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Geopolitical Conflicts and Social Vulnerability of Environmental Induced Migration in Mexico

Ursula Oswald Spring

National University of Mexico/CRIM

MRF Chair on Social Vulnerability, UNU-EHS

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1. Objective

The presentation explores the complexity of the international migration and its geopolitical repercussions between Mexico and the USA:

1. Latinos are the **first minority in the USA**, and half of them are illegal migrants, the majority Mexicans. They are exposed to all kinds of **threats and persecution**. The present crisis created 10% of unemployment.
2. The **fans built** between both countries, the technological training of the Border Patrol, drones, etc. oblige migrants to cross in dangerous region (the desert of Arizona).
3. Another option is to ally with the **transnational organized crime** (drug, arms, human and organs traffickers) transforming the border of Mexico in the most violent region, with repercussions in both countries due to prostitution (Klot & DeLargy 2007), public insecurity, crime, VIH-AIDS, money laundering and drug consumption.
4. The present situation of insecurity related to a high **consumption of drugs in the USA** obliged both countries to combat collectively within the Mérida agreement this social cancer (Kochhar 2007).

2. Definition of EIM

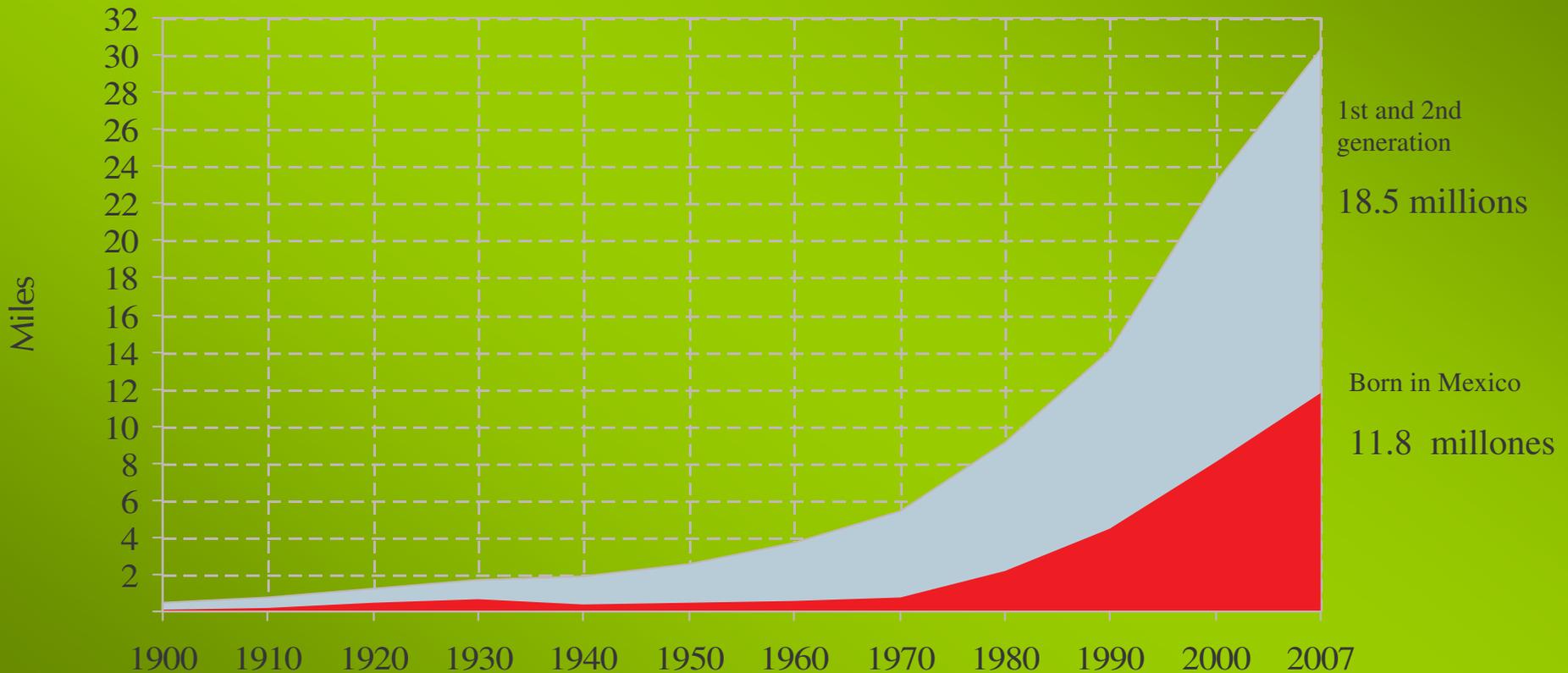
“Environmental migrants are persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad” (IOM, MC/INF/288 2007: 2).

3. Methodology

Demographic studies, deep interviews, participative observation, life histories, police data, the political and intelligence cooperation among USA and Mexico in the frame of the Mérida Agreement, newspaper reports and focus groups were the methodological tools to understand the complexity of migration, the coping mechanisms developed to mitigate the threats and the **destruction of social networks**, and the **social vulnerability** (3,183 migrants dead during crossing between 2001-2008, unofficial: at least one/day), and the upraising violence among competing crime gangs that have created a loss of governance in the Mexican border (during 2 months of 2009, 300 homicides and executions between competing gangs, above all in the border).

4. Results

Mexican's Residents in the USA



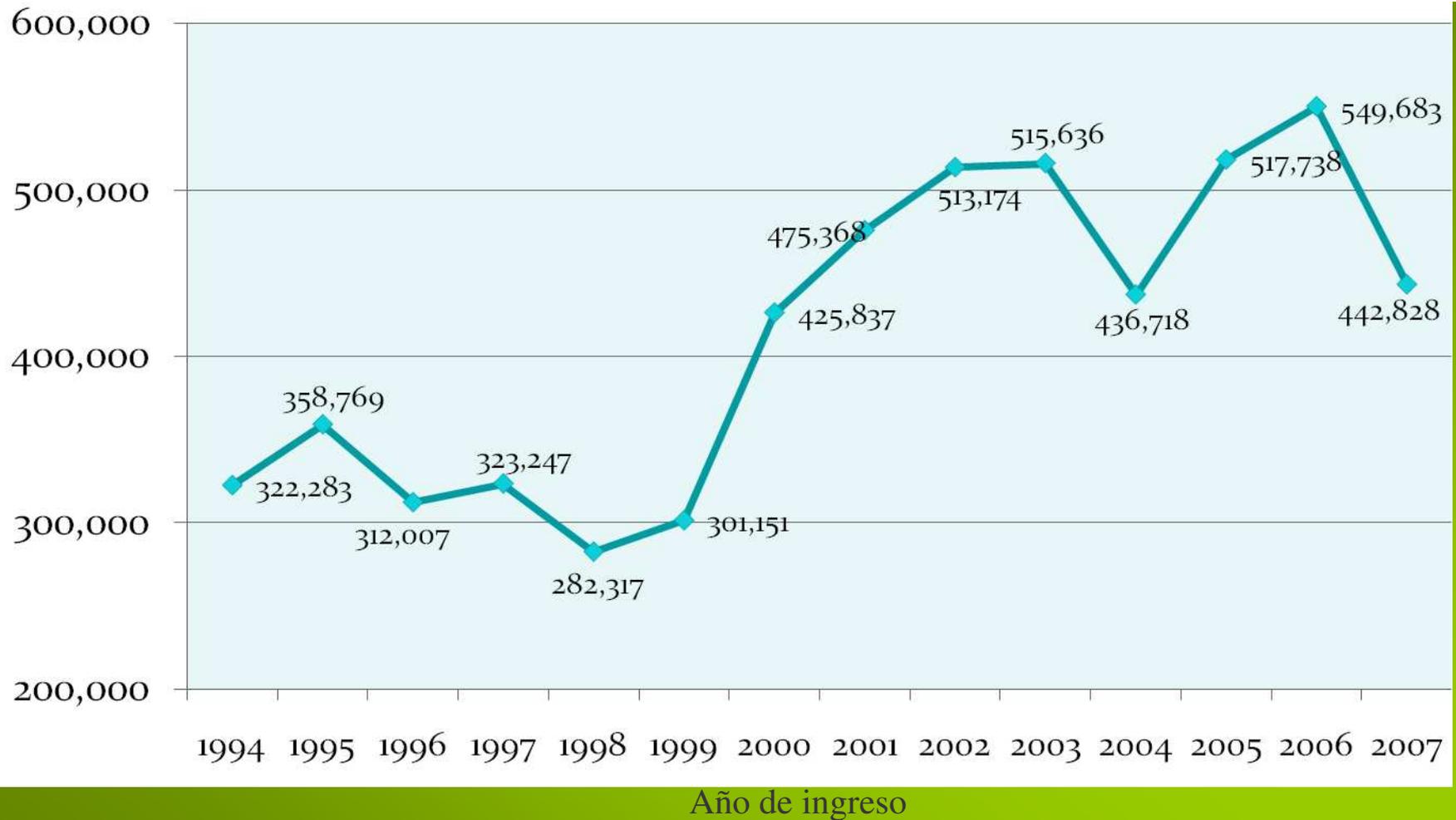
1st and 2nd generation
18.5 millions

Born in Mexico
11.8 millones

Migration from Mexico to the USA

- The **abysmal socioeconomic differences**, environmental threats and public insecurity between both countries.
- Since 1986, the legal status of Latin migrants in the USA has changed and now **most cross illegally**.
- Since NAFTA (1994), the number of Mexican migrants has increased since Despite the fence, a sophisticated electronic observation system including drones, now **annually 450,000 to 500,000** Mexicans cross the border.
- Legal and physical obstacles have created **new conflicts** and the rejection of an immigration law in 2007 by the US Congress has increased the vulnerability of the Latin migrants.
- Often migration is linked to **organized crime** (drug dealers, human trafficking, pornography, illegal purchase of human organs).
- Migration is a **result of the neoliberal model with low growth rates** (below 2%), a corrupt privatization process with a high concentration of wealth, an inefficient education system and low investments in infrastructure, and a lacking policy to create jobs that pushed trained young people into illegal activities (500,000 are linked to drug gangs; AFI 2008; Mexican Congress 2008). But also the demand for a cheap labor, drugs and pornography in the USA are drivers for illegal migration.

Native Mexican Population resident in the USA: Migration 1994-2007



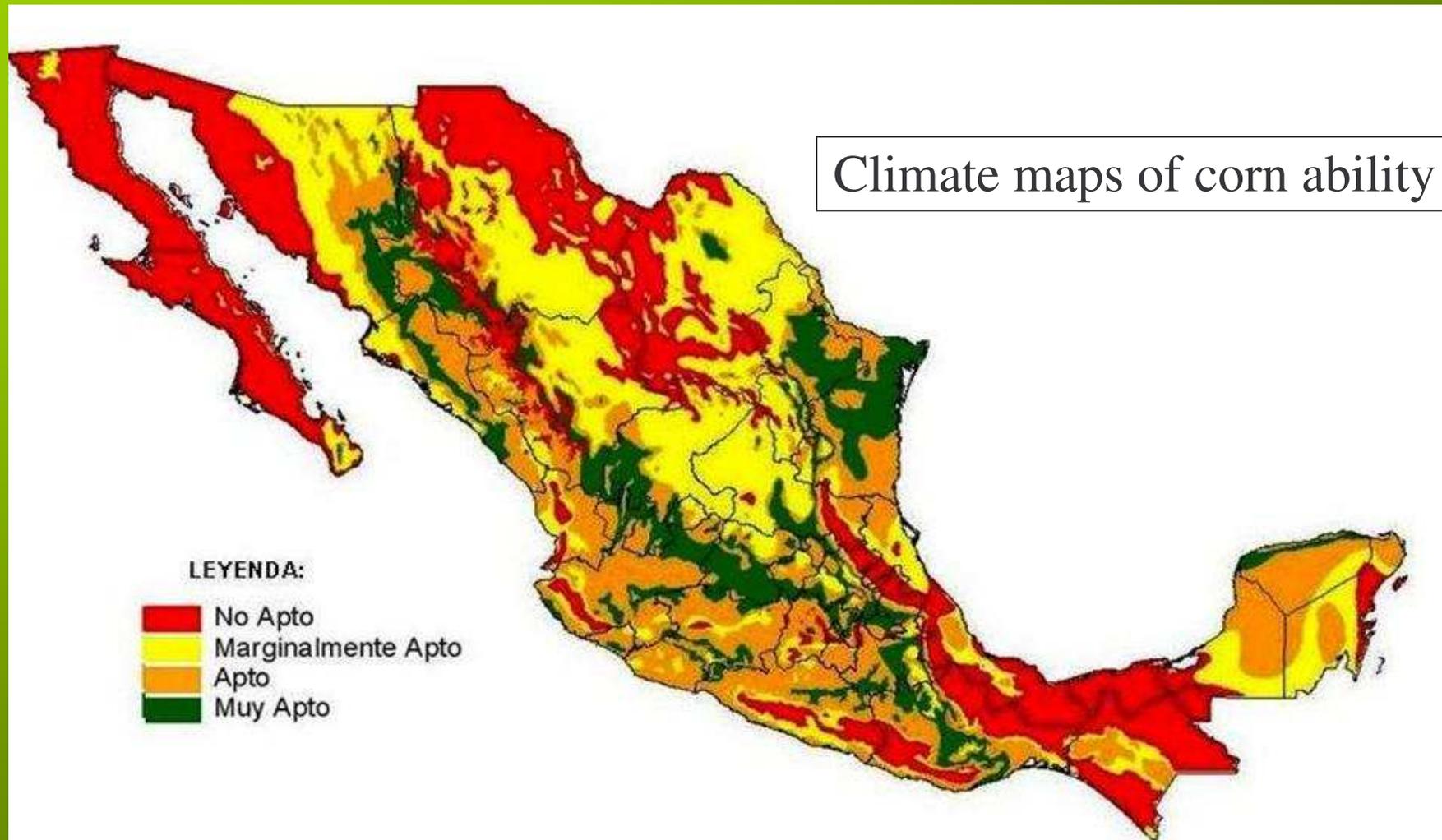
Loss of Population in Mexico



 Municipios que pierden población
 Municipios que ganan población

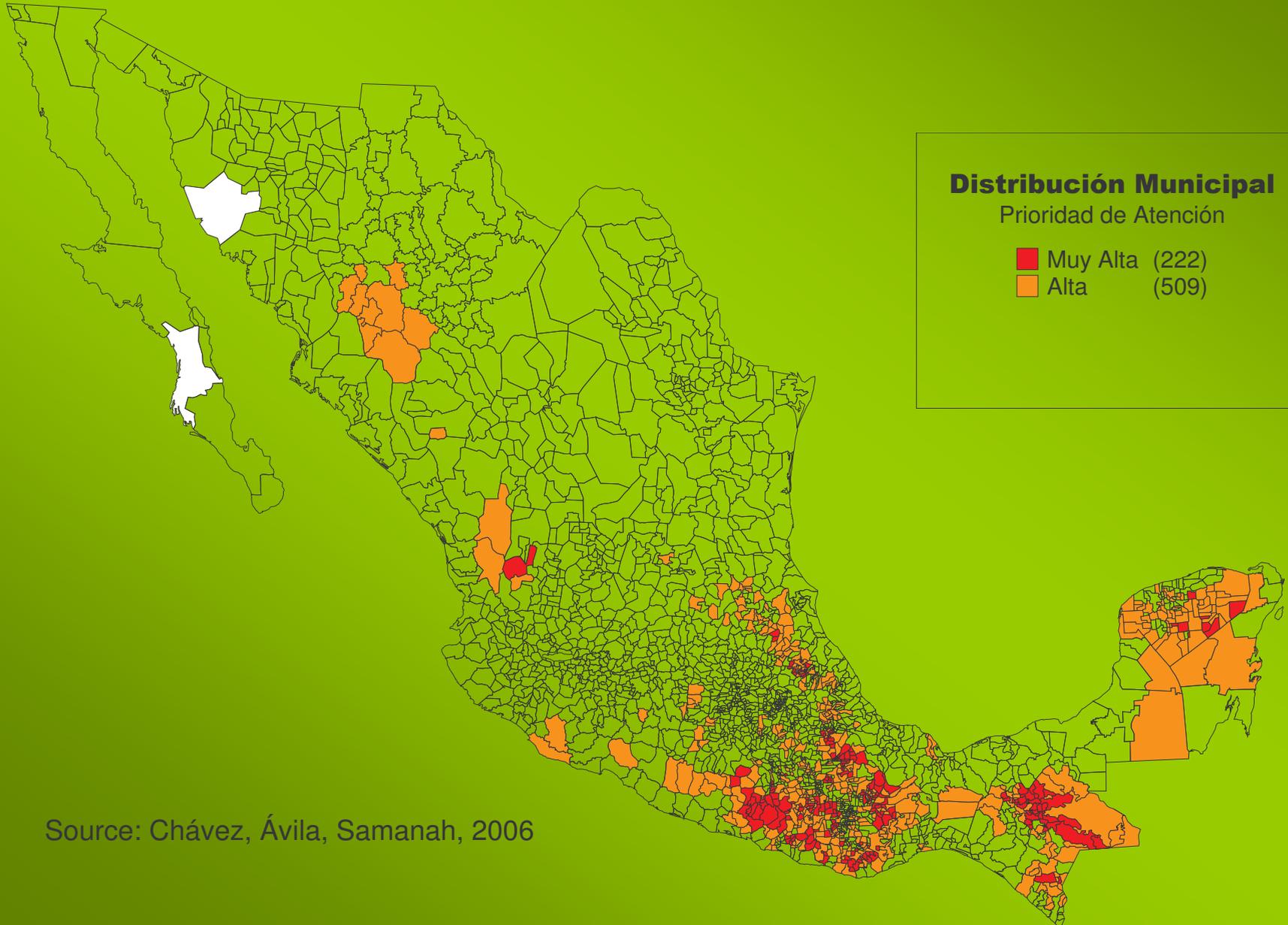
FUENTE: Censos Generales de Población y Vivienda, 199 y 2000. INEGI
II Censo General de Población y Vivienda, 2005. INEGI

Agricultural Ability for Corn Crops



Monterroso, A. G, Rosales, 2006.

Poverty and High Marginality

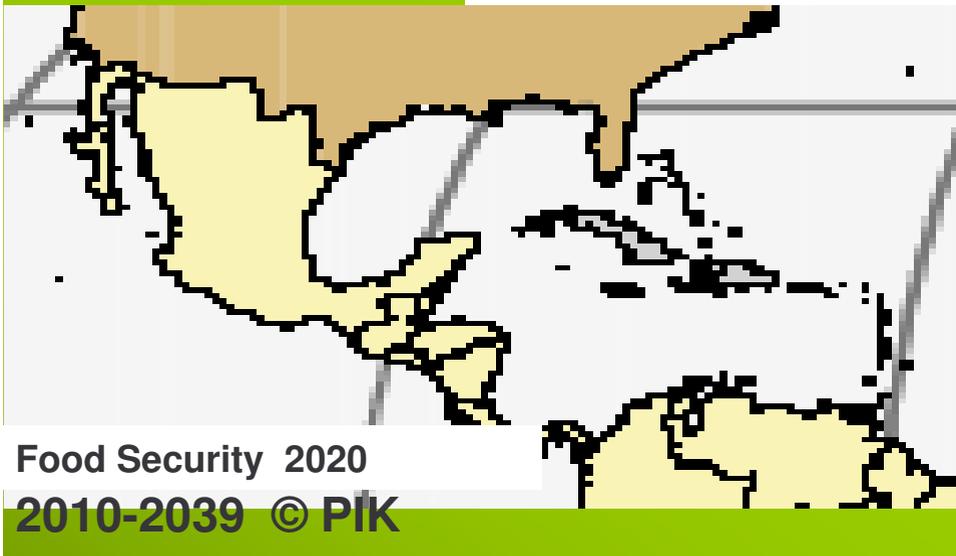
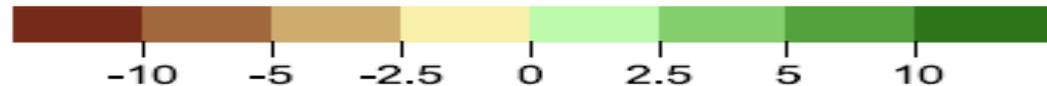


CC and Migration

- The impacts of climatic change already affect Mexico, where **82% of the land is semiarid, arid and hyperarid**. Drought, changes in precipitation, **floods in coastal areas, plagues and crop illnesses**, together with **salinization** of soil and aquifers resulted in declining crop yields what led to unsustainable livelihoods. This process affected primarily peasants depending on **rain-fed subsistence crops** representing almost 78% of all rural producers. Their productive activities cannot guarantee the reproduction of their very poor livelihoods.

potential yield change [%]

no data



Food Security 2020
2010-2039 © PIK



Food Security 2080
2070-2079 c. mit. © PIK



Food Security 2050:
2040-2069 © PIK



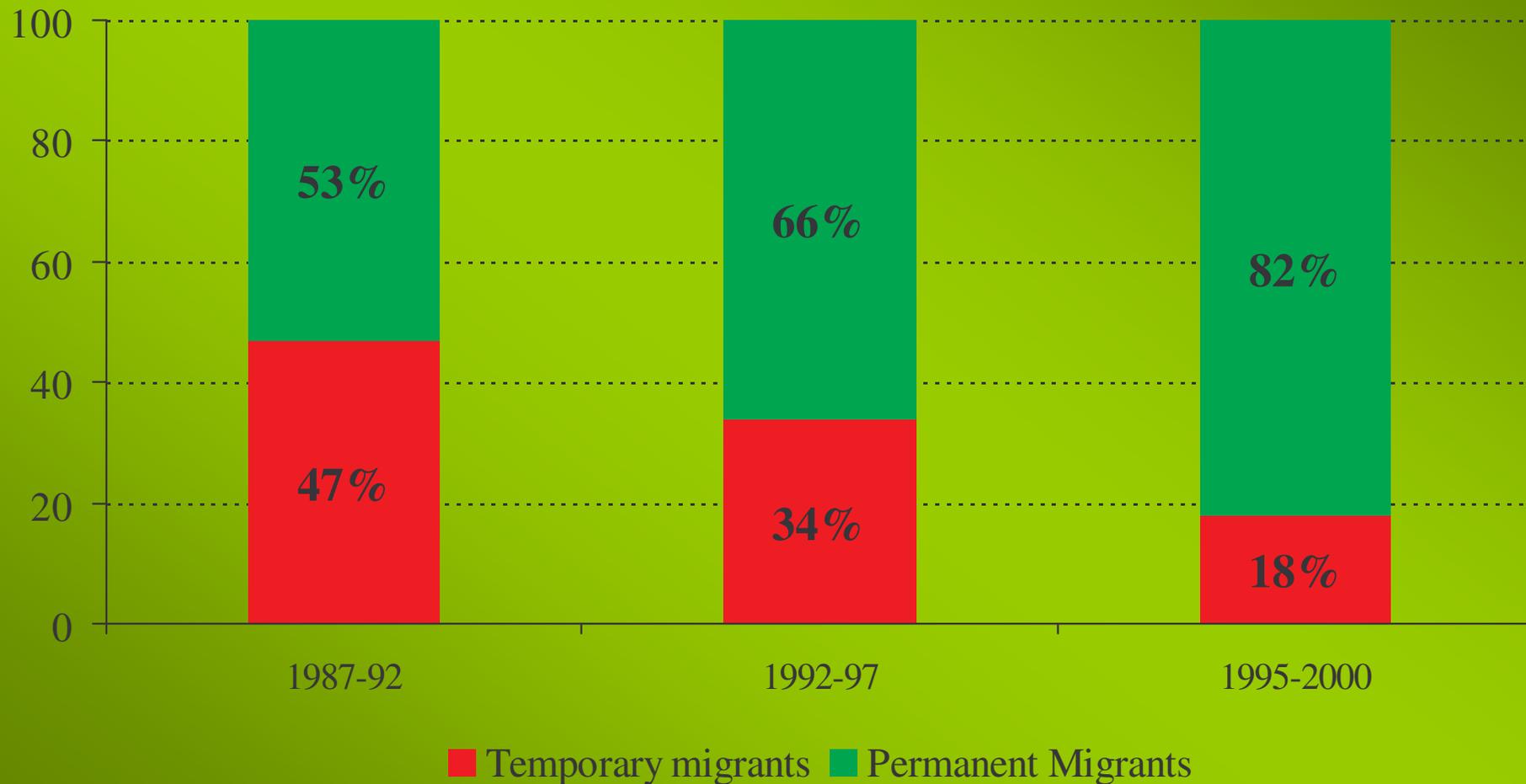
Food Security: 2080:
2070-2079 without mitigation © PIK

How Many May Migrate Due to CC?

1. Between 3.25 and 6.75 millions of small peasants will be pushed out of their land and become EIM due to loss of corn production and desertification.
2. An additional 40 million people are at very high and high risks due to natural hazards (SEGOB 2004).

Permanent and Temporary Migration

Per cent



Source: ENADID92, ENADID97 and Censo 2000, elaborated by F. Lozano, CRIM, 2009

NAFTA and Migration

- Since NAFTA (1994) the **annual import of corn increased from 0.47 to 16 million tons**, the price dropped until 2004 by – 64% due to US subsidies, while the tortilla price increased by +279% (SAGARPA 2008).
- A **combination of climatic and socio-economic factors** (rising costs of agricultural inputs, declining prices for food crops, price hikes of the basic food basket) and political neglect (uncontrolled import of subsidized maize without customs, lack of governmental support for rural production) resulted in a survival dilemma (Brauch 2008; Oswald 1991, 2008) for poor families in rural areas forcing them to migrate to urban centers, to USA or to plant illegal crops.
- Since the 1970s, **urban slums** experience a persistent socioeconomic crisis, failure of economic, education and social policies. Lacking jobs draw in 2008 half a million of young people into drug trafficking (Oswald 2006; Schteingart 2006).

Gender Insecurity

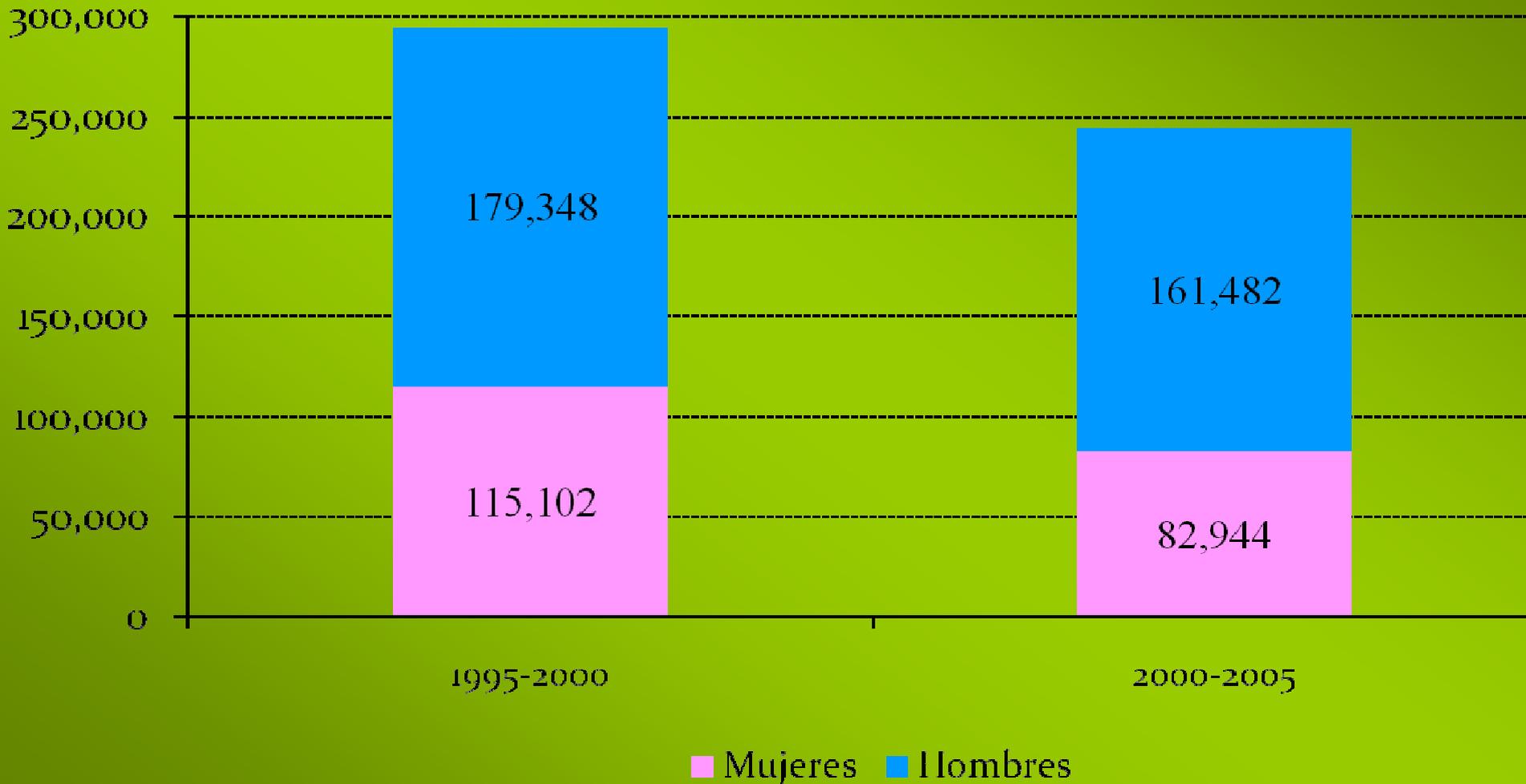
1. During migration from Mexico to the USA, between **70 to 80%** of women are raped and an important group finishes up in prostitution (Catholic Church, 2008) with high risks of HIV-AIDS (Klot/DeLargy, 2007).
2. More than 500 feminicides only in one border town: Juárez (2008: 57)
3. EIM is related to trafficking of humans (also children), human organs, drugs and arms

Children's Insecurity

1. In the USA **17% of undocumented Latinos** are children.
2. Jan-Sept. 2008, more that **90,000 children were deported**, mostly without their parents; often expelled on the other side of the country, where they tried to enter with family.
3. Children joining their parents in the USA, when they are deported, they are returned **to** the Mexican side of the border. There exist in this region **123,500 kids** surviving by begging, prostitution and illegal activities (drugs, smuggling; Chamber of Deputies in Mexico, 2008).
4. For each **three** adults that are deported, there is **one** Mexican child abandoned within the USA, trying to survive in adverse conditions.
5. In any of the mentioned cases, the practices conflict with the **International Conventions on the Rights of the Child**, that were signed and ratified by both countries.

Return of Migrants by Sex and period: 1995-2000 y 2000-2005

Persons/year



Multicausal effects of Migration

- Environmental and socioeconomic factors increased the number of illegal migrants to the USA. It is **impossible to speak only of environmental** (Myers 2002) or **socio-economic migration** (Chávez 2008). Thus, 'forced' migration is a complex, multi-causal and interactive phenomenon with often negative outcomes that can destroy family and community life and increase the social vulnerability of women, who must work in the fields, care for children and maintain the extended family. If these developments are linked to public insecurity and organized crime entire villages must flee from physical violence.
- This increased illegal migration to USA. '**Forced**' migration is a **complex, multi-causal and interactive phenomenon** with often negative outcomes that can destroy family and community life and increase the social vulnerability of women, who must work in the fields, care for children and maintain the extended family. If these developments are linked to public insecurity and organized crime entire villages must flee from physical violence.

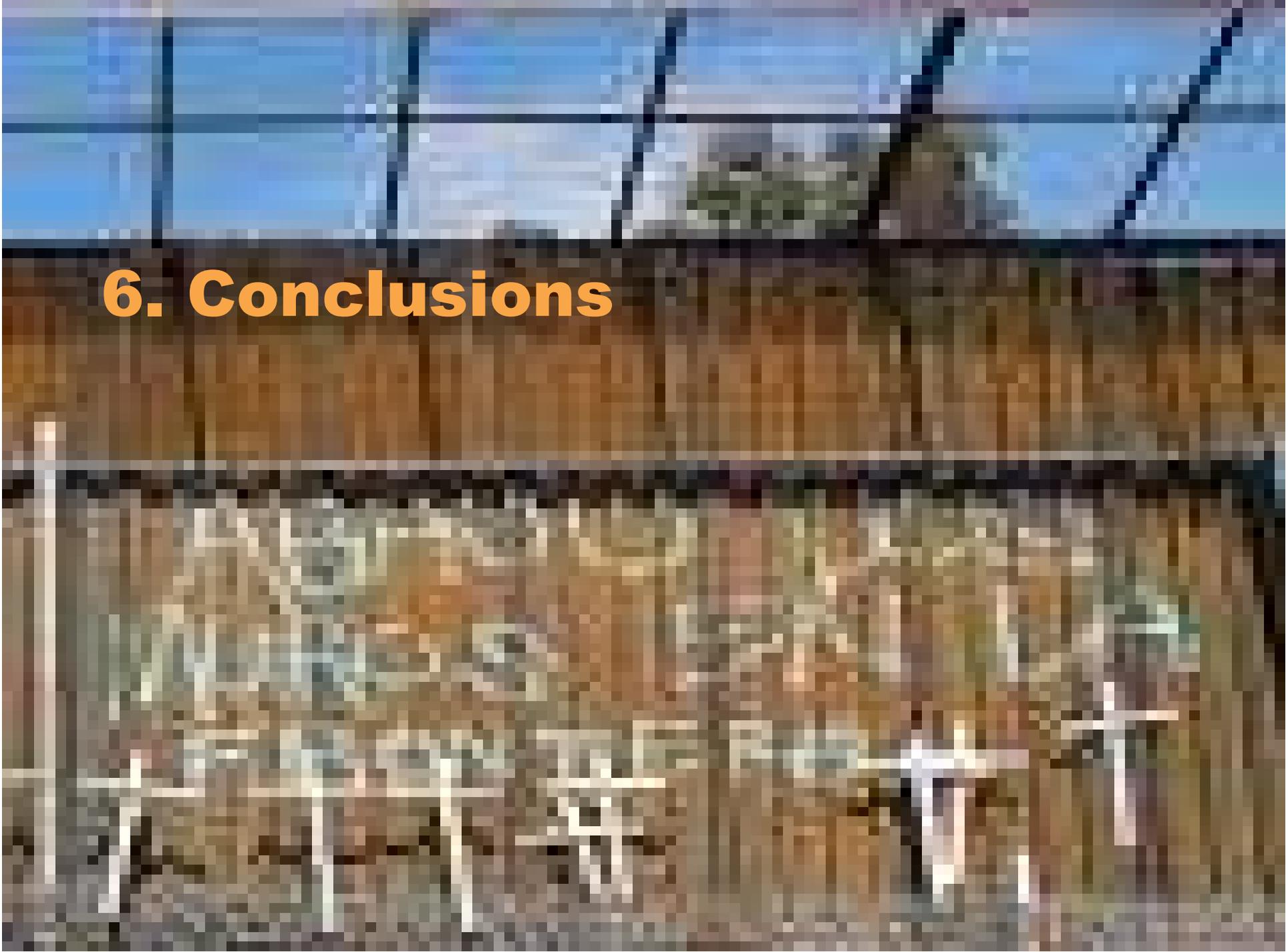
Migration and Conflicts

- Change of **US immigration laws** and growing prosecution have created new conflicts with Mexico.
- The **rejection of an immigration law** in 2007 has increased the social vulnerability of illegal migrants.
- Mounting obstacles for crossing the border shifted migration increasingly to more **dangerous regions** what has resulted in a high human death toll due to dehydration, venomous snakes and extreme temperatures in the desert.
- The prosecution and forced repatriation of adults has left for every five deported people one **child behind** what has severely weakened family bonds (Pew Hispanic Center 2008). Often these children are born in the USA and are US citizens, but their parents and families do not ask for them, fearing that they would also be deported.
- US policies to “**repatriates**” **migrants separately** created a similar situation: e.g. children through Juárez and parents through Tijuana, despite the binding protocol for child protection. This destroyed family bonds (Cremades 2008), threatened the physical and psychological survival, **exposed children** and women to rape, human and drug trafficking and forced prostitution (WTO 2004).

Violence: A Low Level War

- 2006-2008: 10,500 persons assassinated by organized crime in Mexico
- 2008: 5,600 persons killed; 120 police and military; 26 journalists
- Juárez: Border city: 2008: 1,600 persons killed; January 2009: 150 persons; 1 decade more than 500 young women kidnapped and assassinated
(Source: National Commission of Human Rights)
- The economy of crime is based on drug trafficking (cartel of Sinaloa and the Gulf) and is crossing the border to the USA
(Source: Report on Strategic Forecasting; Baker, 2009)

6. Conclusions



1. Environmental and social problems increased the **complexity of international migration** and illegal immigration in the USA. Environmental and socioeconomic migration are linked and 'forced' migration is a complex, multi-causal and interactive process, often with nonlinear outcomes that can destroy family and community life and increase social vulnerability of women.
2. **Women often are left behind to deal alone** with fieldwork, care for children and the extended family. Insecure land and water rights have also generated complex emergencies within communities and new conflicts. Due to public insecurity and organized crime entire villages are fleeing from physical violence.

2. The improved surveillance of the US border patrols has forced migrants to rely on organized crime. The declining social cohesion, disintegration of networks related to migration, the loss of livelihoods, the illegal crossing controlled by transnational crime gangs have resulted in a low intensity war in the border. This has not only increased the vulnerability of people and corruption on both sides, but has created a geopolitical conflicts between the USA and Mexico. The war against organized crime has forced both governments to exchange intelligence and coordinate military against gangs.
3. Cooperation on development activities to improve livelihoods and environmental services in remote rural areas, creation of jobs for young people and a strong social and environmental policy in Mexico would better counter rising criminal behaviour and open a potential for a peaceful living together of both countries.



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uoswald@gmail.com

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