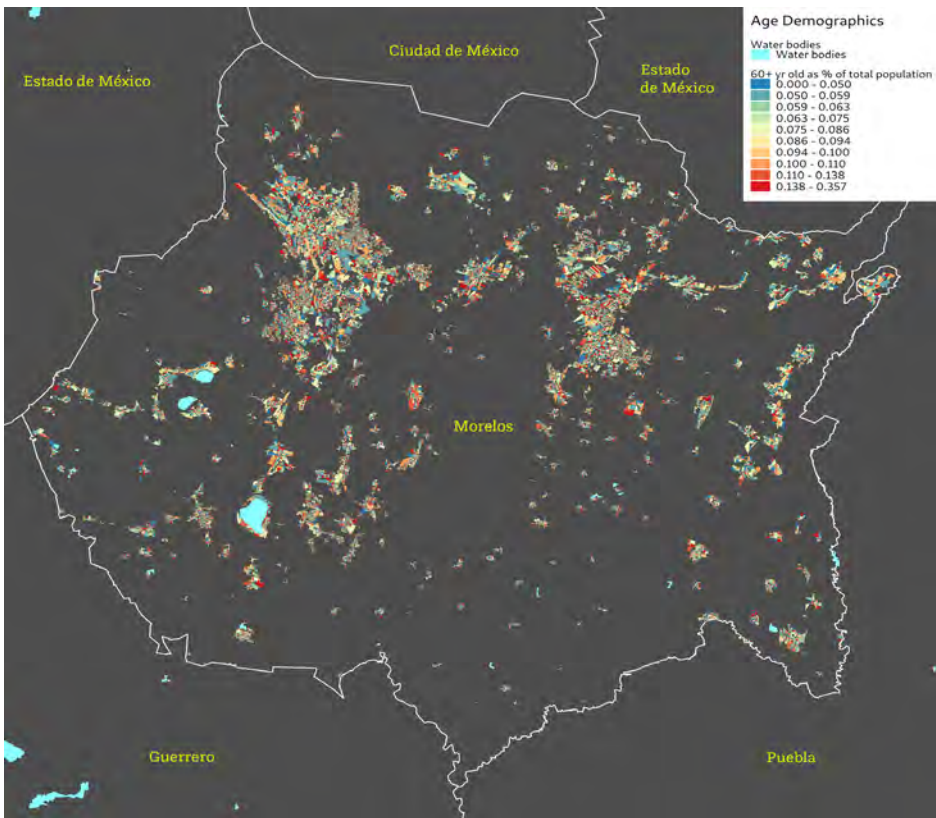
Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI. Population Census [database], and Geostatistical Framework [shapefile].

Map 12c.
Demographic map of Morelos.
Percentage of population between 25 and 59 years of age by block, 2012



Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI. Population Census [database], and Geostatistical Framework [shapefile].

Map 12d.
Demographic map of Morelos.
Percentage of the population over 60 years of age by block, 2012

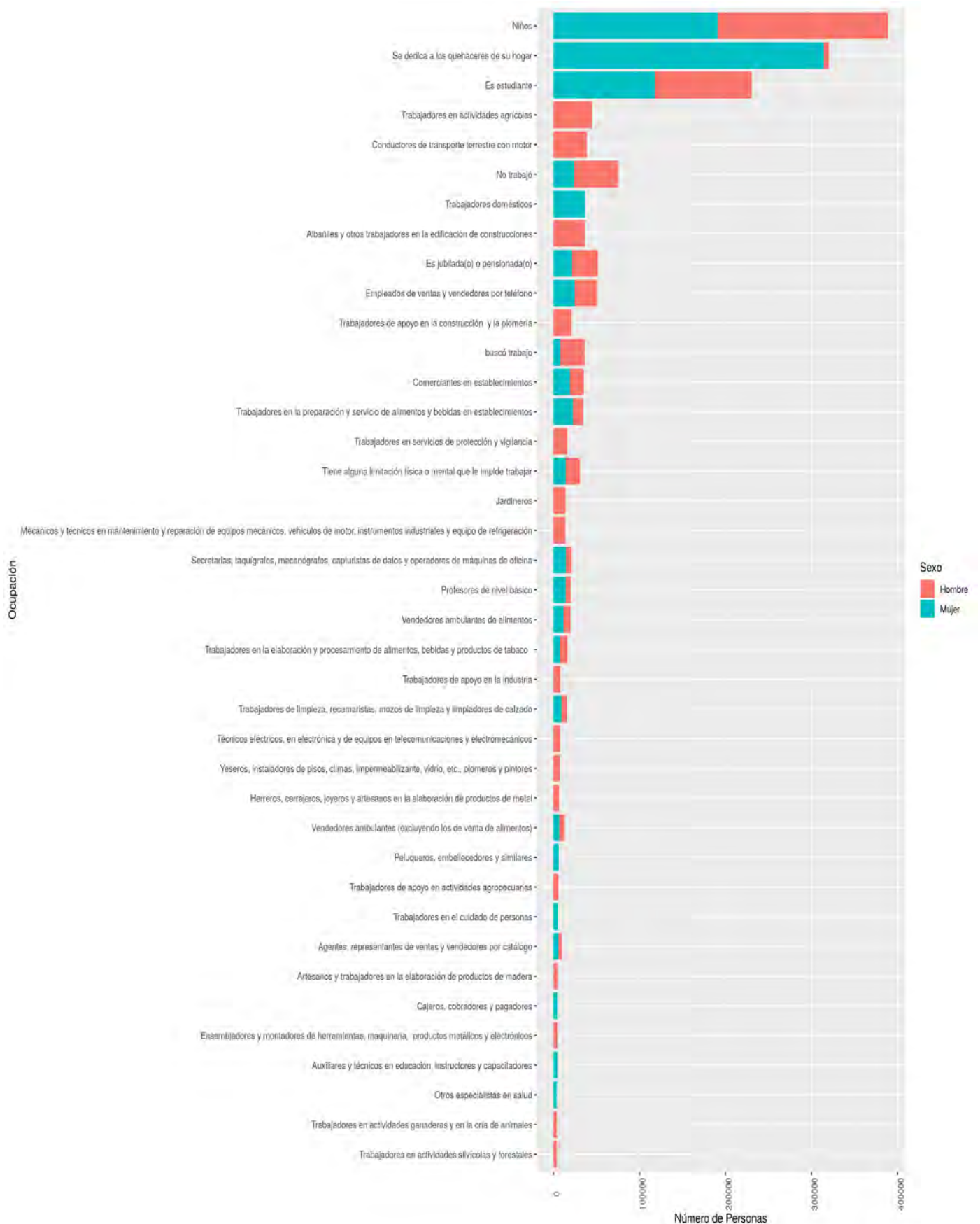


Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI. Population Census [database], and Geostatistical Framework [shapefile].



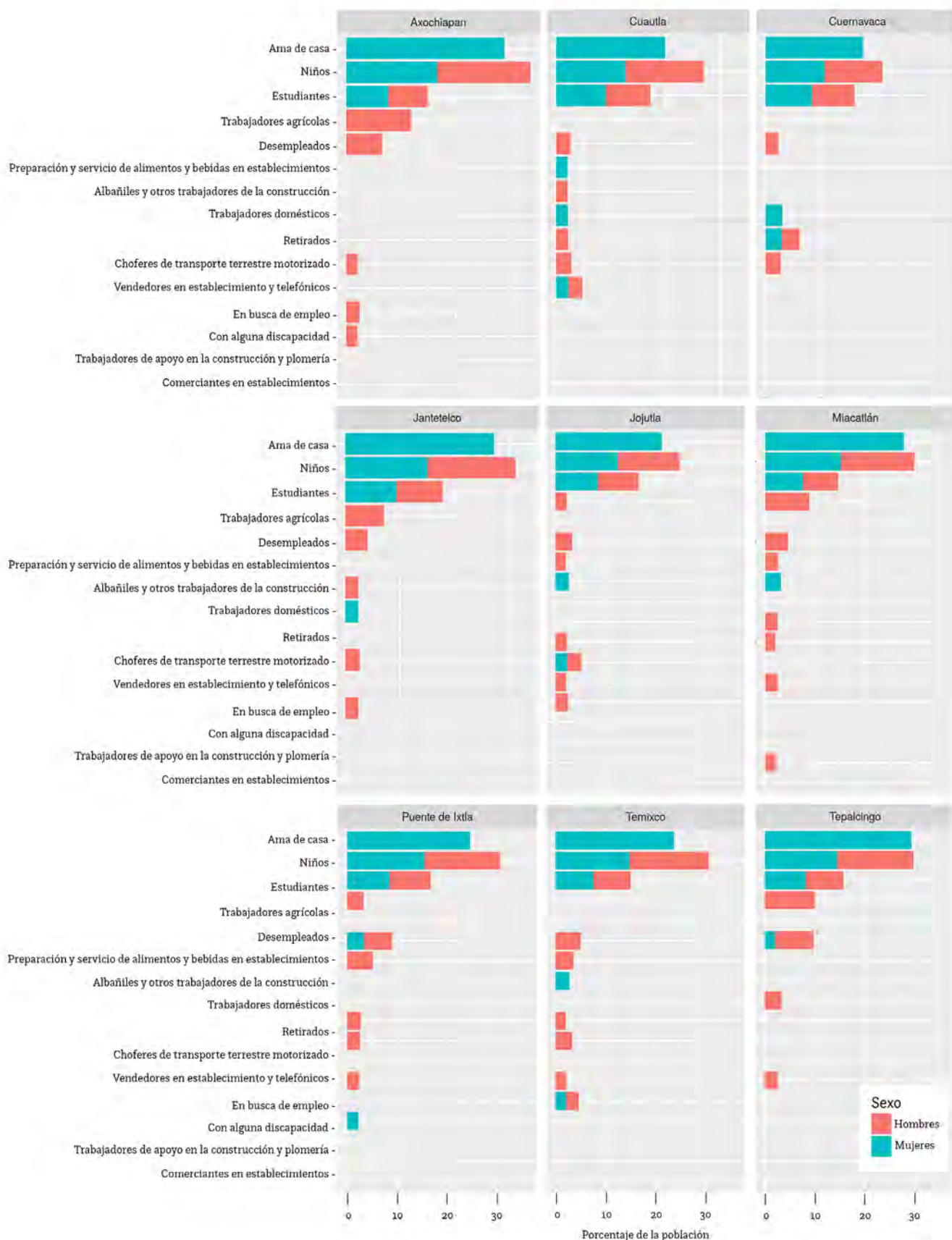
Photo: Adriana Martínez

Figure 6.
Occupation of the population in Morelos, 2015



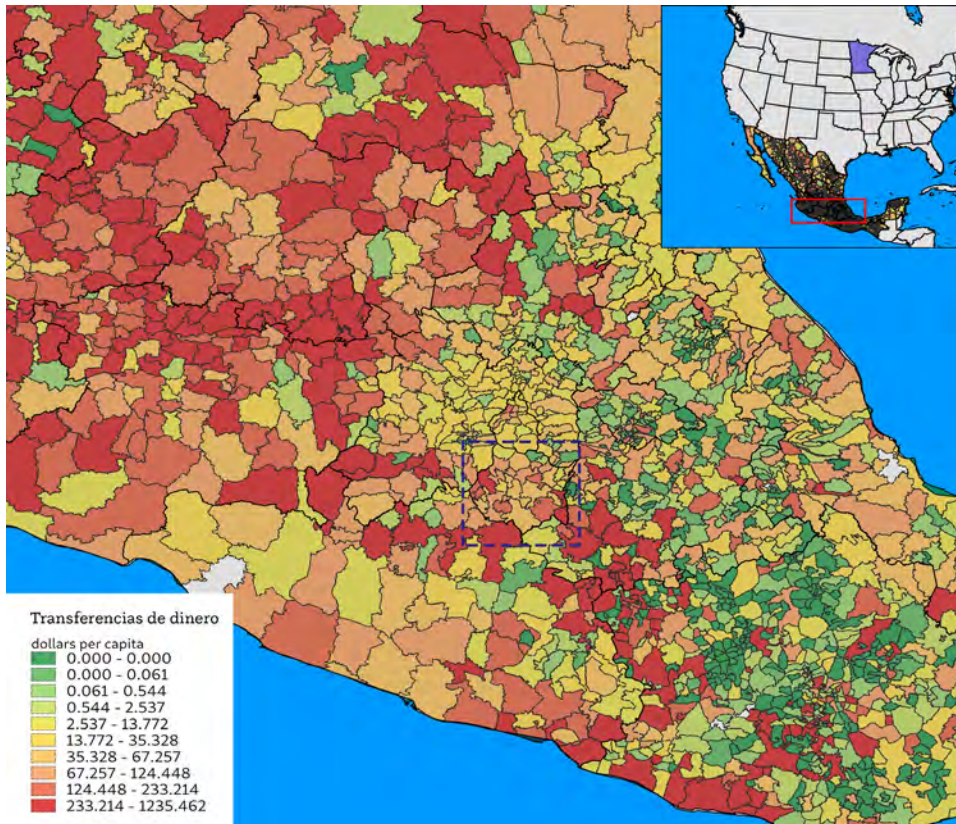
Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI. Intercensal Population Survey, 2015.

Figure 7.
Occupation of the population in selected municipalities of the state of Morelos, 2015



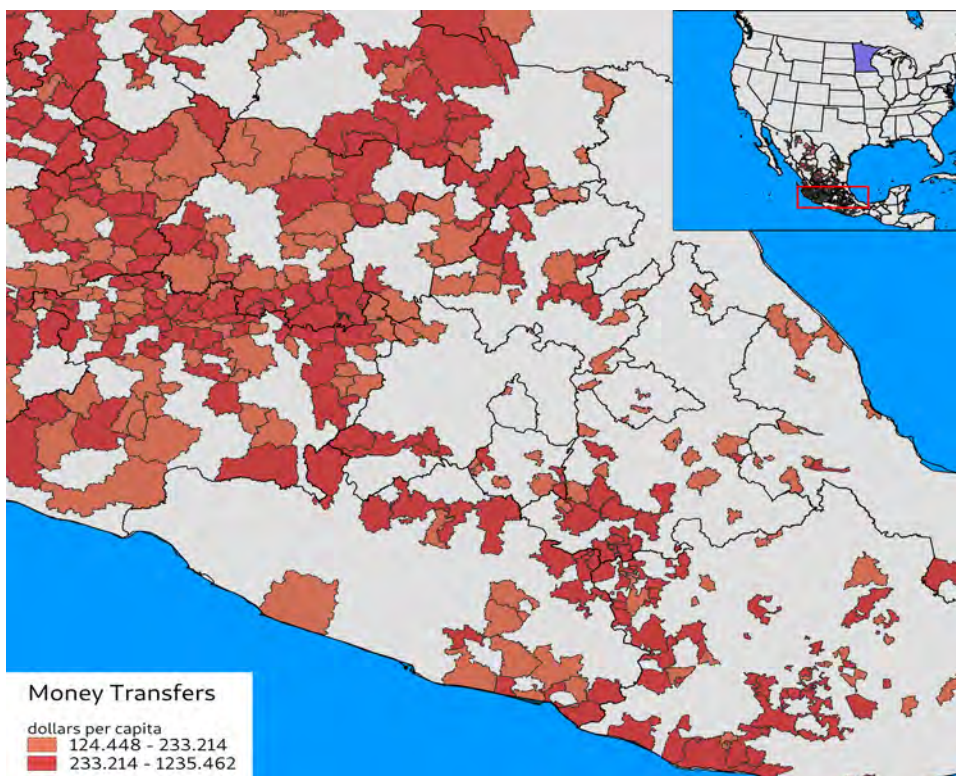
Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI. Intercensal Population Survey, 2015.

Map 13.
Per capita remittances transferred to Mexico by municipality, Q4 2018



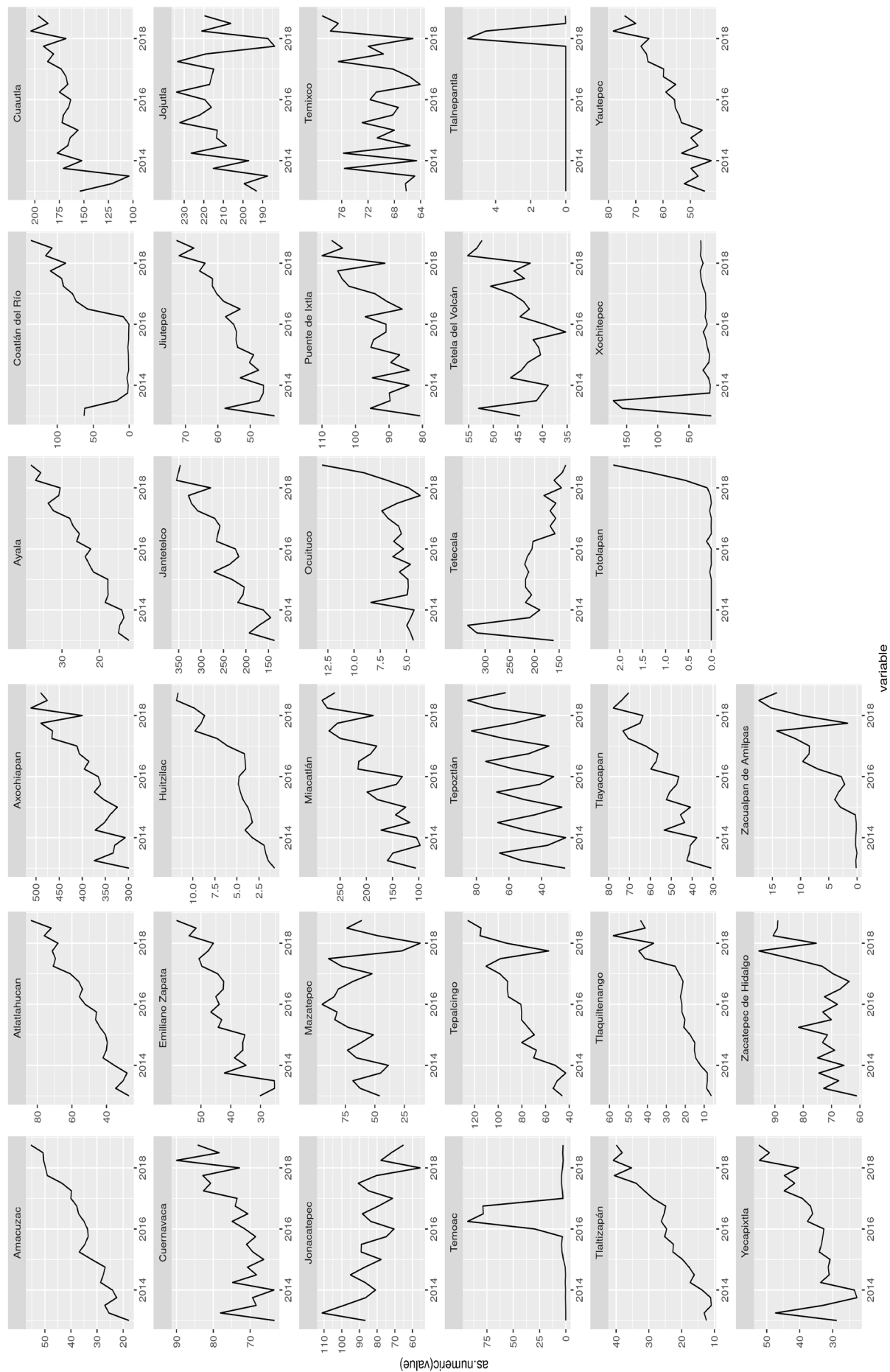
Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI. Geostatistical Framework [shapefile] and Bank of Mexico. Economic Information System [database]. <https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=1&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CE81&locale=es>.

Map 14.
Municipalities in the state of Morelos that received the highest per capita money transfers in the last quarter of 2018



Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI. Geostatistical Framework [shapefile] and Bank of Mexico. Economic Information System [database]. <https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=1&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CE81&locale=es>.

Income through family remittances in the municipalities of Morelos, 2013-2019
(Millions of US Dollars per year)



Source: Made by the authors with data from the Bank of Mexico, 2020.

and security, would they choose to emigrate. Most answered no. Those who answered yes argued that they would do so because of the climate and to get to know other places.

c) Back to Morelos

In Chapter 1 we saw that when economic conditions are favorable, US immigration policy loosens, and vice versa. With the outbreak of the 2008 economic crisis and, above all, with the arrival of Donald Trump to the presidency of the US, the conditions for Mexican migrants in the United States have become much more adverse, forcing many of them to return to Mexico, voluntarily or through deportation. Evidence from interviews we conducted suggests that the situation of return migrants in Morelos is potentially one of the most urgent social crises we will have to face in the immediate future as a government and as a society. In 2018 alone, the Ministry of Social Development of Morelos recorded the return through deportation of 1,200 Morelenses (Mariano, 2018) and we predict that the number will increase in the near future.

A scenario of greater insecurity in the United States poses various questions in the immediate future which are reflected in the migrants' own mixed feelings: on the one hand—as illustrated by Don Gerardo's case, a 60-year-old return migrant from Temixco (Box 5), there are those who manage to find work in Morelos in the jobs they learned in the United States. Between his savings and his newly acquired skills, Don José was able to build his own house and ply his trade in plumbing and construction. In this case, we can say his return to Morelos was satisfactory.

In contrast, for Doña Inés, a 45-year-old return migrant to Miacatlán, being back in Morelos has given her not as much satisfaction as the desire to return to the United States. Although she returned “voluntarily” for family reasons, her economic situation has worsened. Her husband could not find work due to his age, so she became self-employed and the family's main breadwinner. Her income, however, is insufficient to allow her to fulfill her wish to return to the United States as she lacks the means to do so.

Lastly, there are those Morelenses living in Minnesota who wish to return upon retirement to give back something to the community where they were born. However, not only are they a minority, but often this decision becomes difficult as their community is now in the United States, particularly in Minnesota.

Those who do return to Morelos are not always natives of the state, as shown in Figure 16, but come from Mexico City, Veracruz, and Guerrero as well. At the time of their deportation (between 2013 and 2017) their stated intention was to find work in either the service sector, or in agriculture or construction in Morelos, as shown in Figure 17.

One of the main problems we face with return migrants is the discrepancy between the skills acquired in the United States and the actual possibility of implementing them in Mexico in a manner that ensures their livelihood. As seen in Figure 18, for example, all the return migrants in Morelos found to be unemployed at the time of the survey (code number 10 in the third column of the graph) had worked while in the United States in both their first and last jobs (first and second columns) in some kind of manufacturing activity (code 529 in the graph). Another pertinent example involves agriculture: it can be seen, again in Figure 17, that the majority of return



Illustration by Rini Templeton

“I am originally from Guadalajara, but I am here [Axochiapan] because in order to regularize my papers in the United States I had to return to Mexico. I chose to come here because in the Twin Cities everyone is from Axochiapan. In fact, when they organized soccer games, some teams were totally made up of Axochiapan players, while others included migrants from different places. Why would I go back to Guadalajara, when all the people I know are here?”

Juan, a 40-year-old migrant from Guadalajara, returned to Mexico, but lives in Axochiapan

migrants found work within the agricultural and livestock production sector (code 410), and that, while almost half had jobs similar to those in the United States, a significant number had worked in other areas such as construction (code 526), manufacturing (code 529), and different kinds of services like food and beverages (codes 810 and 540), as well as being employed as doormen, dishwashers, and other low skilled jobs (code 812).

The situation of return migrants compels us as a society, as communities, and as organizations, to collectively seek a just solution to reintegrate them with dignity into the community fabric to which they belong, and from which they have been absent for a short or long period of time. If the decision to emigrate is not an easy one, as we stated at the outset, the decision to return can be even more difficult and painful. The challenge is to generate attitudes of tolerance and apply pressure to authorities ease this process.

Box 5.

“ I had a lot of reasons to leave, but I went to the United States in 1992 to find some stability. When someone doesn't have an education, the only option is to go to the United States to make a little money and then try to achieve something here in Mexico. When I left, I wound up in Pennsylvania where I have relatives who welcomed me. I stayed for about a year and a half. I worked several jobs in the United States—in a factory that made electrical metal boxes, looking after machinery, and in construction.

Since I had worked in construction from an early age, before I was 15, and had my own business by 19, that helped me because there I learned several trades within construction, like laying floors, painting and plumbing. That's why when I got back to Mexico, I was more relaxed since some of the money I sent from the U.S. was used to build my house, and thanks to everything I learned there I could build my own house without having to pay anyone.

So aside from the money I had saved for that, I started getting jobs in the trades that I had learned, and I would get paid. When I left, my children were little. The oldest was around 7 and the youngest 3, and they stayed with their mother. Later on, my wife met me in the United States and, though she was only there six months, our children stayed with their grandparents because they were still small. I do think they suffered because when you leave your children, they feel you have abandoned them, or you just left them. But it was not because we wanted to. I left because everything I did was with them in mind. Now they are studying and that is thanks to my leaving so they could get ahead.

I wouldn't return to the United States because, thank God, I am more stable now. The first thing I did when I got back to Mexico was building my house and starting my grocery store business. Like I said, thank God that I'm stable and that the store is doing very well. That's why I don't have to go back. Anyway, life is not as easy there as you think. It is hard because it can be like the song says: it is like being in a golden cage. There, people are used to earning a lot more than here.

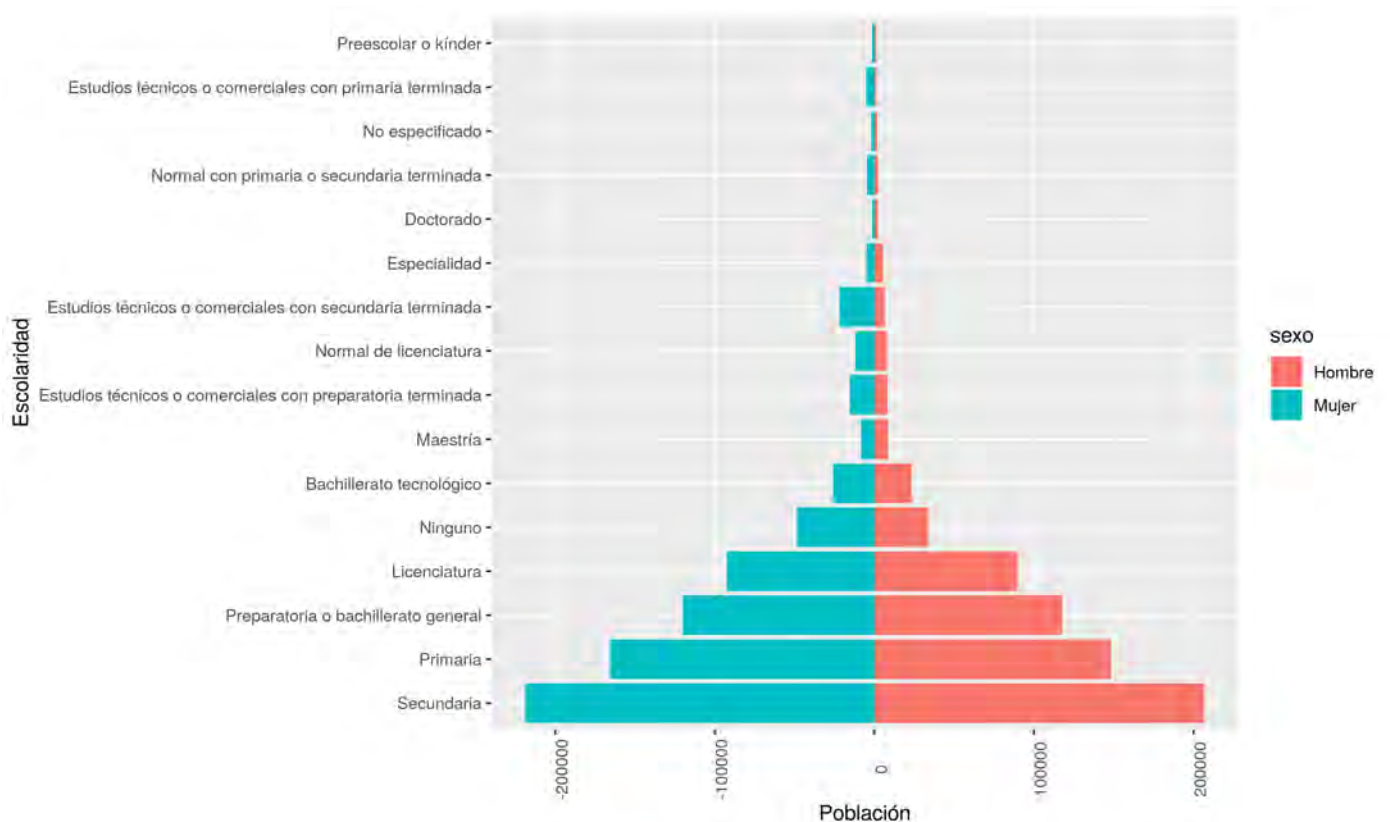
In my case I was paid 15 dollars an hour and I worked 8 hours a day. I realized that both young and older people have more work opportunities there. Those who do not have opportunities are given a hand by the government. So, when you go back to Mexico and start earning minimum wage, well it is not enough for anything. Sometimes I think, what if the same work opportunities existed for everyone in Mexico, why would we have to go to the United States?

Don Gerardo, 69 years old. Originally from Guerrero but currently residing in Temixco, Morelos



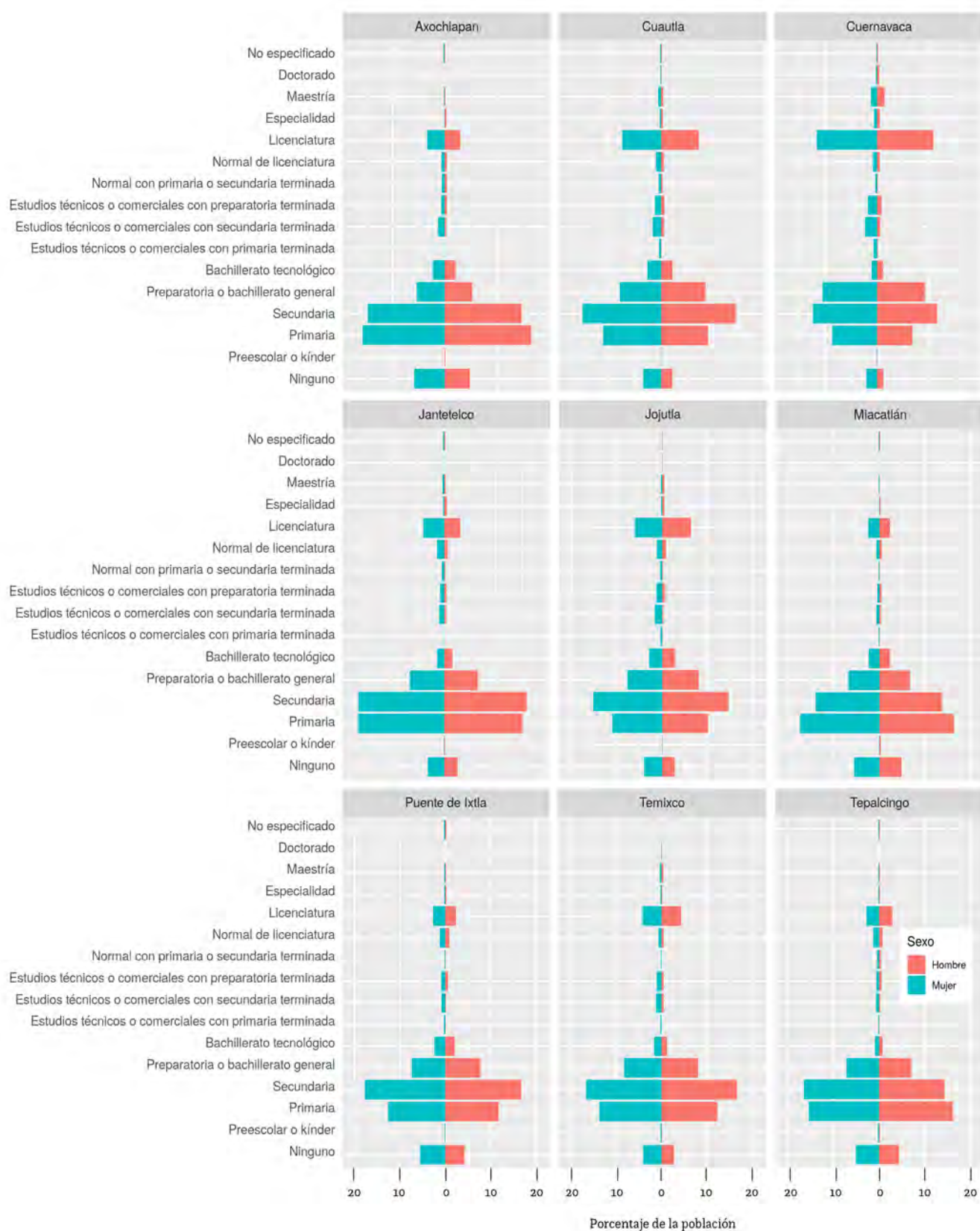
Photo: School of Water, Cuautla, Morelos.

Figure 9.
Education levels of the population in Morelos by sex, 2015



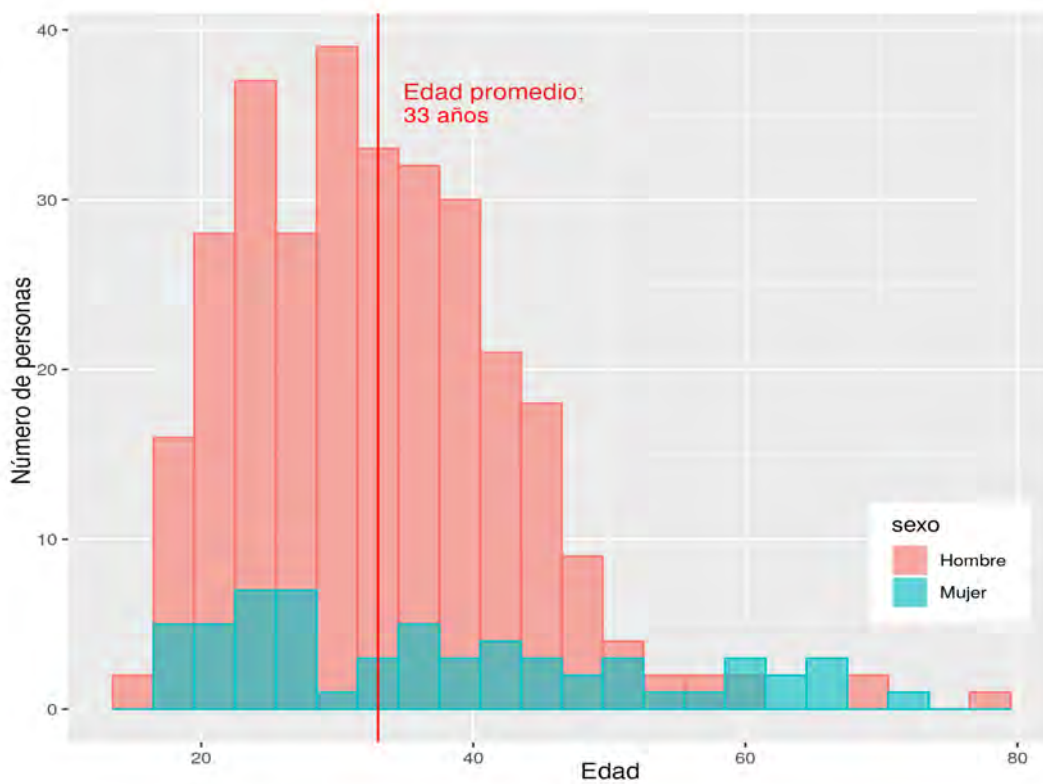
Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI. Intercensal Population Survey, 2015.

Figure 10.
Education levels of the population in Morelos by sex and municipality, 2015



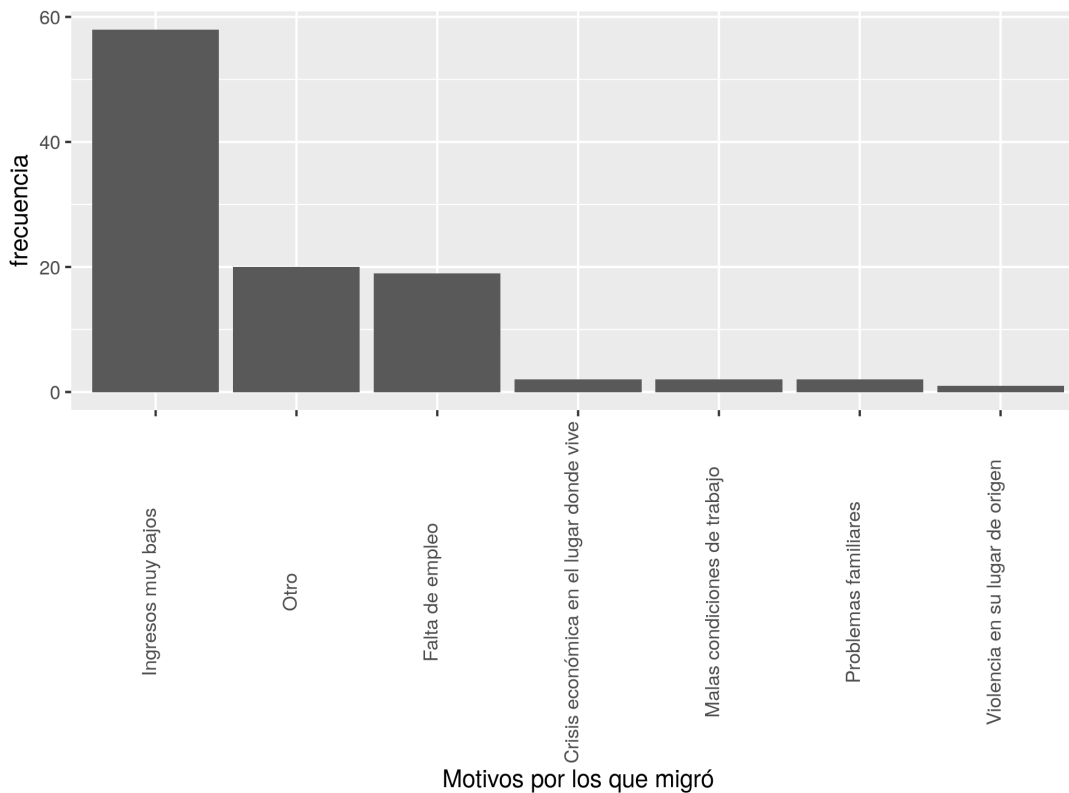
Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI. Intercensal Population Survey, 2015.

Figure 11.
Age of the population from the state of Morelos in the border region
with the intention of crossing to the United States, by sex, 2013-2017



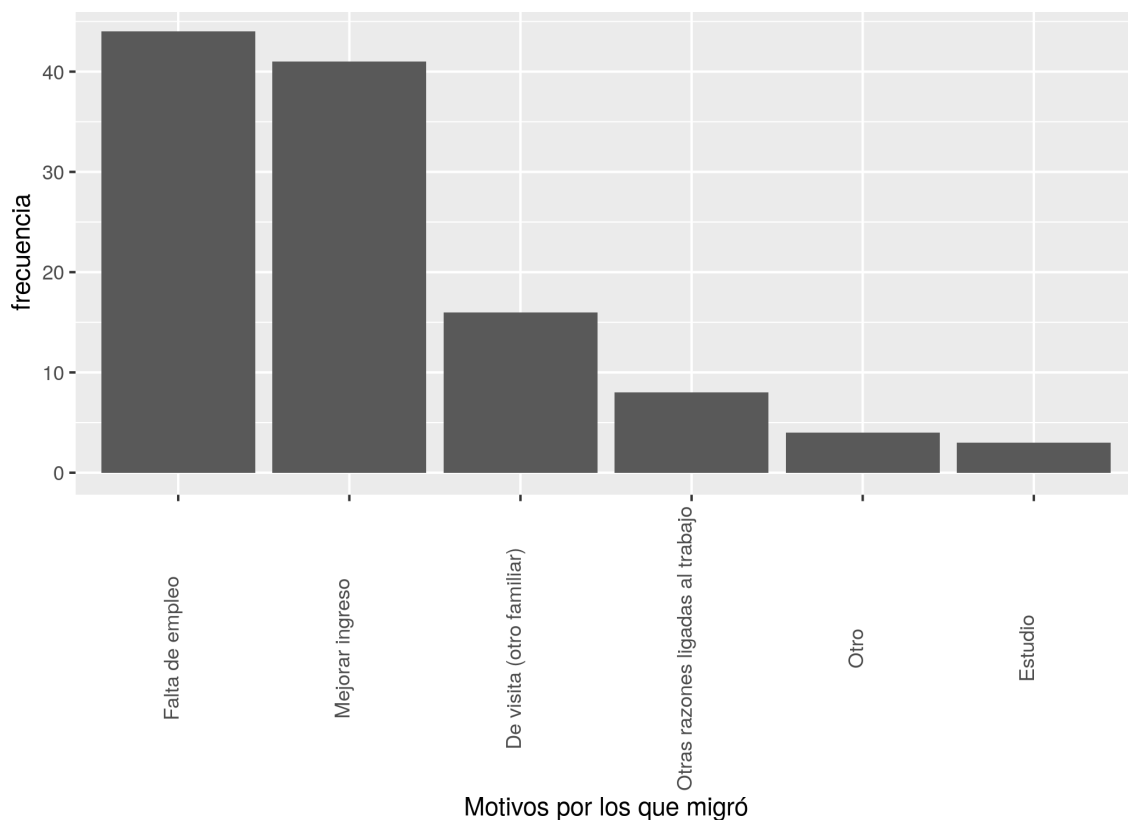
Source: Made by the authors with data from the polls made by the Colegio de la Frontera Norte at the México-U.S. border.

Figure 12.
Motivations to emigrate of the people from Morelos surveyed
at the border, with the intention of crossing to the United States, 2013-2014



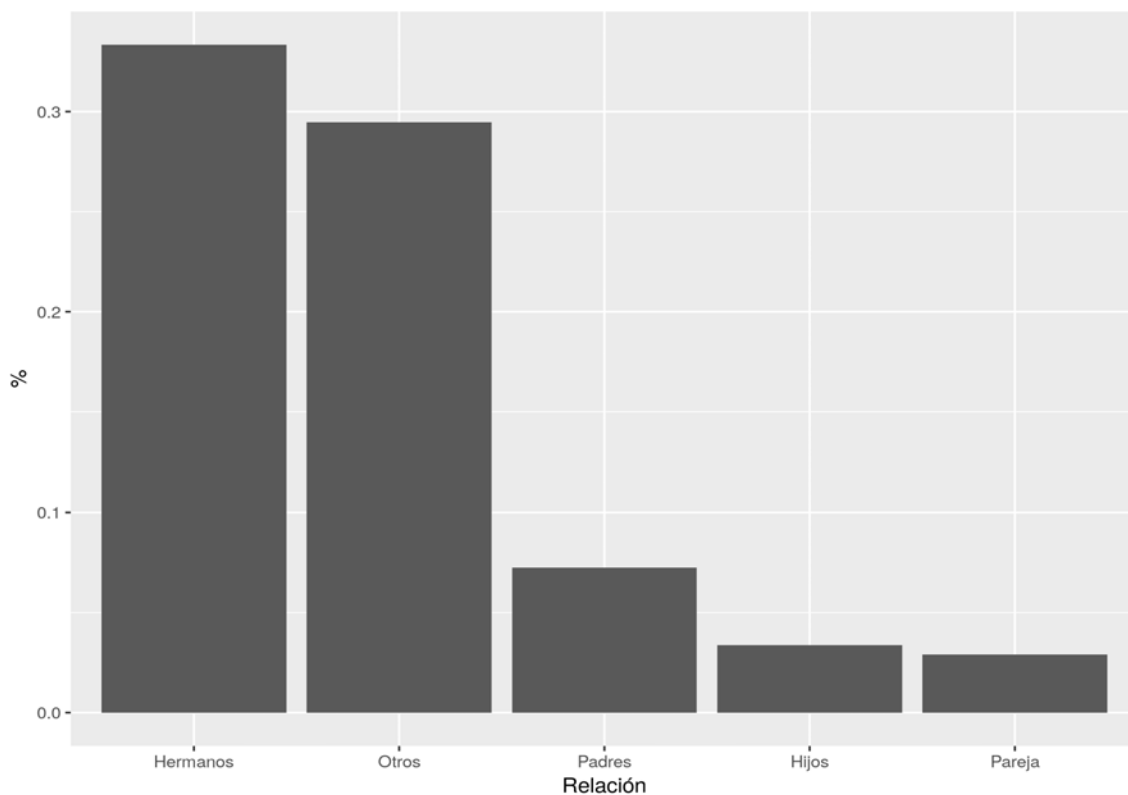
Source: Made by the authors with data from the polls made by the Colegio de la Frontera Norte at the México-U.S. border.

Figure 13.
Motivations to emigrate of the people from Morelos
at the border, with the intention of crossing to the United States, 2015-2017



Source: Made by the authors with data from the polls made by the Colegio de la Frontera Norte at the México-U.S. border.

Figure 14.
Relatives with whom the people emigrating from Morelos intended to reunite in the United States,
as surveyed at the border with the intention of crossing to the United States, 2013-2017



Source: Made by the authors with data from the polls made by the Colegio de la Frontera Norte at the México-U.S. border.

Figure 15a.
Year of the first arrival and state of destination in the United States of immigrants from Morelos
(with a curve depicting the immigration of people from Morelos to Minnesota)

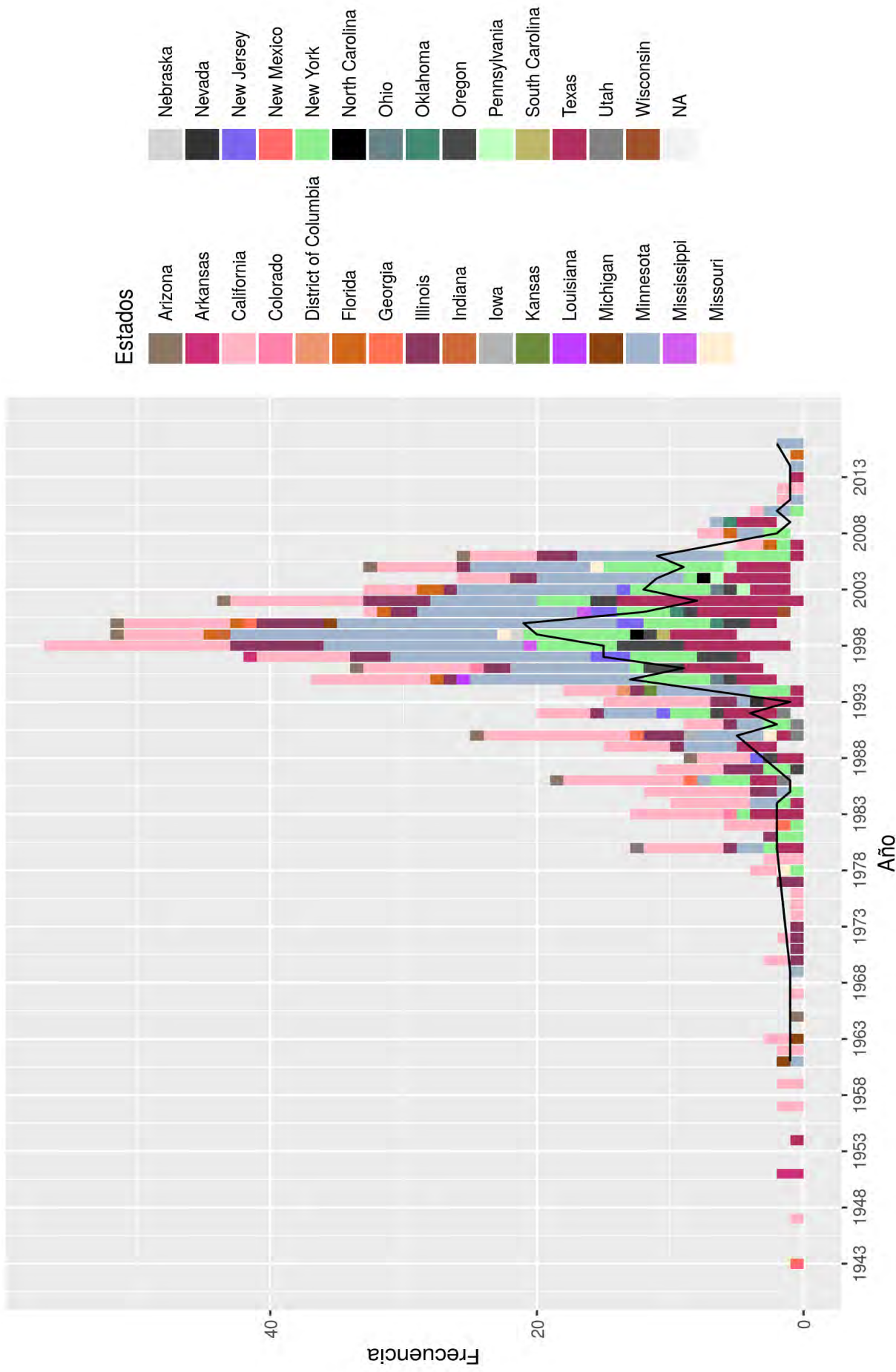
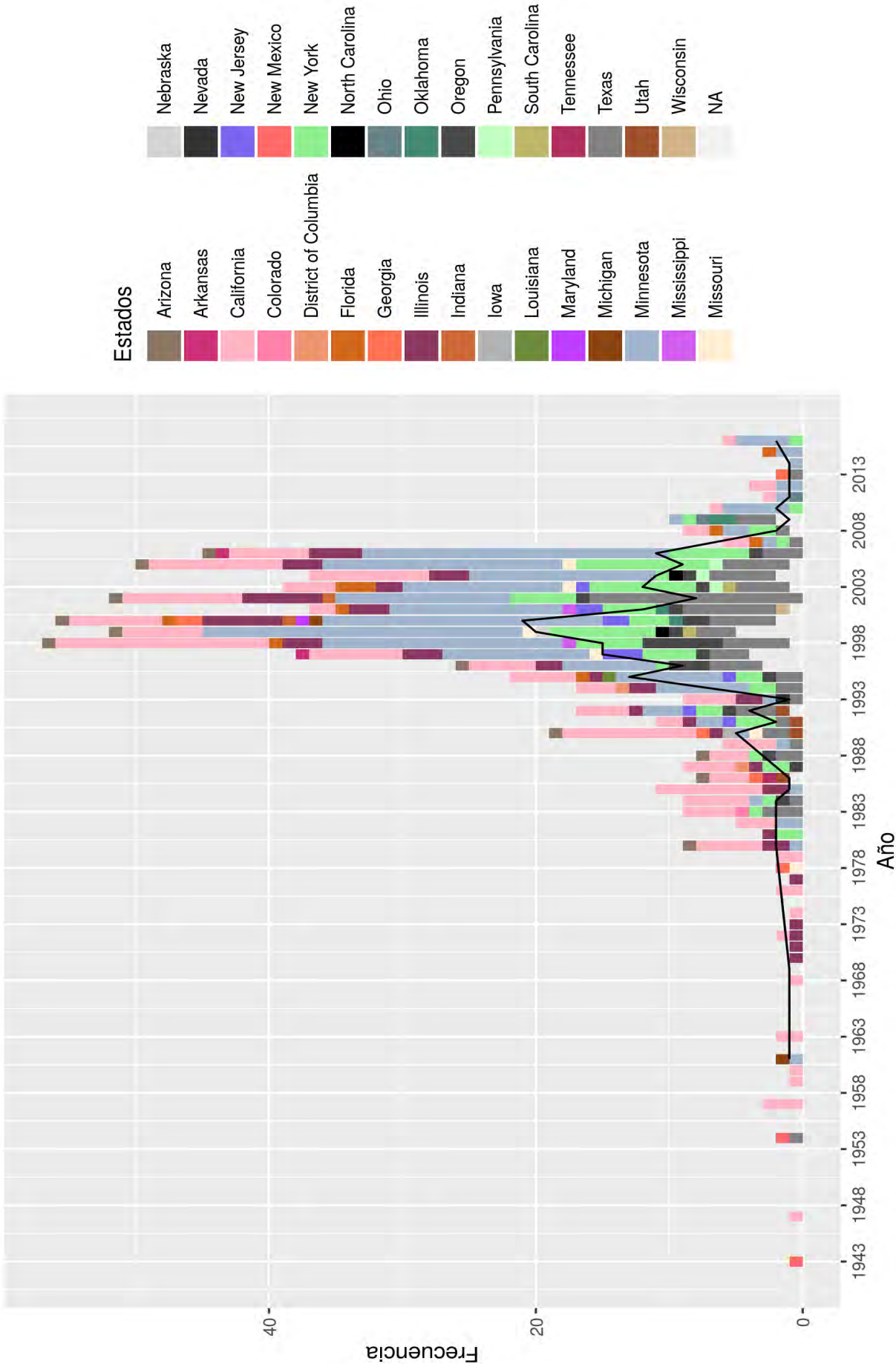


Figure 15b.
Year of the last arrival and state of destination in the United States of immigrants from Morelos
(with a curve depicting the immigration of people from Morelos to Minnesota)



Source: Made by the authors with data from the polls made by the Mexican Migration Project with returned migrants at the state of Morelos.

4. CONCLUSION: THE MORELOS-MINNESOTA NETWORK, BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

While we have provided a general overview of migration from Morelos, we do not overlook the fact that the true transnational community is, potentially, the one being built between Axochiapan and the Twin Cities.

One of the clearest manifestations of this interrelation is the transformation of the urban space. The Central Market on Lake Street, Minneapolis, is chiefly a contribution of the Mexican (and Morelense) community to the Twin Cities. It is no coincidence that a large portion of migrants from Axochiapan lived (and still live) in that area, before Lake Street became what it is today. While there are still many challenges facing Mexicans' access to the public space in Minnesota, as Dr. Fernando Burga commented during an interview, we cannot deny that the Morelense culture and its artistic expressions already occupy a place in Minnesota. One example is the Axochiapan feast day or celebration in honor of San Pablo (Saint Paul) their patron saint, now held in Saint Paul.

The story in Morelos is not very different. According to Ana Melisa Pardo (2017), there have been many notable changes in Axochiapan, especially in communications infrastructure. Axochiapan is now more linked to the major urban centers of Morelos thanks to contributions made by migrants. It is remarkable that Axochiapan is one of the municipalities that receives the most remittances in the entire state of Morelos, especially because neither its size nor its population come close to that of cities like Cuautla and Cuernavaca. The remittances Axochiapan receives annually provide a glimpse of how its migrant population in Minnesota not only maintains a strong connection with its community of origin, but of how highly productive it is, even in times of increasing economic hardship for Mexican migrants in the United States, and despite the fact that Minnesota is second among states in the continental US with the largest wage gap between whites and Latin Americans, only after North Carolina.

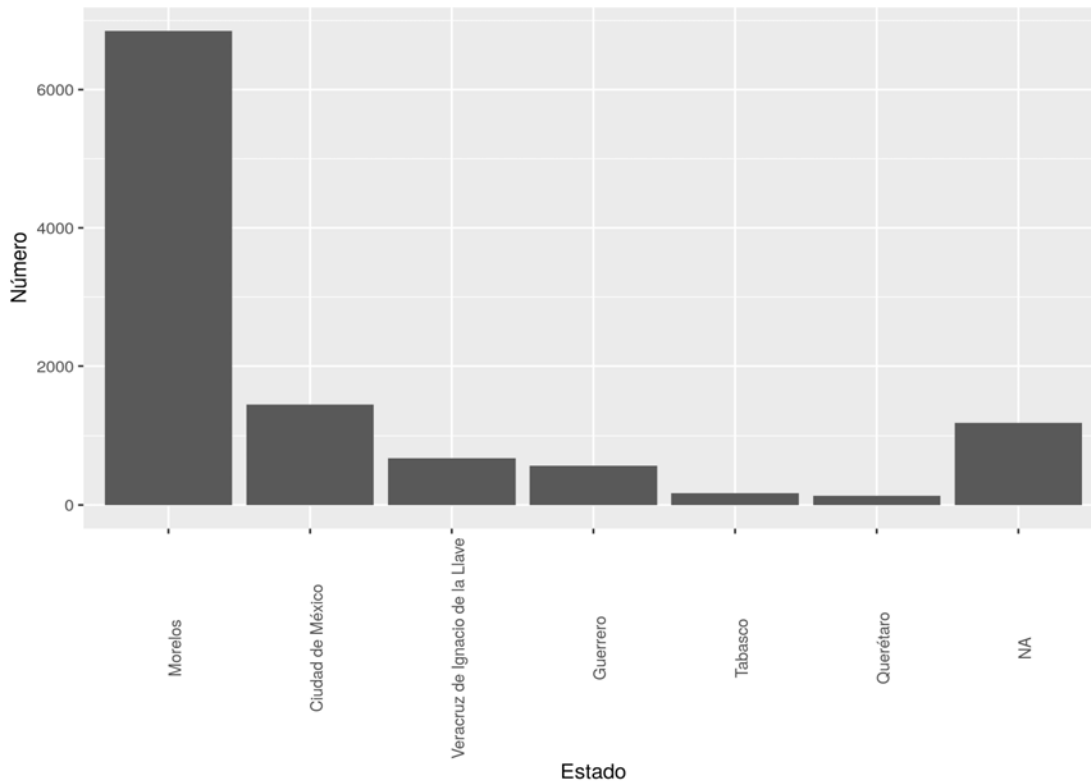
Although it takes us Morelenses by surprise, our relationship with Minnesota has deeper roots than we imagine and exploring them is our shared duty.



Food court at the Mercado Central on Lake Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
Photo: Adriana Martínez

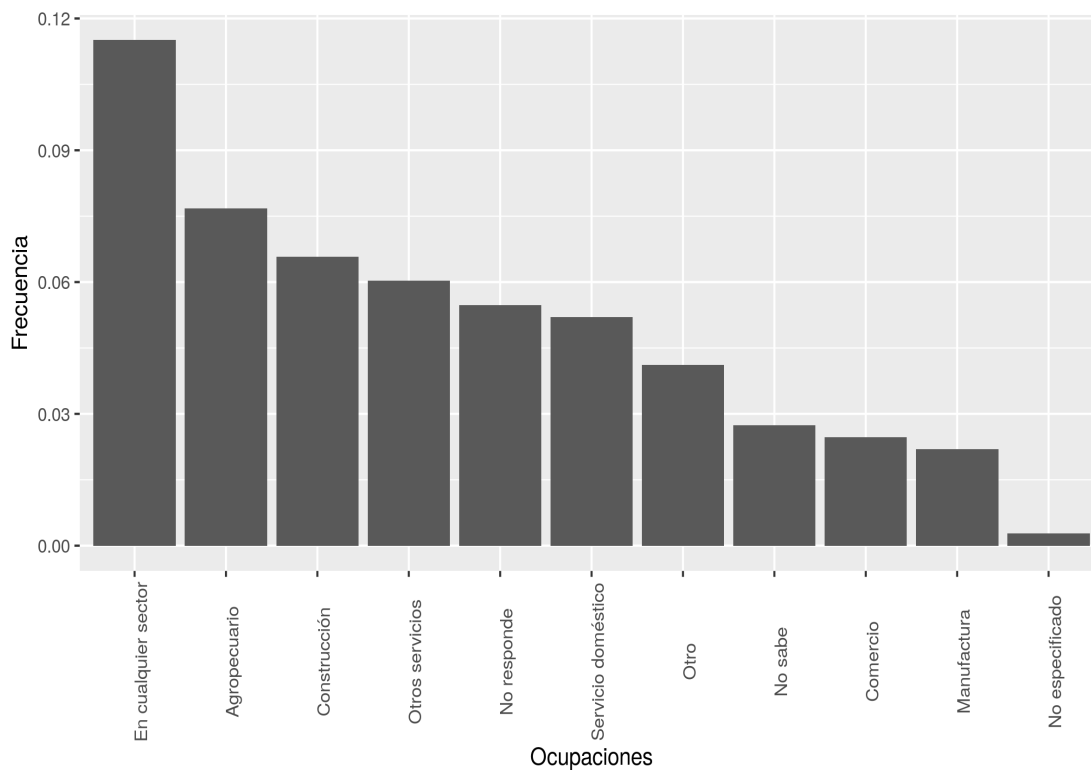


Figure 16.
Origin of the returned migrants from the United States
residing in Morelos by state of birth, 2014



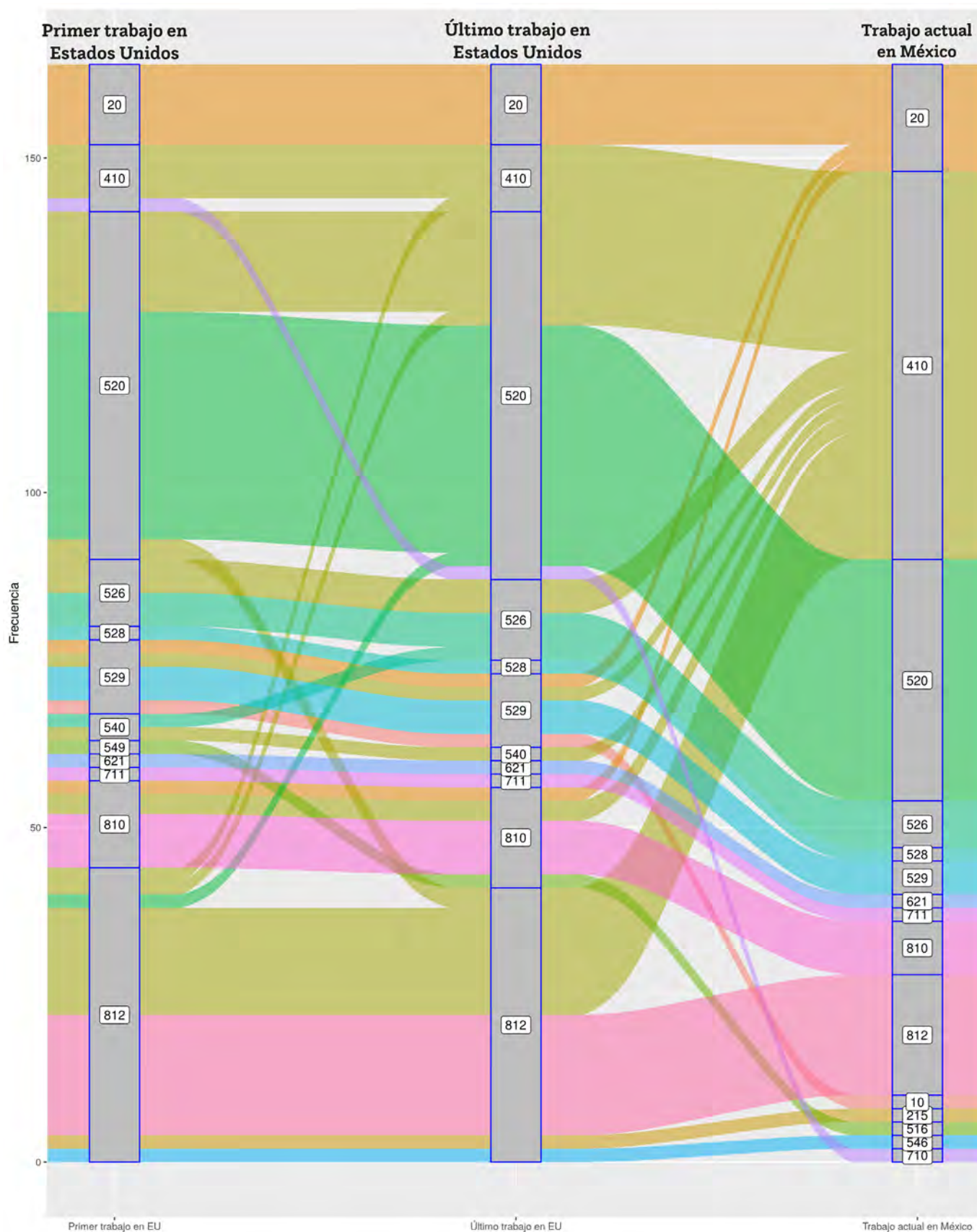
Source: Made by the authors with data from INEGI's National Demographic Dynamics Survey (ENADID).

Figure 17.
Intended occupation in Mexico of the deported Mexican migrants, 2013-2017



Source: Made by the authors with data from the polls made by the Colegio de la Frontera Norte at the México-U.S. border.

Figure 18.
Occupation of the population from Morelos in the United States and Mexico:
first and last occupation in the Estados Unidos and occupation in Morelos after returning



Source: Made by the authors with data from Life 170, Mexican Migration Project.

Figure 18 (continued).
Description of occupations

010: Unoccupied (looking for a job)
020: Housewife
215: Owner of small and medium-sized services establishments
410: Agricultural workers
516: Chief, supervisor, contractor or similar in the construction industry, installation, maintenance and finishing
520: Worker in the manufacturing of food, beverages and tobacco products
526: Worker in the construction industry, installation and finishing
528: Worker in the manufacturing and repair of rubber, plastics and chemical products
529: Worker in other manufacturing industries
540: Helper, apprentice or similar in the manufacturing of food, beverages and tobacco products
546: Helper, apprentice or similar in the construction industry
549: Worker in non-professional industrial occupations
621: Cashier, collector, box office worker or similar
710: Owner of retail store
711: Worker at retail store
810: Waiter, bartender, stewards, or similar
812: Doorman, janitor, elevator operator, bellboy, cleaning worker, gardener or loader



Street protest art at the Pilsen neighborhood Chicago, Illinois. Photo: Adriana Martínez



*Yo luche por la
tierra y el agua.
¿y tu que has
hecho por la
tierra?*



Photo: Emanuel Deonicio Palma

We reached this point having briefly outlined the key moments in the migratory history between Mexico and the United States. From there we can stipulate that what was woven throughout the Long 19th Century and the Short 20th Century—as British historian Eric Hobsbawm called them—was a pattern of economic, political and social interconnectedness and interdependence where a constant feature was the migration of Mexicans to the United States serving as a reserve workforce for the growing and powerful US industry. We are thus able to identify, based on the economic and industrial development hubs of the United States and on Mexico’s structural and economic organization, the pull factors, on the one hand, and the push factors on the other. It was then possible for us to begin to identify the presence of certain migratory corridors between both countries.

In Chapter 2 we were able to show the importance of the American Midwest region, and particularly of Minnesota, beyond its mere location within Chicago’s area of economic influence, and to cite some of the factors attracting migrants to the state. We continue to reiterate that, while Minnesota does not draw massive numbers of Latin American immigrants, its relation-

ship with the Morelense community, and with Axochiapan in particular, is highly significant for Minnesota as well as for Axochiapan and Morelos.

Lastly, in the third and last chapter we described the general historical, economic and social contexts in Morelos, as well as the situation of violence in the state, that determine some of the causes of expulsion of its population. We learned that the people of Morelos have a long peasant and migratory tradition with which they live and coexist and which they recognize as their ancestry and as a possibility for the future. We concluded that to speak of migration in Morelos is to look into a mirror and recognize yourself looking back at you. Based on this context analysis, we were also able to begin to identify the geographic, cultural and economic similarities between Minnesota and Morelos, which allows us to initiate a dialogue in this, our transnational community.

However, there are still questions to be answered and cracks to be explored. We began by taking a broad, panoramic look, and we eventually delved into more detailed analyses in subsequent chapters. As it is not possible to understand an isolated piece of the puzzle without looking at the whole picture, it is



Illustration by Rini Templeton

now time, in this brief space, to focus on the particular: the community of Axochiapan in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

We must first discuss the more general data and the difficulty in getting accurate information. According to Ana Melisa Pardo Montaña (2012), by 2002 there were 95,636 Mexicans residing in Minnesota. In contrast, Cecilia Bobes (2012) claimed that the number was already 128,607 by 2005 and 180,186 by 2010. Lastly, according to the Federación de Clubes Morelenses [Federation of Morelense Clubs], by 2019 there were 250,000 Morelenses living in the United States, of which 150,000 were in Minnesota (Ruiz, 2019), which would be equivalent to 7.8% of the total population of the state of Morelos today. If we also bear in mind that a considerable number of these Morelenses come from Axochiapan, it is not surprising that, according to data from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), 65% of those Morelenses were students from Axochiapan (Hernández, 2018); and that, as stated by the municipal authorities of this Mexican locality, the equivalent of a third of the 30,000 Axochiapan residents were living in Minnesota in 2005. In fact, Minnesota is such a newly explosive migration destination that while the 1990 census counted just 3,500 Mexicans in the state, this figure had multiplied by almost 12 in the 2000 census to 41,600. By 2005, according to a report in the *New York Times* in the same year, the number of Mexicans already exceeded 200,000, that is, a 5,614% increase in 15 years (Porter and Malkin, 2005).

The above brings us face to face with a serious discrepancy. If we accept the figure of 150,000 Morelenses in Minnesota as valid, and the MDE's estimate that 65% of them are students from Axochiapan, we would then be talking about some 100,000 people with origins in this small municipality. However, considering the population size and the municipal government's figure which cites a third of their population as living in Minnesota, we would then only be talking about 10,000 people from Axochiapan living in that US state. This is barely a tenth of the 100,000 that we considered in the first place! As the reader can see, the difference between the two estimates is very large and pits us against the same problem anyone wishing to research migration would face and that we mentioned at the start: that while there is more information at our disposal, obtaining accurate estimates continues to be very difficult, compelling us to look for new methodologies to calculate the impact of migration in both destination and expulsion communities.

Another significant fact should be added to this:

the Pew Research Center (2016) estimated in 2014 that there were 96,000 Latinos with the right to vote in the 2016 elections, of which 70.1%, or 67,296 individuals, were Mexican. This means that naturalized Mexicans or individuals of Mexican descent represent only 1.68% of Minnesota's electorate. This is important because the inadequate political representation of this sector of the Mexican population in the Minnesota State Congress as well as in the United States Federal Congress prevents, among other things, the development and implementation of more effective mechanisms for estimating the state's total number of documented and undocumented Mexicans without putting their security or the exercise of their civil rights at risk. However, greater political representation of the Latino population in general and of the Mexican population in particular is also needed. It would allow for the development of specific strategies and support programs for strengthening the Mexican and Latino communities in Minnesota, and allow us to assess the true degree of their economic, social and cultural contribution to Minnesota and US societies—as a means to combat racist discourses and hate speech against that the population. The “Visiting Teachers Program,” aimed at fulfilling the educational needs of boys and girls of Mexican origin in the United States, serves as an example. This Morelos-Minnesota initiative was successfully carried out for several years as a bilateral agreement between the MDE and Mexico's Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), a program which could be expanded and deepened.

Secondly, we cannot deny the great impact that the Axochiapan community has had on St. Paul. It is not only because the patron saint of Axochiapan happens to have the same name as the state capital where this population chose to settle, but because their contribution to the Twin Cities' local economy and to their own community of origin have transformed both areas, along with the lives of their inhabitants. This can be appreciated, for instance, in how Lake Street in Minneapolis has been refashioned, or during the celebrations of the feast of Saint Paul the Apostle in Saint Paul—celebrated on the same day as in Axochiapan, with the same traditional festivals and chinelos street dancers, which is now a tradition in this Minnesotan city as well. It can also be seen in the growth of infrastructure within the small municipality of Axochiapan, made possible by the economic contributions of its migrants in the United States and to its newfound closeness with Minnesota.

However, there is still much to explore and ma-

ny challenges to face, which remain as tasks for this report to pursue.

Although the population from Morelos is proportionally larger than the rest of the Latin American community in Minnesota, the state has a highly diverse immigrant community. There is much to speak with them and many similarities to find. How have they coexisted so far? Could we venture to build from Minnesota a transnational community that is not only binational but also global?

The native indigenous population of Minnesota is currently smaller than that of Latin America. Why? How do both communities coexist? Is there room for coincidences?

Both countries have plans and programs to serve the immigrant population in the United States and the returned population in Mexico, such as the previously mentioned “Visiting Teachers Program” in the US. On the other hand, programs like Atención a Migrantes (Care for Migrants”), Atención a Jornaleros Agrícolas (Care for Agricultural Workers,” and “3x1 for Migrants” are some Mexican government initiatives that seek to address and reduce the vulnerability of returned migrants. However, these programs prove inadequate because they lack effective mechanisms for their dissemination; access to them depends on luck and coincidence, not to mention that these programs and efforts in Mexico and the United States could be expanded.

The problem is that for returned migrants in Morelos, there is a lack of desperately needed support, as seen throughout the various interviews and figures included in this report. As a community and as a government, how can we help this population resume their life in Mexico? How can we take advantage of the newly acquired professional or job skills learned as migrants? How can we ensure they return to a Morelos that offers them the opportunity to undertake the economic activity of their choice, well paid, and carried out with dignity? How can we collectively build public policies at the local and national level to protect immigrants in the US or return migrants in Morelos?

It remains to be pointed out that in Mexico’s case there exists a vicious circle: many of its communities, particularly in Morelos, depend on remittances. This dependency generates a circular chain of events whereby the infusion of money into the local economy becomes an incentive for sending more migrants to the United States. In other words, the more remittances a community receives, the more it comes to

rely on them, resulting in an increased dependency on more migrants. This does not take into account that families in the communities must be separated, or the danger that migrants face during their journey and at their destination. Rather than building strong, self-sustaining communities that prosper and whose members thrive, this vicious circle only turns out more migrants.

Talking about community and that which pertains to the community has never been easy. This has not prevented many of us from being more persistent in trying to understand it, build it and re-build it. Migration worldwide is more than an excuse to talk about community; it is above all a basic driving force because it implies looking at ourselves to recognize the other person: the one who arrives, the one who leaves, the one who comes back, and the one who is only passing through.

The times in which we are living and where people have to migrate, are times of much confusion and adversity for migrants: the hate speech, the conditions during the trip, where life is at risk with every step, the intolerance of some who are tormented by deep fears of “others”, racism whipping our societies, both in Mexico as in the United States. All of these contexts of disorder, confusion and dehumanization that seem to have always been there as if they were parts of us, are just ghosts that, as strong communities, we can and must face in order to transcend. That is why we say that thinking about community is no easy task, but it becomes simpler if we think about it collectively and from within a strong community.

This is why placing the migratory corridor forged between Axochiapan and the Twin Cities at the center of our commonalities helps us look at one another and enter into a dialogue about our needs, our communities, our similarities and what we want as a transnational community. The way the Axochiapan community has refashioned Minneapolis-St. Paul with its festivals and traditions is only one side of the coin. People from the Twin Cities have sought ways to become involved with communities across Morelos—like Minnesota’s university student exchange programs for young Americans, that arrange stays in Axochiapan or Ixtlilco el Grande (a small town in Tepalcingo). These efforts reflect the mutual will to build bridges and support networks. There are still many stories to tell about this very special and as yet unexplored relationship, such as the close ties that were formed between the people of Ixtlilco el Grande, in Tepalcingo (neighboring municipality of Axochiapan), and the United States after then-President Jim-



Illustration by Rini Templeton

my Carter's visit, which the town remembers with great affection to this day.

Throughout this Report, whose objectives we hope have been achieved, we have endeavored to explain how the Morelos-Minnesota transnational community has been built over the course of its history and amidst its own circumstances. While there remains much to discover about each other, we have learned that we have many things in common, starting with our migrants: they are as much from here as they are from there.

Building a stronger community in Minnesota also requires building a stronger community in Morelos. It is of vital importance in both processes to vindicate the individual, collective and human rights of each and all: from the right to migrate, the right to live in the place of one's choosing, the right to not migrate, and the right to collectively build the kind of community that people desire for themselves, their neighbors and for future generations. Neither Minnesota nor Morelos are new to community organizing and this is an important legacy for the new challenges that lie ahead, for transnational communities as well. In both places, the most important shared

lesson learned is that any solution to the problems that collectively afflict us can only be overcome to the extent that there is community involvement.

It is not about making sure the community is an idyllic space where everything is always solved in the best possible way, nor is community participation, in itself, a guarantee of success. That would lead to serious errors, preventing the social transformation that, depending on history and circumstances, is necessary for the construction of a more just society. However, we can find in many cases examples of how the community has been a potentially transformative social force, in a way that is both beneficial and inclusive. If we look closely at some instances in Minnesota or Morelos communities, it is possible to identify their significance.

The city of Minneapolis has shown us that, when faced with the internal contradictions of its social life, it becomes more feasible to confront great challenges as a community. As the ex-mayor of Minneapolis R.T. Rybak stated (2016), to tackle a problem like crime (as can be found anywhere in the world), it is not enough to approach it only from the government level because "there is practically nothing that makes a place

safer than one where all men and women work as committed neighbors together.” Minneapolis is a city that, in many areas, has not only shown this interest, but where it has been reflected through action, in strengthening its many and diverse communities. Suffice it to mention that Minneapolis has close ties to 12 cities around the world through the “Sister Cities” program, which “facilitates global connections and exchanges between international cities and the people of Minneapolis with the aim of generating cultural awareness and fostering mutual benefits through the opportunities that this program offers.” Accordingly, the brotherhood with Morelos could not be left out. In 2008 Minneapolis chose Cuernavaca, the state capital of Morelos, as its sister city.

In the case of Morelos, its communities have been protagonists and defenders of their people in different moments of their local and national history. The earthquake that struck the central region of Mexico in September 2017 reminded us of the creative, reconstructive and transformative power of the peoples of Morelos, and revived the memory of all the struggles they have fought throughout their history. According to Jennifer Arias, program coordinator for Fundación Comunidad.

The month of September 2017 not only left us in pain, but also provided lessons and possibilities for building more welcoming spaces and support networks [...] [The intention] is to learn to be connected to the world, to dismantle isolation and to see ourselves collectively through a process that articulates emotion with knowledge. In so doing, cooperative work transforms and strengthens the community from within (Sánchez Reséndiz and Videla, 2019: 10).

One example is Xoxocotla, an indigenous community cited by Jennifer Arias, which has a long organizational tradition and history of struggle, of defending indigenous rights, the rights of peasants, land, the environment and labor rights. According to Gabriela Videla, Xoxocotla

among other indigenous peoples, resists the urbanization of its life, defending its practices and customs, its culture taking place within diverse community settings. Thus, the collective way in which they celebrate religious or civic festivities, such as the custom of *tequio* or collective work [...] or the defense of their sacred sites, such as the banks of the Apatlaco river [...] or the Coatepec cave, has allowed them to apply these norms of coexistence during political crises (Sánchez Reséndiz and Videla, 2019: 14).

The community experience of Minnesota and

Morelos, of Minneapolis and Xoxocotla in particular, cannot be overlooked. Faced with the challenges imposed by the reality of migrants who leave Morelos for Minnesota, in a world currently reeling from multiple crises, remembering the distinct and diverse ways of creating communities in Mexico and the United States shows us the way to organize and work together as transnational communities in the future.

One of the contradictions we find when talking about migration is that while we defend the right of people to seek better living conditions outside their communities of origin, we must also defend their right to not have to leave to develop skills or to live with dignity. The bet is for migration to become a right enjoyed in freedom, and although we have not yet reached that goal, the path is and always will be through community.

Through the work we carried out in the community of Xoxocotla, Morelos, we learned and talked about community and its role in migration. We realized that migration is always an open possibility, always at hand, but it also provides a pretext to talk about ourselves as men and women: Do we really want to leave? What stops us? What pushes us?

Through the young men and women of Xoxocotla who participate in the cultural center Yankuik Kuikamatilistli, we discovered that the community we belong to gives us an identity as well as the possibilities to remain. In the words of the workshop participants: “I don’t want to leave because I know my neighbors here and I feel good;” “My grandfather was the one who made me feel rooted in my community;” and, from a female participant, “It was our grandmothers and grandfathers who taught us that we should always contribute to the community.” Finally, we concluded that the community gives us our identity and that this identity and our roots in Xoxocotla are maintained through public assemblies (where the community holds discussions and makes decisions), festivals, the language of our grandparents, and the “chanceo,” the playful way people interact with each other in Xoxo. They said, “if we don’t want to migrate, we have to hold tight to our community, but if we do migrate, we have to hold tight to it as well.”

Thus, the right to not migrate is lived and defended within the community. It means fighting for the conditions that allow us to live with dignity in our communities of origin, so that when we are faced with the possibility of migrating, it should not be out of necessity but desire.

This does not prevent us from defending, as

dozens of our communities in the United States have done, the right to migrate and to live there. Part of the beauty of the United States is how their society is a synthesis of many communal ways of seeing, thinking and feeling in the world. Finally, the United States has been and continues to be built by its citizens (from many backgrounds) and by its migrants.

The community is a productive force that can potentially generate opportunities for all men and women. The transnational community contains the same force but amplified. Why not take advantage of it? Why not get to know each other? Why not weave together international networks of sister communities? What obstacles must be overcome (political, legal, institutional, social, economic, or cultural) to achieve this?

September 19, 2017 marked the 32nd anniversary of the most powerful earthquake that we have experienced in Mexico's central region. On that very day we experienced a second earthquake of nearly the same magnitude that destroyed buildings in Mexico City and dozens of communities in Oaxaca, Puebla and Morelos. While many of us joined in the efforts to help those in need, it was the younger men and women who took the reins during the call to action. At that moment we were reminded that, no matter how fleeting such energy may seem at times, the community was alive and ready. We realized then how extensive and transnational our community is. Help arrived in Morelos from all over the world. Those of us at Fundación Comunidad A.C., in particular, did our part rebuilding homes in several towns across Morelos with the help of many other international organizations, ensuring that community members took a leading role in the reconstruction. The lesson learned was that there is still a lot of community left in Morelos.

This is why shifting our gaze today towards Morelense migration and taking steps towards building broader communities, particularly with Minnesota, seems like an obligatory and urgent task. Curiosity

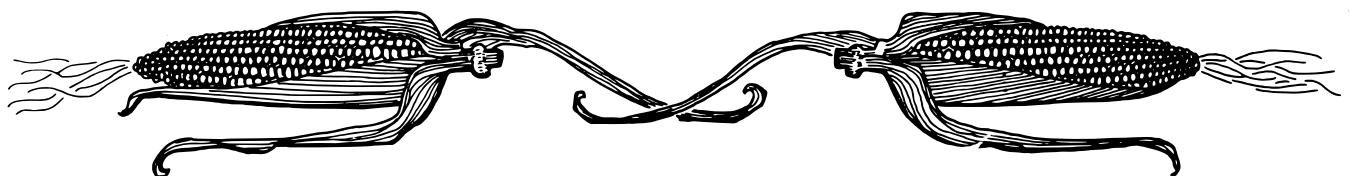
and the desire to learn about the Minnesotan community inspires us to make progress building this binational community, because no matter how great the territorial distance that separates us, our migrants bring us closer together.

This Report seeks to contribute to our joint understanding and strives to be a step, among many, towards the construction of a broader social fabric. We recognize that the challenges are great and that much work lies ahead. Shedding light on the issue of migration is one such task. One of our findings was how little we actually know about migration despite constantly living in its shadow.

Furthermore, the tasks become even more urgent given the hardships that migrants face; guaranteeing their safety and integrity is the first order of the day. The next step is responding to the needs of our returned migrants: what are their options? What can be done for them and with them? What can the community do and what should governments do?

Those of us who took on the responsibility of giving shape to this Report hope to have pointed out some of the deficiencies in the literature so that those willing and in a position to strengthen the transnational community can do their part to the best of their ability. No contribution is too small considering the challenges ahead. This Report embodies a small collective action because, as we stated at the beginning: if the alternative is not collective, it is not an alternative. The product of this research can only be the synthesis of a collaborative effort in which we who participated became a small community too.

The fruits of this Report can only flourish in the hands of the reader. We hope that spring will burst forth from your hands.







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