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NEW MIGRATION PATTERNS: HIGH-SKILLED ENTREPRENEURIAL MIGRATION FROM MEXICO TO THE UNITED STATES

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“New Migration Patterns: High-Skilled Entrepreneurial Migration from Mexico to the United States”

Abstract

The number of high-skilled Mexican entrepreneurs working and living in the United States has increased during the last years. Texas is one of the states that illustrate this. A recurrent explanation of this entrepreneurial migration is the insecurity caused by the extended presence of organized crime in Mexico. But, is insecurity the only or most influential factor leading Mexican entrepreneurs to migrate? Are there additional factors contributing to this migration? To what extent do the push factors of the Mexican institutional context influence entrepreneurs' decision to migrate? Do the pull factors of the U.S. institutional context influence the migration decision as well, or do they only perpetuate the decision to stay in the United States? The paper addresses these questions through qualitative research based on 20 in-depth interviews with Mexican entrepreneurs working and living in Houston. The theoretical framework considered for the design of the interview is a mixed-embeddedness approach. Findings show that push and pull factors have changed during recent years. Insecurity is one but not the only or most important factor. Instead, the perception of a friendly U.S. fiscal system, the search for a better quality of life, and the appeal of a more transparent business environment are powerful initial and staying factors of Mexican entrepreneurial migration to the United States.

Introduction

During the last two decades, the immigration landscape from Mexico to the United States has changed. The profile (education, income, skills) of the immigrant population has become more diverse (Rodríguez 2009, 5), and shifting U.S. immigration policies have generated new behaviors and trends. Immigrant profiles are more complex than in the past (Pandit and Holloway 2006, iv). While there is still a movement of less educated Mexicans to the United States, contemporary migration includes a growing flow of highly educated immigrants (Portes, Escobar and Arana 2009, 104). Delgado and Márquez (2009, 42) found a sustained growth trend in the education level of the population of immigrants aged 15 years and older born in Mexico but now residing in the United States—38.9 percent of new migrants have a higher education level above a basic high school diploma. This figure rises to 52.4 percent if the full population of Mexican origin residents in the United States is taken into consideration. Surprisingly, the analogous figure for Mexico is 27.8 percent, which leads to the unfortunate inference that more qualified workers are leaving Mexico than remaining in the country. Many of the new migrants also have access to financial capital and support the creation of businesses (Kloosterman and Rath 2001, 191). This accelerated immigration of wealthy and/or highly educated Mexicans is provoking dynamic entrepreneurial activity with a considerable impact on the American economy (Correa and Girón 2013, 557).

According to 2010 U.S. Census data, almost 33 million people of Mexican origin live in the United States—13 million of whom are active in the labor force. Data reveal that approximately 8 percent are entrepreneurs, though only a fraction operates businesses that employ workers (Correa and Girón 2013, 556). Despite these figures, the literature is scarce

on recent high-skilled entrepreneurial migration (Chrysostome and Lin 2010, 78), particularly in the case of Latino entrepreneurship, which has had an accelerated growth across the United States in the last two decades (Robles and Cordero-Guzmán 2007, 18). Chrysostome and Lin (2010, 78) emphasize that this literature void is evident from the management perspective, which is not necessarily the case with other disciplines such as sociology or anthropology. This paper intends to fill this literature gap by determining, through a mixed-embeddedness approach (Kloosterman, Van der Leun and Rath 1999), the main push and pull factors that contribute to this migration of high-skilled entrepreneurs from Mexico to the United States.

The research question that arises is: What are the push factors in Mexico and the pull factors in the United States which foster the increased high-skilled entrepreneurial migration from Mexico to the United States? To answer this question, a qualitative approach is used through the application of 20 in-depth interviews to Mexican migrant entrepreneurs living and working in Texas, specifically in Houston. The interviews encompass a set of push and pull factors categorized as ethno, managerial, institutional, and financial factors (Chrysostome 2010, 137). Insecurity appears as one of the institutional factors. Thus, special attention is paid to the issue of whether insecurity, as often assumed, acts as a determinant push factor in the migration decision.

In the theoretical section of this paper, concepts such as the opportunity structure, the mixed-embeddedness framework, and the transnational migration are reviewed. The methodology section explains the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (Tong, Sainsbury, and Craig 2007, 352) used for the data gathering and analysis. The findings section discusses the main results derived from the in-depth interviews and its connection with the theoretical concepts. The last section presents the conclusions.

Literature Review

Unlike the past, when most of the entrepreneurial activity performed by Mexican immigrants was characterized as small, informal, and family-owned businesses, contemporary entrepreneurial undertakings among Mexican immigrants in the United States have become more formal and institutionalized (Zhou 2004, 1065). These new migrant entrepreneurs are more socioeconomically diverse, and many of them are highly educated professionals for whom economic integration is not an issue (Pandit and Holloway 2006, iv). In fact, Ríos (2014, 202) states that migration to the United States is a natural choice for middle- and upper-class Mexicans living on the border when they have to change residence. She explains that in most cases, they move along with their businesses. Consequently, the number of U.S. investor visas has dramatically increased, from 7,603 visas granted between 2001 and 2005 to 31,066 visas issued between 2006 and 2010 (Ríos 2014, 212).

The reasons (push factors) to move to the United States are also different. Immigrant entrepreneurs are not need-based but constitute instead an opportunity-based immigrant group, as they are looking for a profitable business environment. Chrysostome (2010, 138)

defines an immigrant entrepreneur as one who freely decides to start a business in order to take advantage of an opportunity. Thus, although a significant number of them are relocating to the United States to escape increased drug-related homicides and criminal activity (Ríos 2014, 200), that is not the only or main factor behind their exit. To fully understand the dynamics of the Mexico-to-U.S. migration, it is necessary to broaden the analysis of the factors that are normally explored as part of traditional immigration literature (Ríos 2014, 200).

In this sense, the mixed-embeddedness framework developed by Kloosterman, Van der Leun and Rath (1999) is relevant to analyze the individual characteristics of the entrepreneur (micro-level) and the social, economic, and politico-institutional environment (macro-structure), or what has been called concrete embeddedness (immigrant social networks), and the abstract embeddedness (Price and Chacko 2009, 329) to determine its influence on entrepreneurial strategies and outcomes. As Price and Chacko (2009, 343) point out, mixed embeddedness is mutually constituted from the actions of immigrants themselves as well as those of local officials and institutions. Even though the personal profile of entrepreneurs plays an important role to motivate and execute migration, immigrant entrepreneurs' business performance may be more influenced by institutional settings than by their national cultural values (Yang, Yi-Hsuan Ho, and Chang 2012, 766) or individual characteristics. As Zhou (2004, 1046) asserts, particular contexts of exit and reception can effect social environments and cultural migration conditions.

Likewise, the analysis of both home and host institutional contexts allows us to understand why and how immigration takes place and in what way specific institutions promote or constrain immigrant entrepreneurship (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp 2013, 835). In order to have a far-reaching view of the institutional influence on entrepreneurial activity, it is advisable to take into account the value systems and formal support provided to potential entrepreneurs through the governmental policies in the host country, in this case the United States (Chrysostome 2010, 142), but it is also necessary to examine the lack of this formal support in the home country (Mexico). This is relevant because the institutional environment determines the rules of the game that affect entrepreneurial decisions (Chrysostome 2010, 148). This comprehensive approach allows us to identify both the starting reasons that trigger immigration and the forces that perpetuate it (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2009, 25).

As previously stated, there is a whole set of other factors besides insecurity that motivate Mexican entrepreneurs to migrate. These factors are ethno-cultural, behavioral, managerial, financial, and institutional (Chrysostome 2010, 137). As for the ethno-cultural factors, Mexican businessmen have started to organize themselves into clubs (Ríos 2014, 212). As Pandit and Holloway (2006, v) state, immigrants choose to settle close to friends and family who migrated earlier. This new Mexican entrepreneurial class is not the exception. They have formed ethnic enclaves (such as the club named "La Red" in El Paso, Texas or in "The Woodlands" community in Montgomery County, Texas) which facilitate the formation of social networks and generate valuable economic, political, and cultural capital for enclave residents (Pandit and Holloway 2006, v). One of the main benefits of

these networks is to minimize transaction costs as immigrant entrepreneurs draw from the pool of resources that exist within the immigrant community (Yang, Yi-Hsuan Ho, and Chang 2012, 756). Relatives or friends who own businesses may provide access to relevant information, markets, and other necessary resources for business formation such as training, technical assistance, contacts, and general guidance (Raijman 2001, 406). Often, however, this entrepreneurial class does not rely only on the ethnic enclave, but it benefits considerably from diverse social networks within the co-ethnic community and the native community (Beckers and Blumberg 2013, 661). This behavior previously has been suggested by Wang and Li (2007, 179), who found that migrant entrepreneurship does not rely only on co-ethnic neighborhoods or communities. Zhou (2004, 1041) found that during recent years, migrant entrepreneurs have opened up businesses in affluent urban neighborhoods and middle-class suburbs and have shown up not only in the secondary sector but also in the primary sector of the host economy.

As Portes, Guarnizo, and Haller (2002, 288) indicate, business opportunities at home and the host country are constrained by institutional contexts and often lead to transnational migration. Thus, the value of networks for migrants' entrepreneurial development is not just confined to their existence in the host society; they are also essential in the immigrants' home country. As a matter of fact, many migrants become transnational entrepreneurs who depend on contacts and associates in both origin and destination countries for their firms' success. Portes, Guarnizo, and Haller (2002, 287) suggest that transnational entrepreneurs tend to have high incomes and acquire U.S. citizenship but preserve ties with the home country. So, the better qualified, more experienced, and more secure immigrants are the ones who tend to be involved and committed to economic activities in both countries, depending on the sociopolitical conditions of the country of origin and on the characteristics of the immigrant community. Transnational migration opens an interesting opportunity for migrant-sending countries because, as Délano (2011, 10) suggests, states may profit from transnationalism as a bridge to legitimize the government or to promote its image abroad. Furthermore, it may enhance the transfer of know-how, technology, and skills that migrants acquire abroad, and the government may even convince entrepreneurs to bring their investments to the home country.

Behavioral factors refer to aspects such as the entrepreneur's commitment and his/her risk aversion towards entrepreneurial activity. Both aspects may be influenced by the aforementioned ethno-cultural factors and by demographic issues such as marital status and whether one has children. In fact, most researchers (Raijman 2001, 396) found that marital status affects propensity for self-employment. Furthermore, entrepreneurs' risk perception may decrease due to the labor support of their spouses. Consequently, the different familial structures partly explain the differences in self-employment rates among ethnic groups (Raijman 2001, 396).

As for managerial factors, migrant entrepreneurs require a certain level of education, country-specific language, and cultural skills to benefit from opportunity structures (Beckers and Blumberg 2013, 660) in the host country. In fact, educational attainment is positively linked to Mexican business survival. Moreover, education plays a key role in

small business formation and longevity (Moon et al. 2013, 370). In the same sense, Masurel et al. (see Wang and Li 2007, 169) found that language proficiency, higher education, and prior business experience have great influence on the start-up and growth of ethnic entrepreneurship. Wang and Li (2007, 173) also support the fact personal characteristics such as extended work experience, longer business hours, English mastery, and length of time in the destination society are positively related to a greater opportunity of becoming entrepreneurs. Robles and Cordero-Guzmán (2007, 21) consider other managerial factors influencing Latino business ownership success and failure, including individual or family wealth, customer demographics, the age of the enterprise, the owner's age, and access to financial capital. Zhou (2004) also has referred to the importance of human capital, encompassing education, job skills, and citizenship status; and to other demographic characteristics, in terms of their strong effect on the likelihood of immigrants pursuing entrepreneurship. Portes, Guarnizo, and Haller (2002) agree with this. They state that human capital, in the form of years of education and high occupational skills, plays a significant role in immigrant business success.

In regard to financial factors, access to start-up capital is a determinant for business ownership (Raijman 2001). In fact, in Raijman's study (2001), latent migrant entrepreneurs signaled that the most common obstacle to start a business is the lack of financial capital. Most of this capital is provided by owners' personal savings as well as loans from friends and relatives (Raijman 2001, 397).

On institutional factors, the opportunity structure proposed by Kloosterman and Rath (2001) helps explain the dilemma immigrant entrepreneurs face in terms of finding possibilities to start a business and maintain or expand it. Kloosterman and Rath (2001, 194) suggest that two dimensions have to be considered: accessibility to markets and market growth potential. Furthermore, these authors make reference to the importance of the mixed-embeddedness framework when pointing out that immigrant entrepreneurs cannot simply transfer their activities from home and continue in their new environment. They have to adapt to the new socioeconomic context of the host country.

Most of the literature has focused on the analysis of the host country's institutional environment surrounding immigrant entrepreneurship. This is important to understand the context of reception (preexisting ethnic enclaves, governmental policies, societal reception, etc.). Nonetheless, the study of the home country's institutional context is fundamental to have an all-inclusive view of the exit conditions that lead migrants to launch an entrepreneurial activity outside their country (Zhou 2004). In this sense, to recognize and assume a greater responsibility regarding exit conditions of both traditional and high-skilled migrants, Mexico has gradually adopted more active migration policies, supporting the establishment of bilateral cooperation mechanisms and agreements (Délano 2009, 766).

The next section explains data collection and analysis to deepen knowledge of the profile of Mexican entrepreneurs living in the United States and their institutional environment.

Methodology

Due to the fact that entrepreneurial migration from Mexico to the United States is relatively new, this study used a qualitative approach to the main push and pull factors that have motivated entrepreneurs to move to the United States. The use of interviews helps explain complex phenomena linked to both economic factors and social issues such as education, corruption, impunity, and insecurity. Therefore, this approach was suitable to explore the experiences of the Mexican immigrant entrepreneurs. In-depth interviews were conducted through the Asociación de Empresarios de México (AEM), one of the most recognized entrepreneurial associations of Mexican businessmen in the United States. Interviewees were contacted by email or by telephone in order to make an appointment, and the purpose and scope of the research was explained to them in this initial contact.

In order to provide a thorough explanation of the methodology employed to obtain and analyze information, the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) developed by Tong, Sainsbury, and Craig (2007) was used because it is a comprehensive framework that includes all the required items to build a complete and transparent report of the methods, context of the study, findings, analysis, and interpretations. This tool is particularly useful for this study since it is specifically developed for in-depth interviews and focus groups.

Research Design

The theoretical framework of this research is based on the understanding of the entrepreneurial culture of Mexican immigrants who share some common characteristics and face similar institutional contexts in the home country. It describes the meaning of the entrepreneurial experiences of high-skilled Mexican immigrants in the United States. A purposive sampling was used to select participants, as the entrepreneurs were contacted through the AEM, which joins entrepreneurs with a similar profile who could provide relevant information. Afterwards, a snowball sampling was used: the entrepreneurs provided contact information for other people who had a similar profile and could share valuable experience closely related to the research topic.

Potential interviewees were approached through e-mail or face-to-face in two AEM-organized events. Approximately 60 entrepreneurs were contacted, but only 20 interviews were finally conducted because entrepreneurs were travelling when the field research took place; expressed no interest in the research project; or simply did not reply to the e-mail. Nine interviews were conducted face-to-face and 11 were by telephone, according to the preference and/or location of the interviewees. The interviews were conducted only in two Texas cities: Houston and The Woodlands (there was only an exception: a telephone interview with an AEM member living and working in San Antonio). The face-to-face interviews took place at different locations according to the preference of the interviewees: at Rice University, at the entrepreneurs' office, at social clubs or conference rooms where the AEM organizes monthly events, or at different restaurants or coffee shops. The entrepreneurs' ages ranged between 35 and 60 years old, and most of them have a higher

education degree, live in Texas, are married, and have children. They are working in different sectors such as real estate, marketing services, financial services, consulting, construction, energy, tourism, insurance, legal services, etc. Fifteen interviewees were men and five were women. Seventeen out of the 20 interviewees were Mexican. One was from Colombia, but she is in charge of a magazine targeting Hispanic people living in one of the most prominent master-planned communities in Texas and became very familiar with Mexican entrepreneurs' experiences through interviews for the publication. One interviewee was from Peru, but she previously lived in Mexico for 20 years, is married to a Mexican, and has Mexican citizenship. A third is from the United States, but he has close interaction with Mexican entrepreneurs through his role as the director of community relations for one of the most important residential and commercial developments in Texas and thus provided a very important point of view.

A guide of the interview was prepared (Appendix A) in Spanish because it is the native language of all but one of the respondents. The in-depth interview was translated into English. Both versions, English and Spanish, were reviewed by an expert on migration issues. As a result of the expert's feedback, some changes were made: the demographic information which appeared at the end of the interview was moved to the beginning; demographic data were added (kind of industry or sector); a question central to the research topic was broken down into several questions; and another was removed because it was deemed redundant. A pilot interview was done with the first interviewee who showed an interest in the topic when contacted. As a result, a minor change was made to the interview: two questions containing similar information were grouped into one. The interviews were audio-recorded to accurately reflect the participants' opinions. Additionally, field notes were taken to further understand some of the interviewees' comments and points of view. Each interview lasted about 40 minutes.

Analysis

The information analysis was conducted with the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti, an efficient tool to manage, contrast, categorize, link, and interpret large amounts of data. The coding was based on the survival factors of immigrant entrepreneurs suggested by Chrysostome (2010), namely the ethno, managerial, institutional, and financial factors. Nonetheless, due to the fact that Chrysostome (2010) has proposed this survival factors' framework for necessity-immigrant entrepreneurs, some sub-categories were created within each in order to adjust this framework to the profile of opportunity-immigrant entrepreneurs. This categorization was also taken into account when designing the in-depth interview guide. Specific themes were identified out of the theories that guide the research (theory-driven codes) but these themes were later confirmed through the data derived from the in-depth interviews (data-driven codes). Thus, based on the literature review, the design of the research instrument, and the initial overview gained from the application of the interviews, four family codes (clusters of classification devices) were created with their corresponding individual codes: 1) Ethno Factors, a family code that includes Ethnic Resources, Family and Friends, and Networks; 2) Managerial Factors, which covers Competences Developed in the US, Competences Required in the US,

Competences Transferred From Mexico to the US, and Resources Required and Acquired in the US; 3a) Institutional Factors Mexico, which encompasses Mexican Government Entrepreneurial Support Policies, Bureaucracy, Complex Tax System, Difficult Economic Situation, Existence/Lack of Opportunities, and Insecurity; 3b) Institutional Factors US, involving US Government Entrepreneurial Support Policies, Better Education, Better Quality of Life, Efficiency, Friendly Tax System, and Transparency; and 4) Financial factors, which comprises a single element: Credit Accessibility. Table 1 shows theory-driven family code names, sub-codes identified in each family, corresponding definitions and code examples.

Table 1. Coding Process

FAMILY CODE NAME	SUB-CODE	DEFINITIONS	EXAMPLES
Ethno Factors	Ethnic Resources	Ethnic Resources are those that foster group cohesion, solidarity, access to private loans and credit associations, assistance, and loyalty from relatives. They bring together co-ethnic employees and customers. They provide opportunities to purchase businesses from co-ethnic owners.	“There is still a lot of opportunity regarding this. Compared with other communities, there is a clear lack of support. No formal neither informal links have been created. There is no confidence due to a cultural element”.
	Family and Friends	Due to the fact that opportunity-immigrant entrepreneurs do not rely significantly on co-ethnics, assistance and loyalty are mainly provided by their friends and relatives already living/and or working in the United States.	“My ‘concuños’ were living for four years in The Woodlands with the safety situation at the time. I came very often to work and my wife would come with me and stay with her sisters there. She ended up liking it.”
	Networks	Social and mainly professional networks bring together Mexican migrant entrepreneurs and foster the cohesion through business guidance and business partnerships, and even by connecting their families.	“Yes, through these networks I have had more connections, more exposure to other markets, and direct link with the culture.”

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<p>Managerial Factors</p>	<p>Competences developed in the US</p>	<p>Competences developed refer to the skills, capacities, and expertise Mexican migrant entrepreneurs have acquired as a result of their business activities in the United States.</p>	<p>“A competence acquired here in the USA is having the civil value of being direct and say, ‘No, thanks, we are not interested,’ instead of making the people wasting their time.”</p>
	<p>Competences and knowledge required in the US</p>	<p>Competences required refer to the skills, capacities, and expertise Mexican migrant entrepreneurs have been forced to develop in order to be able to settle and keep their business operating in the United States.</p>	<p>“We are made to the day to day. In Mexico, corporate culture in small businesses has many gaps regarding procedures. In USA, in order to offer the service you must be qualified, you must have certifications. You have to follow specific procedures; for example, invoices.”</p>
	<p>Competences and knowledge transferred from Mexico to the US</p>	<p>Competences transferred refer to the skills, capacities, and expertise Mexican migrant entrepreneurs had already developed in Mexico before coming to the United States but that are still useful and needed to settle and keep their business operating in the United States.</p>	<p>“...in Mexico we work a lot of hours. If this habit is transferred here, it helps a lot.”</p>
	<p>Resources required in the US</p>	<p>In order to efficiently perform their business activities in the United States, Mexican entrepreneurs require a set of human, financial, social, and technological resources.</p>	<p>“The support of organisms like Score has been invaluable. Technological resources also in the sense that you can operate your business here from home. Having arrived to the USA with certain financial resources also facilitates everything – not having to start from zero.”</p>

Entrepreneurial Migration from Mexico to the United States

<p>Institutional Factors: Mexico and United States</p>	<p>Institutional Factors Mexico:</p>		
	<p>Government entrepreneurial support policies</p>	<p>It refers to the support provided by governmental instances to Mexican entrepreneurs in order to facilitate their business initiatives while working and /or living in the United States.</p>	<p>“There is an industrial capital drain because it is not any longer only about opening a restaurant to get a visa but people are staying here in the USA, they establish manufacturing plants. Mexico must play a local role providing support so that entrepreneurs stay there.”</p>
	<p>Bureaucracy</p>	<p>It refers to inefficiencies in the public and private sectors that negatively affect business operations.</p>	<p>“It’s much simpler here. Starting a business here takes a week. In Mexico, starting a company takes two months. Here, everything is very virtual. Everyone works in a very practical way.”</p>
	<p>Complex tax system</p>	<p>It refers to the existence of complex, strict and uncertain procedures and formalities to inform about profits and pay taxes.</p>	<p>“Here there is more certainty, unlike in Mexico. If I invest here, the rules do not change.”</p>
	<p>Difficult economic situation</p>	<p>It refers to the lack of opportunities to settle or grow a business in Mexico due to the perceived contraction of the purchasing power.</p>	<p>“There are no growth opportunities at the business level in Mexico. Thus, people transfer the financial capital they have in Mexico to make it grow here in the USA.”</p>
<p>Insecurity</p>	<p>It refers to the unsafe conditions to live or to do business in Mexico, mainly due to the presence of organized crime.</p>	<p>“It reveals the insecurity situation; the corruption. Half of Mexican people living here would go back if this situation would end.”</p>	

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<p>Institutional Factors US:</p> <p>Government entrepreneurial support policies</p>	<p>It refers to the support provided by governmental instances to Mexican entrepreneurs in order to facilitate their business initiatives while working in the United States.</p>	<p>“The Federal Government of United States has launched 100 Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) across the country which provide free support to startups.”</p>
<p>Education system and quality of life</p>	<p>The perceived existence of a higher quality education in both the public and the private sector and the positive judgment about the good quality of life in terms of services, opportunities, and conditions.</p>	<p>“Yes, on one hand, they look for the opportunity for their kids to improve language skills, to be involved with other culture, to have a better quality of life...”</p>
<p>Efficiency</p>	<p>The perceived easiness to conduct business in the United States because procedures and rules of the game are clear and because the business environment is certain.</p>	<p>“The system here is less bureaucratic, it is easy to start a business. You get here, you get a card and they serve you at the stipulated time. Much is made online, there is a lot of confidence, the government will believe you thanks to the locks (control mechanisms) they have.”</p>
<p>Friendly Tax System</p>	<p>Entrepreneurs have the impression that paying taxes is easier in the United States even though it is strictly regulated and controlled.</p>	<p>“Yes. It’s more flexible. It’s impossible to evade taxes but there are many forms to deduct.”</p>
<p>Transparency</p>	<p>Perception that the legal system coincides with the legal order.</p>	<p>“Bureaucracy and regulations are more ample and more delicate here than in Mexico, but they are clearer and more guided by the book. You have a lot of fronts to deal with.”</p>

Financial Factors	Credit accessibility	Entrepreneurs perceive that creating a financial background in the United States takes time, but once you have it, it is easier to get a credit.	“If you have money and you are able to create a financial background, you will have access.”
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Source: Author’s own elaboration.

Significant sections from participant statements that were related to each of the aforementioned family codes and their corresponding elements (individual codes) were selected for comparison purposes. The previously identified main themes were further used as labels of the networks’ components (the network is the visual diagram that connects sets of similar elements). Next, a network was developed for each individual code (called a node) out of the integration of the family code, the set of quotes associated to this code, and the co-occurring codes, where applicable. The kind of existing link (if it is associated with, if it is part of, if it is cause of....) between the codes was also determined.

Discussion of Findings

During the last decade, insecurity has become one of the main push factors for Mexican entrepreneurs, who leave in search of a safer living and working place. But the interviews show that additional motivators led them to move to the United States. In some cases, the initial motivation was insecurity, but other aspects later became important.

The results of the analysis of each factor are explained, and in every case a figure portrays some of the comments made by Mexican migrant entrepreneurs about the corresponding factor. Each figure contains the name of the family network, the factor under analysis, and some quotes. When applicable, the figure also depicts the co-occurring factors (which may be associated with, part of, contradict...the central factor). The family network node contains two numbers. The first refers to the size of the network—that is, the number of quotes associated to it (groundedness). The second refers to its position within that family. A tilde (~) next to the family code name means there is a comment associated to that family. Each quote’s box includes two numbers. The first refers to the interview number (from 1 to 20), while the second notes the quote number within the interview.

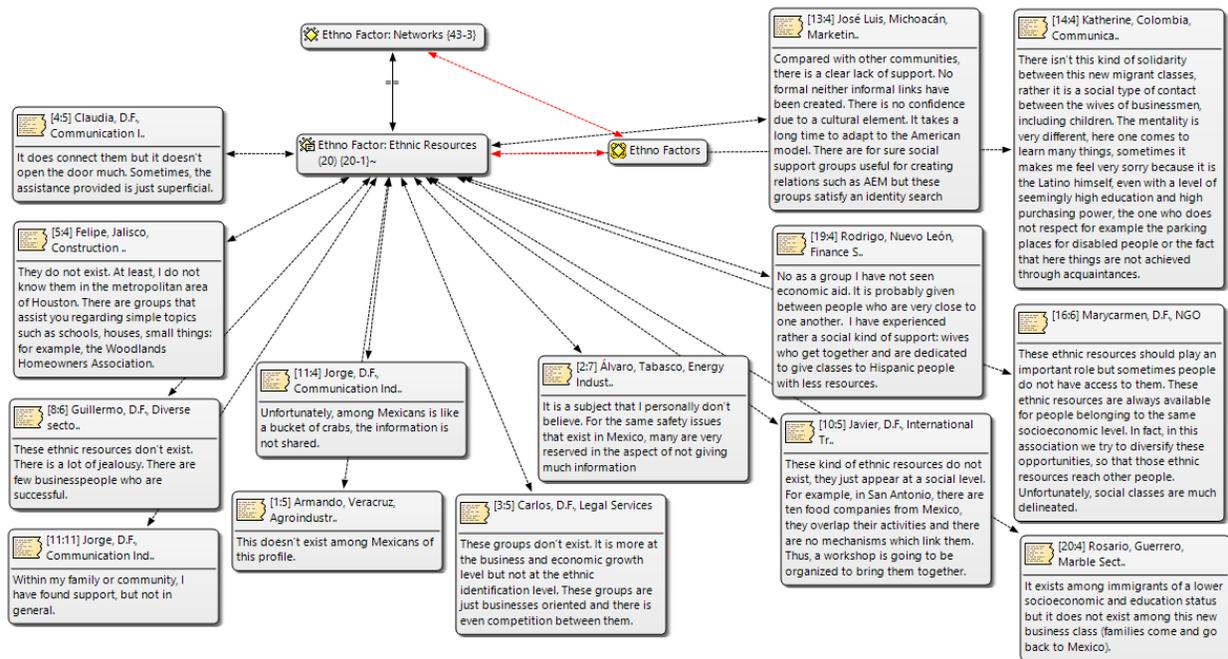
Ethno Factors

Ethnic Resources

Most interviewees think ethnic resources such as group cohesion, solidarity, assistance, and loyalty do not exist among Mexican entrepreneurial migrants. They argue that support is superficial, related to simple things such as recommendations about schools or houses. In some cases, this support extends to business interests, but it is not linked to an ethnic kind of identification. Some interviewees think there is strong social and economic competition

as well as a lack of trust among the group members. This confirms what Chrysostome (2010) suggested about opportunity immigrant entrepreneurs. They do not rely on ethnic resources, and they do not employ only co-ethnic employees but people from the host country as well. Figure 1 shows these comments. Ethnic resources are part of these kind of factors. They are associated with another ethno factor—networks— because ethnic resources sometimes emerge from established networks. Quotes below show the lack of ethnic resources in this new migrant entrepreneurial class.

Figure 1. Ethnic resources’ role among Mexican migrant entrepreneurial class

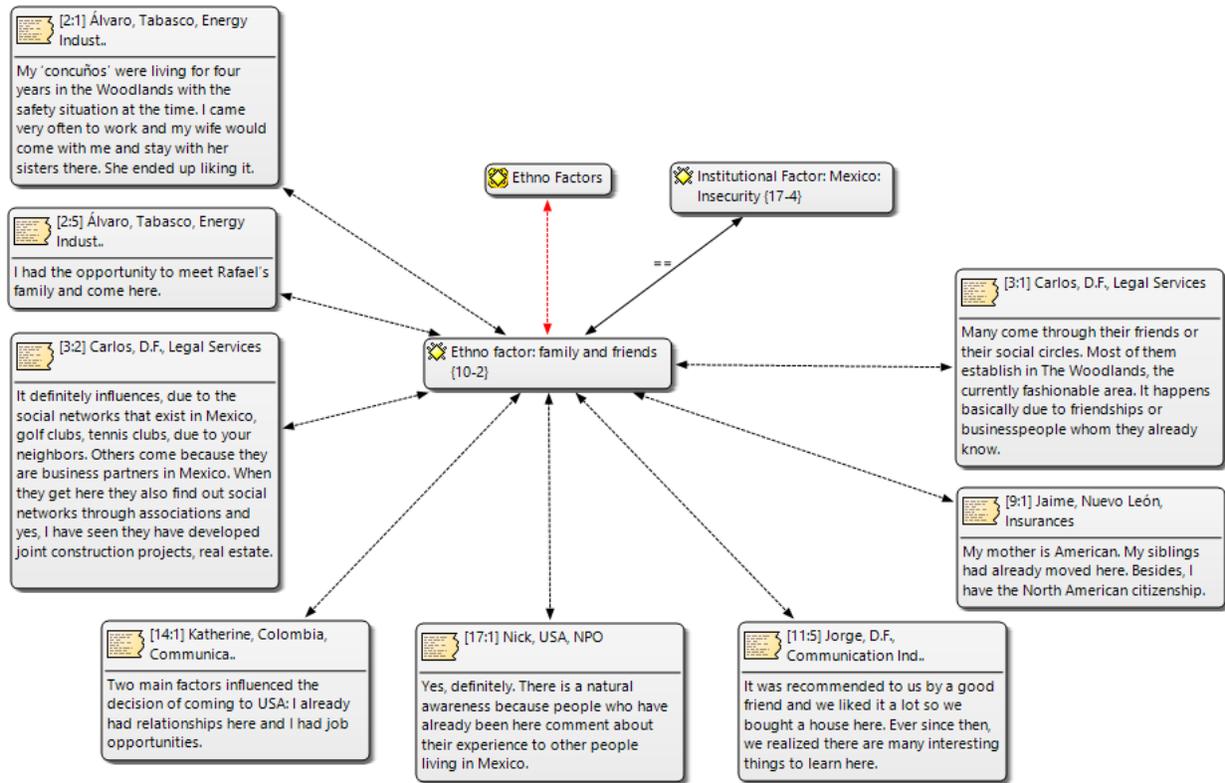


Source: Author’s own elaboration.

Family and Friends

Almost half of the interviewees (45 percent) moved to the United States because they had friends or family living there already. In fact, this aspect can be considered as a pull factor that attracts or at least facilitates the decision to work and/or live in the United States. Figure 2 contains interviewees’ comments about the role family and friends played in their decision to move to the United States. Again, we refer to ethno factors, but this time we analyze the importance of family and friends. This ethno factor is related to insecurity, a major institutional void in Mexico that pushes families to look for the support of relatives or friends living in the United States.

Figure 2. The role played by family and friends



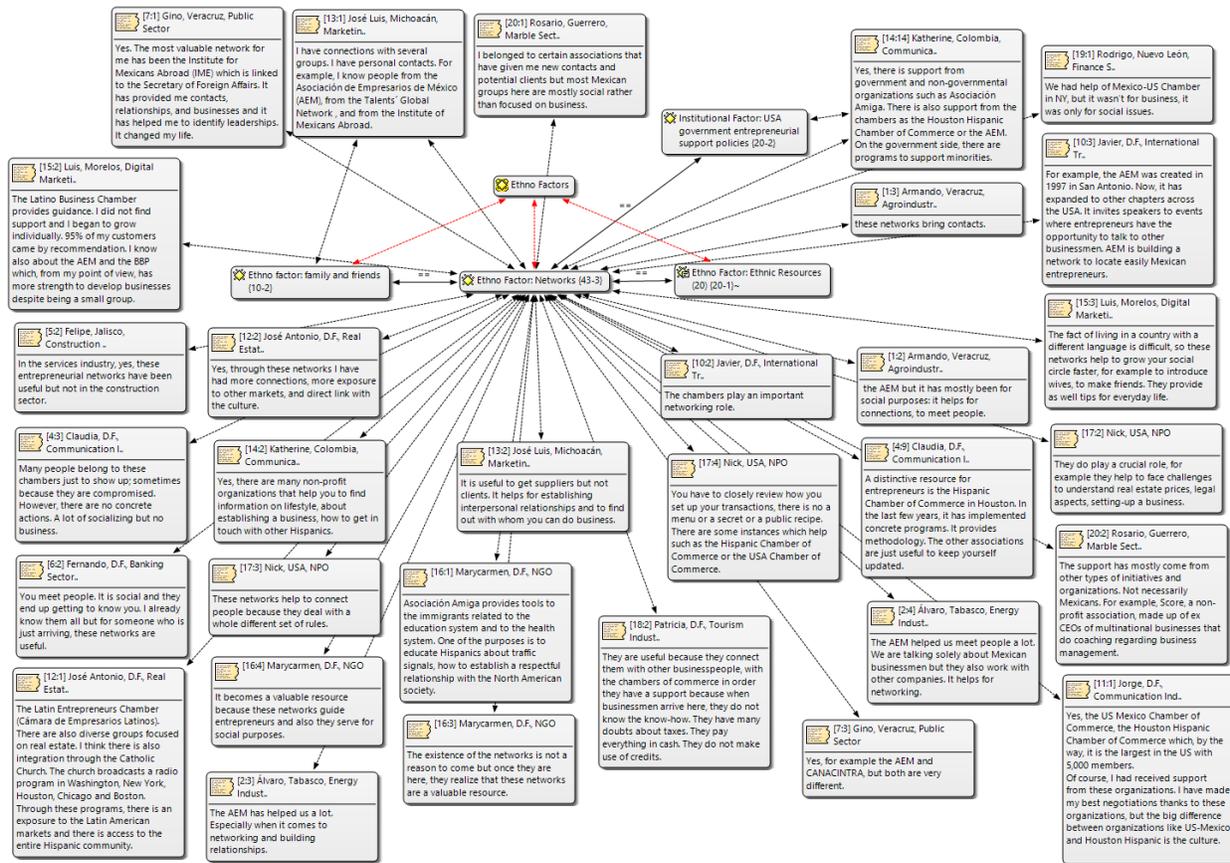
Source: Author's own elaboration.

Networks

Most of the interviewees referred to networks such as the Asociación de Empresarios de México (AEM), the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce, the Professional Business Partnership (PBP), Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Transformación (CANACINTRA), the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME), the U.S.-Mexico Business Council, or the Latin American Women's Association, among others. According to the interviewees, some of these networks have mainly a social purpose, but the entrepreneurs also recognize that belonging to them is beneficial in terms of getting connections, more exposure to other markets, understanding legal aspects, or other business-related issues. Such networks even provide closer links to the U.S. culture through the knowledge and experience of other Mexican entrepreneurs who have been living in the United States for a while. The existence of these networks is not a pull factor to come to the United States, but once Mexican entrepreneurs are living there, they realize that these networks are a valuable resource. They constitute what has been conceptualized as social capital, which along with human capital, financial capital, and the institutional constitute the mixed-embeddedness framework.

Figure 3 displays comments about this factor under the family code Ethno Factors. “Networks” is closely associated with both ethnic resources and family and friends, but it is a different ethno factor. Networks are part of the ethnic resources which foster group cohesion, solidarity, and assistance. And sometimes the initial contact with networks takes place through family and/or friends. “Networks” is therefore a factor also associated with U.S. entrepreneurial support policies because many of these business and social connections come out of the support provided by governmental entities.

Figure 3. Importance of networks



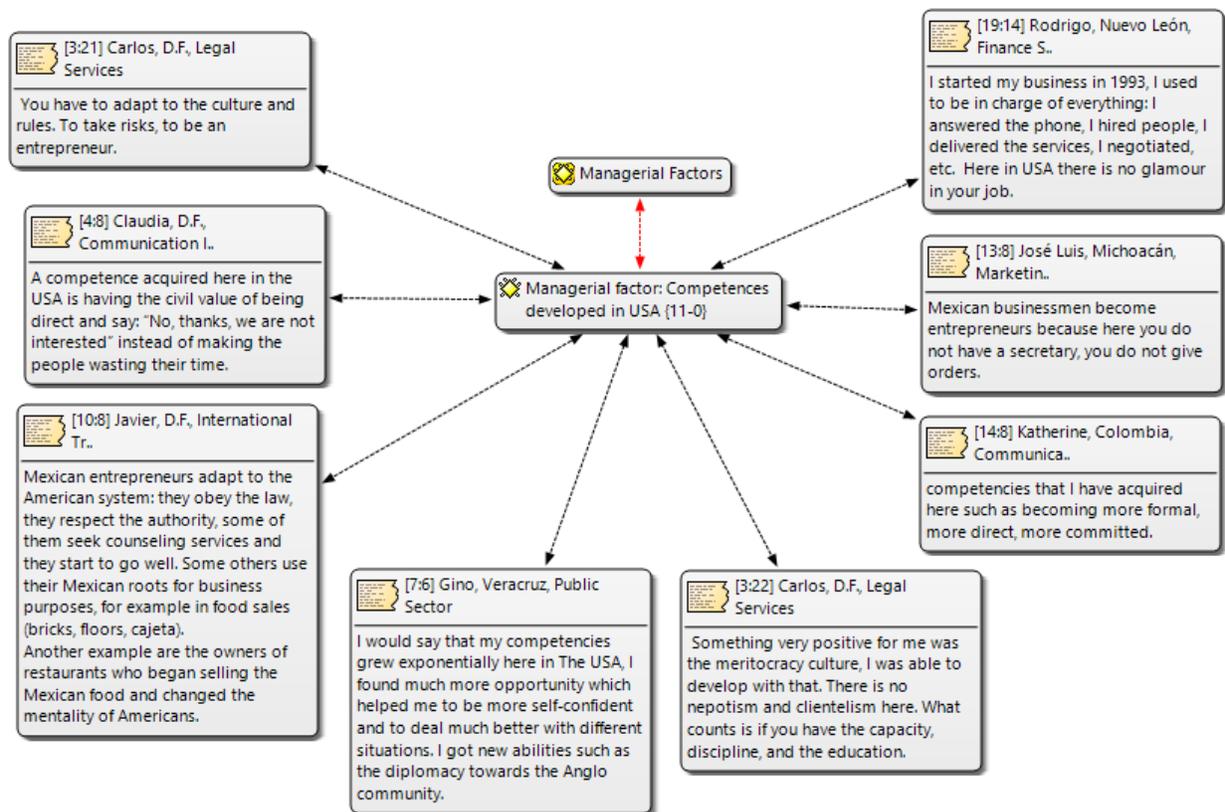
Source: Author’s own elaboration.

Managerial Factors

Competences developed in the United States

Migrant entrepreneurs have developed specific competences (human capital) while working and living in the United States. Mastering English is one such competence. Also, they develop a willingness to take risks due to the nature of the U.S. market and to the initial lack of knowledge about the behavior of this market. Adapting to the rules and business culture of the United States has been a key competence as well. Mexican entrepreneurs also learn how to perform the basic business activities they used to delegate to their assistants in Mexico but now have to perform themselves due to the low hierarchical system in United States. This in turn increases entrepreneurs' self-confidence. Figure 4 makes reference to interviewees' comments about such competences. This time the family code pertains to Managerial Factors, with the first member of this family being competences developed by Mexican migrant entrepreneurs.

Figure 4. Competences Mexican migrant entrepreneurs develop while living and working in the United States

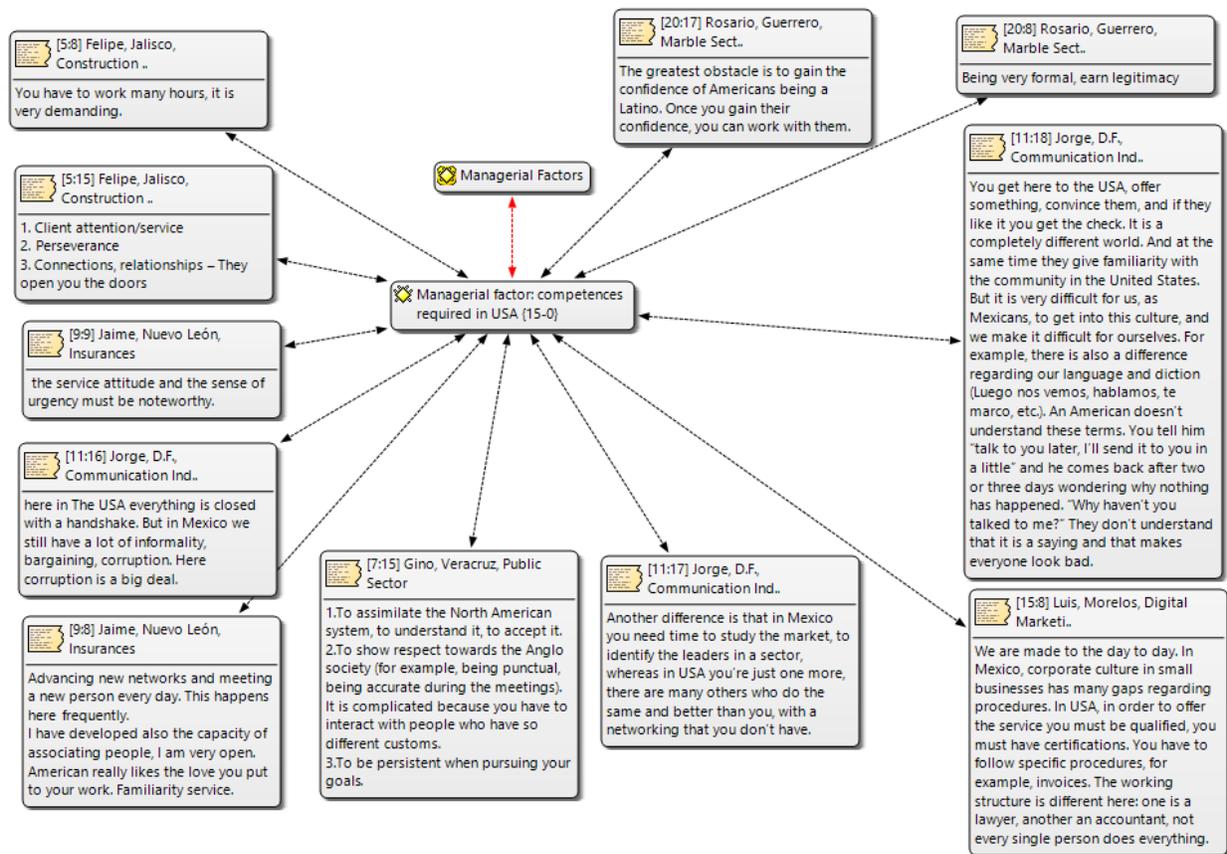


Source: Author's own elaboration.

Competences and knowledge required in the United States

Most Mexican migrant entrepreneurs reference the importance of the service attitude and the sense of urgency to succeed in the United States. Formality and transparency are taken-for-granted business qualities. Entrepreneurs also emphasize the relevance of building networks. In addition, they stress the need to be persistent and resilient because the business environment is extremely competitive. This is paired with the fact that it is imperative to work hard to gain the trust of U.S. clients who may sometimes have biases about Latinos due to previous negative experiences. Part of gaining this trust means the professionalization of services provided by Mexican entrepreneurs through the systematization of procedures and certifications. Figure 5 shows quotes around this. The family code is still Managerial Factors, but the individual factor refers to competences and knowledge required in the United States.

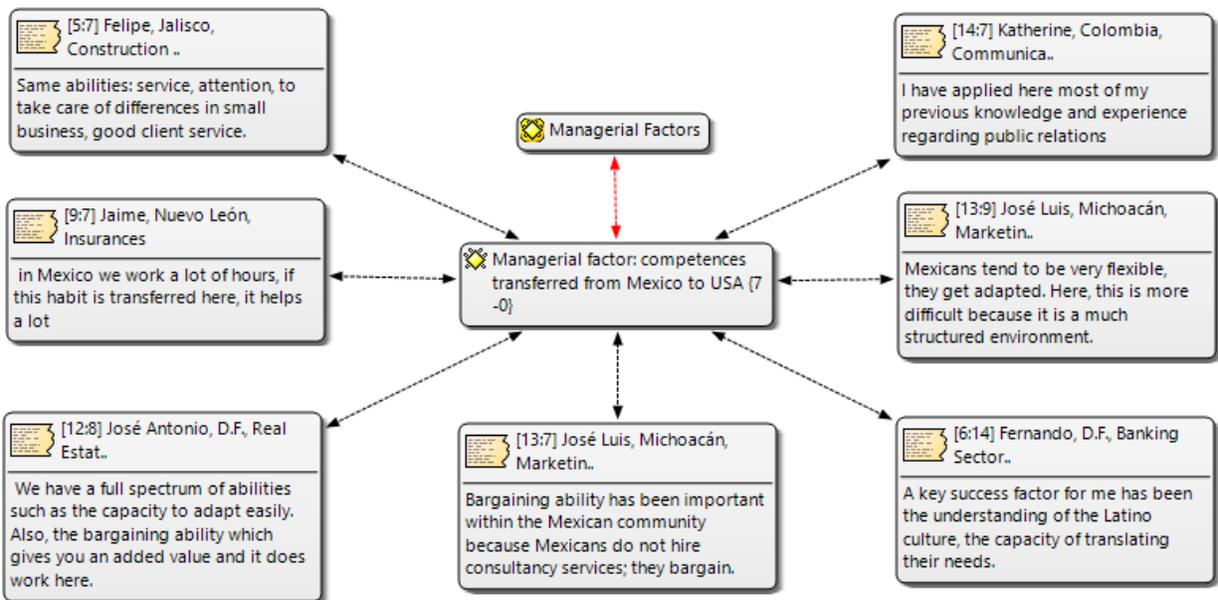
Figure 5. Competences and knowledge required in the United States



Source: Author's own elaboration.

Interviewees point out that in order to fulfill the competences and knowledge required in the United States, it is useful to adjust some of the competences and knowledge developed in Mexico, such as the capacity to work long hours, high-level ability to adapt to diverse situations, or even the bargaining capacity that may bring better results in a negotiation. Additionally, the knowledge Mexican entrepreneurs developed in Mexico about specific sectors or industries can be very useful in entrepreneurial activity in United States. Figure 6 depicts the comments around the knowledge that interviewees have transferred from Mexico to their daily business activities in the United States.

Figure 6. Competences and knowledge transferred from Mexico to the United States

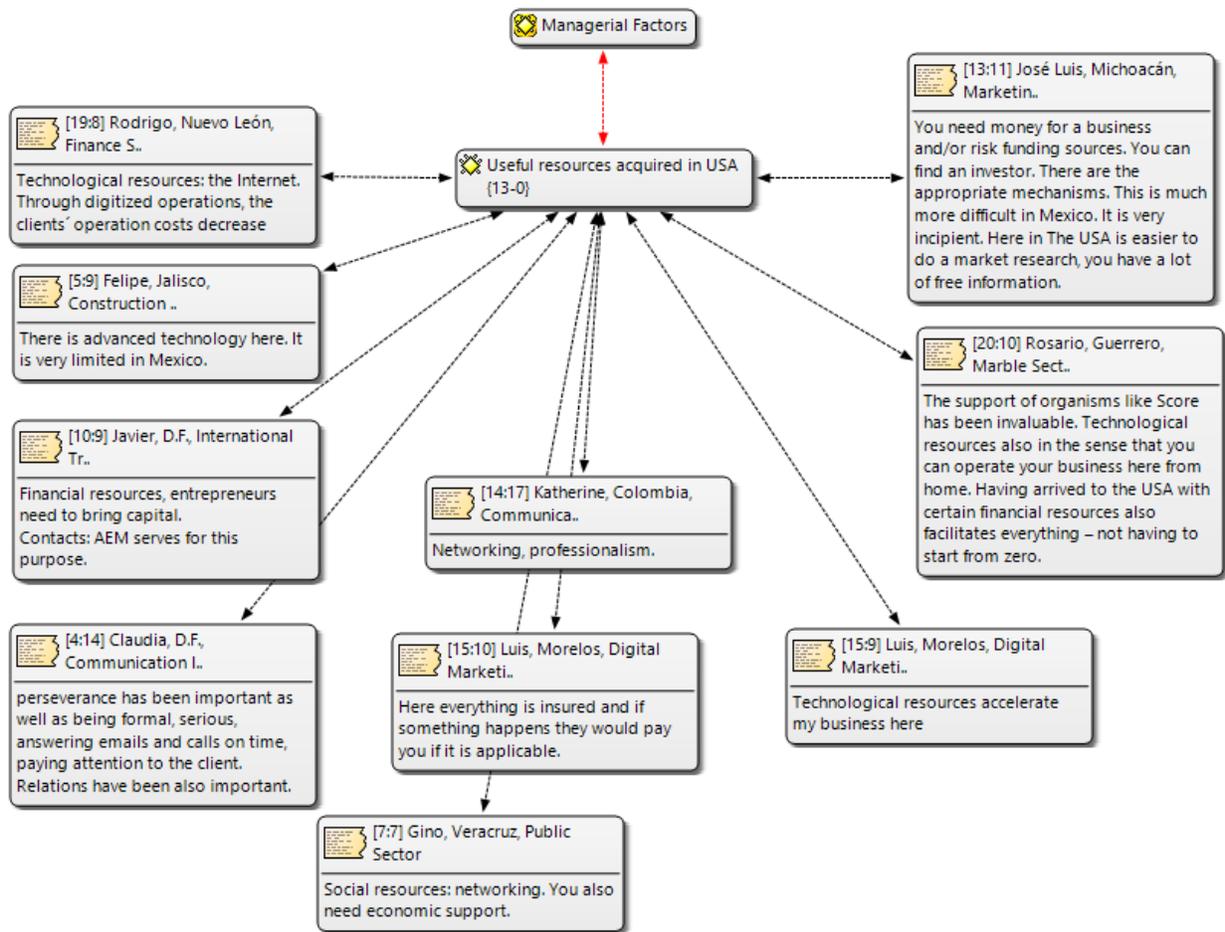


Source: Author's own elaboration.

Resources required and acquired in the United States

Most of the interviewees highlight the importance of having solid financial resources when coming to work in the United States. Many also underline the importance of technological and information resources available in the United States, which foster and make easier business operation and maintenance. They also refer to the certainty that the U.S. insurance system provides to the daily operation of the business. Figure 7 still refers to the Managerial Factors, but it depicts quotes around the kind of resources required and normally acquired in the United States for business activity.

Figure 7. Resources required and acquired in the United States



Source: Author's own elaboration.

Institutional Factors

The analysis of institutional factors is done separately for Mexico and the United States because in the case of Mexico, these factors pushed the entrepreneurs to migrate to the United States, whereas in the case of the United States, these institutional factors have pulled them to come.

Mexican institutional factors pushing entrepreneurs to the United States

Mexican government entrepreneurial support policies

The Mexican government supporting policies are inadequate. Most Mexican migrant entrepreneurs do not receive support from the Mexican government while living and working in the United States. Some of them recognize that providing such support would be questionable to a certain extent, because Mexico needs to undertake these entrepreneurial projects within the country. However, they point out that the government so far has not generated the appropriate economic and social conditions to avoid this brain and productivity drain. When questioned about governmental support, most of them refer to ProMexico¹, but they consider its scope limited. Some mentioned CONACYT², but they say that it supports education, not businesses. Interviewees acknowledged the existence of programs but point out the lack of continuity from one presidential administration to another. In fact, most of them recognize the presence of the Mexican Consulate in Houston, but they make clear that its role is operational and social. Although the Consulate provides health and education assistance to traditional Mexican migrants, those services are not for entrepreneurs. They also mention the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME)³, but think IME has become weaker in recent years. Entrepreneurs allude to the existence of support programs for farmers and manufacturers of finished products, but there is no support for service providers. When questioned about the kind of help they expect from the government, they do not talk about financial support because they are convinced this is not the government's role. However, they mention the creation of forums, seminars, and conferences that can bring the Mexican migrant entrepreneurial class together to share know-how, advanced concepts, and best practices. Another aspect the interviewees bring up is the lack of advertising for existing governmental programs. Sometimes they find out about them accidentally, but they do not have accurate or timely information to assist

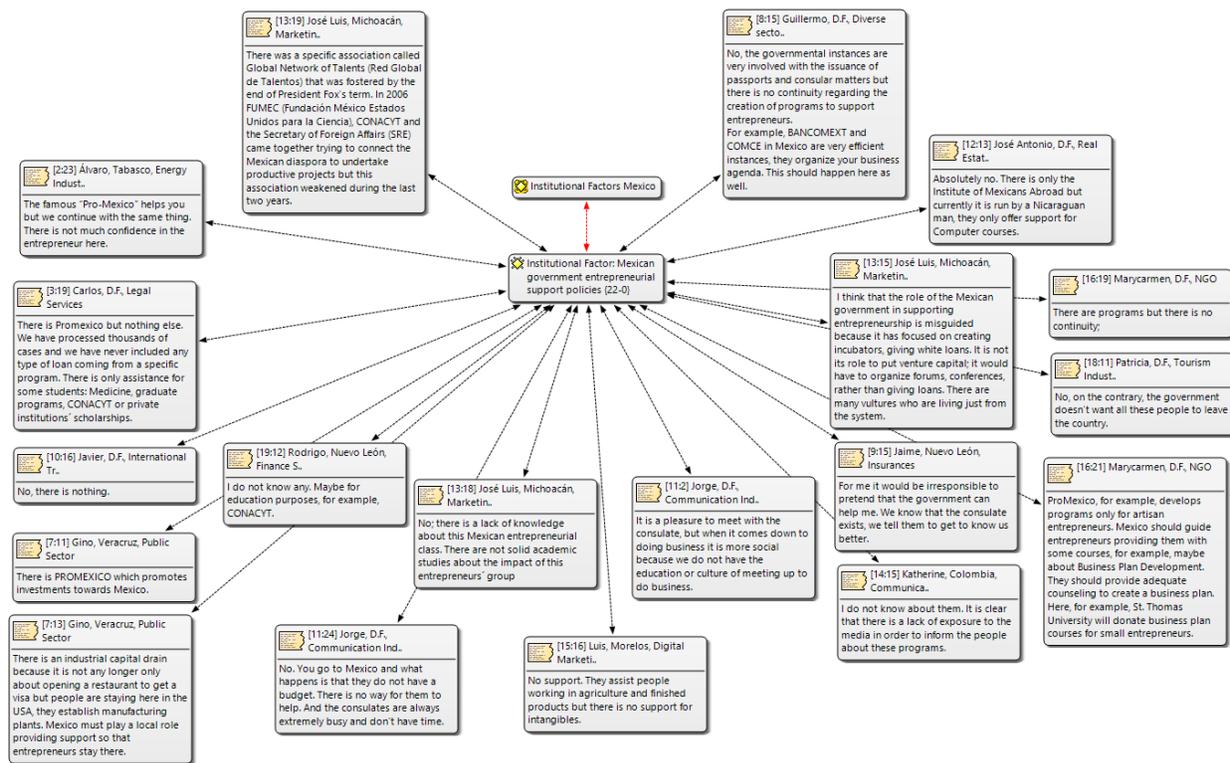
¹ ProMéxico is the federal government agency responsible for coordinating strategies aimed at strengthening Mexico's participation in the international economy, supporting the process of exporting firms established in the country and coordinating activities aimed at attracting foreign investment. Pro México Trade and Investment (2015). Mission, Vision, and Values. Retrieved from <http://www.promexico.gob.mx/en/mx/mision-vision-valores-objetivos>.

² Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (the National Council of Science and Technology) is Mexico's entity in charge of the promotion of scientific and technological activities, setting government policies for these matters, and granting scholarships for postgraduate studies. Conacyt (2015). El Conacyt. Retrieved from <http://www.conacyt.mx/index.php/el-conacyt>.

³ The Institute for Mexicans Abroad (Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior, IME) is a decentralized agency of the Mexican government's Foreign Ministry to support Mexicans who live and work abroad. Its main purpose is to strengthen ties with Mexico and to support the health and education infrastructures within diasporic communities. Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (2015). ¿Qué es el IME?. Retrieved from <http://www.ime.gob.mx/es/ique-es-el-ime/1>.

them. Figure 8 reflects the perceptions of Mexican entrepreneurs regarding the support of the Mexican government while they are overseas.

Figure 8. Mexican government support policies addressed to the Mexican migrant entrepreneurs



Source: Author's own elaboration.

Mexican bureaucracy, tax system, and economic situation

When asking Mexican entrepreneurs about the main reasons that pushed them to go to the United States, some refer to the inefficient bureaucracy that characterizes Mexico and negatively affects entrepreneurship. It takes too long to open a company in Mexico, compared to the United States. Interviewees attribute this disadvantage to the lack of technological resources to streamline formalities and to the irrational working system of many public and private agencies versus the pragmatic approach of the U.S. system. Conversely, the perceived efficiency of the U.S. bureaucracy becomes a pull factor for attracting Mexican businessmen.

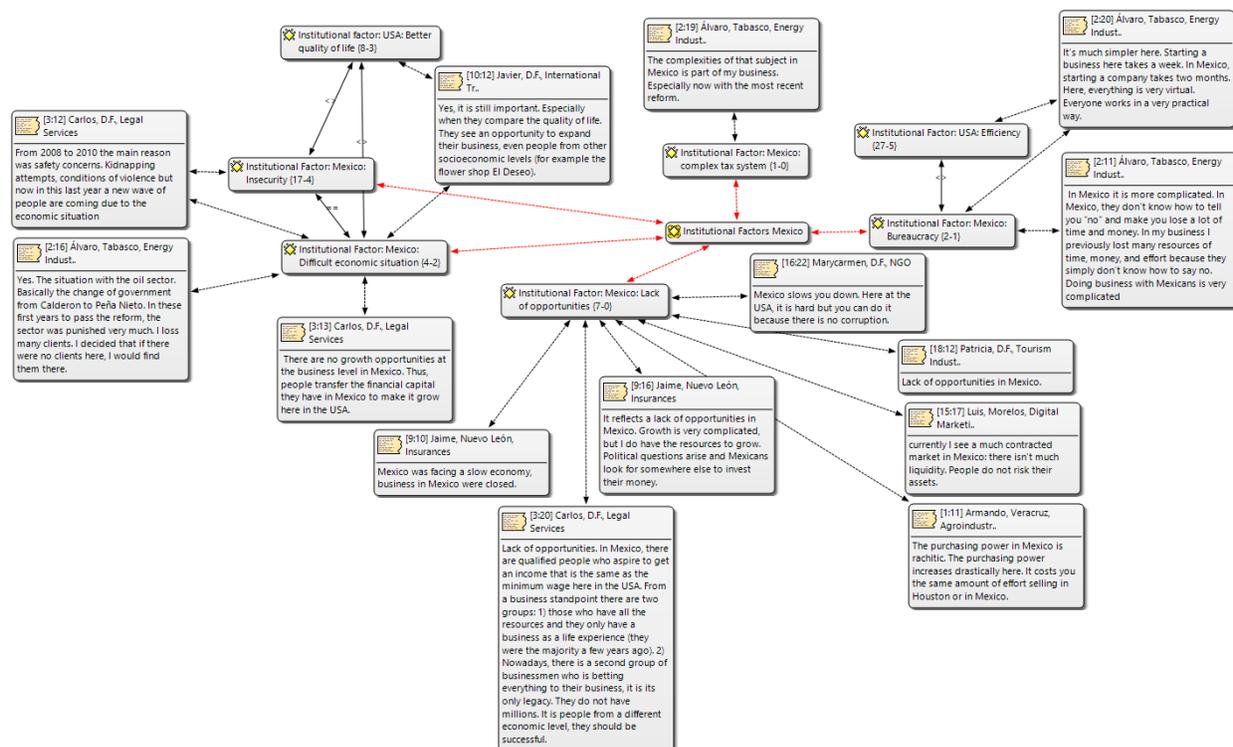
Another institutional issue identified by interviewees is the tax system, described as complex, particularly as a result of the 2013 fiscal reform. Forty percent of interviewees depicted Mexico's economic situation over the last decade as difficult, translating this into a lack of opportunities. Even though they think that was not the situation at the beginning of this century, they reveal that in recent years, some entrepreneurs transferred their capital

Entrepreneurial Migration from Mexico to the United States

to the United States to make it grow. This decision is fostered by the perception of a higher quality of life in the United States. In contrast, a bigger percentage of the interviewees (55 percent) still point to opportunities in Mexico. They refer to the existence of a binational market (Mexico and the United States) and even recognize that they have been able to go to the United States because of their business success in Mexico. Yet profiting from these opportunities is difficult due to institutional obstacles. Most of the entrepreneurs think there are as many opportunities in Mexico as in the United States, but the main difference lies on the ease of capitalizing upon them in the United States.

Figure 9 references these institutional issues pushing entrepreneurs to work and live in the United States. Due to their interconnectedness, institutional factors such as the bureaucracy, tax system complexities, the difficult economic situation, and the consequent perceived lack of opportunities (which is not a general perception among interviewees) are analyzed under the same visual network, but each institutional factor is related to corresponding quotes. Insecurity is also depicted as part of the visual network due to its association to the aforementioned factors, but it is analyzed separately because of the large number of quotes derived from this topic. The figure also displays some co-occurrences between institutional factors. For example, insecurity is associated with the perceived difficult economic situation in Mexico. The high quality of life of the United States contradicts both the difficult economic situation of Mexico and its high level of insecurity.

Figure 9. Mexican institutional factors pushing entrepreneurs to the United States: bureaucracy, tax system, economic situation



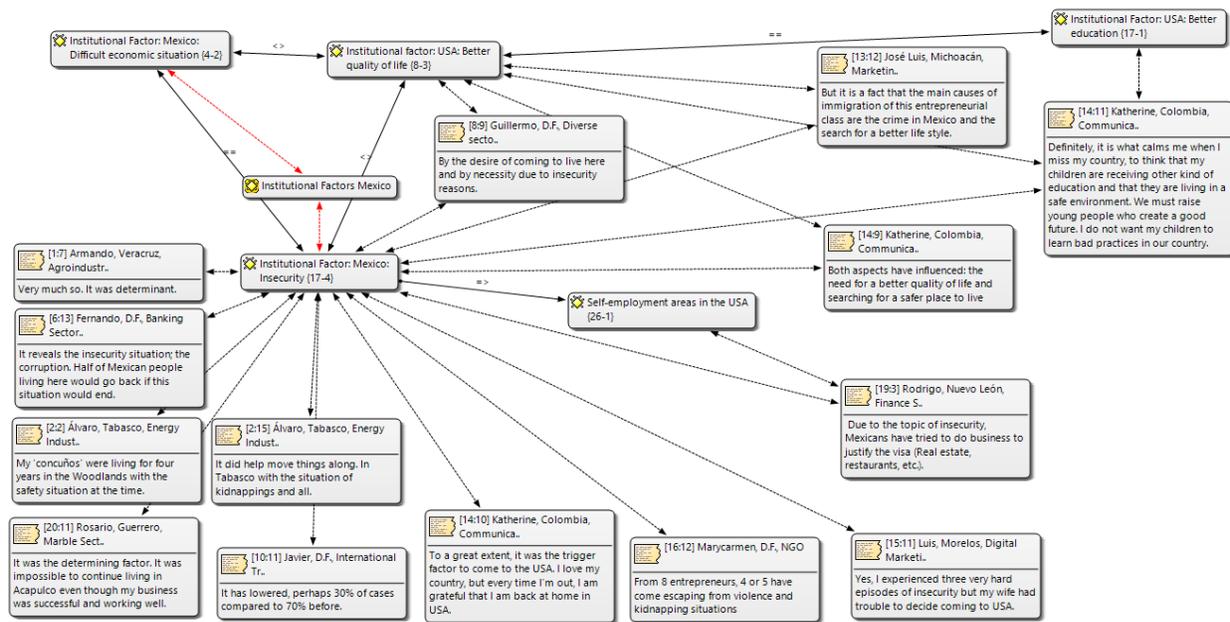
Source: Author's own elaboration.

Insecurity

Even though insecurity is not the only push factor associated with the migration of the entrepreneurial class to the United States, it has been a major reason behind not just this migration but also behind the stay (diaspora) of many Mexican families in the United States. The weight of this factor has been such that many entrepreneurs left behind businesses that were really successful in Mexico. In fact, in some cases they tried to create totally new businesses out of nothing (self-employment areas) in the United States in order to get a visa and stay with their families. They often make this decision to offer their families a safer environment (plus a better quality of life and a better education) despite the fact that their families sometimes were not confident about the move. Notwithstanding, some mentioned that lately, this choice is not directly related to insecurity but to opportunities offered by a solid institutional environment.

Figure 10 shows the perceptions of the interviewees about insecurity, which falls under the Institutional Factors family code. As mentioned, this institutional issue is associated with the perceived difficult economic situation in Mexico and with both a better quality of life in the United States and a better education system. Additionally, the figure reveals that insecurity is a cause of Mexican entrepreneurs' self-employment in the United States.

Figure 10. Mexican institutional factors pushing entrepreneurs to the United States: Insecurity



Source: Author's own elaboration.

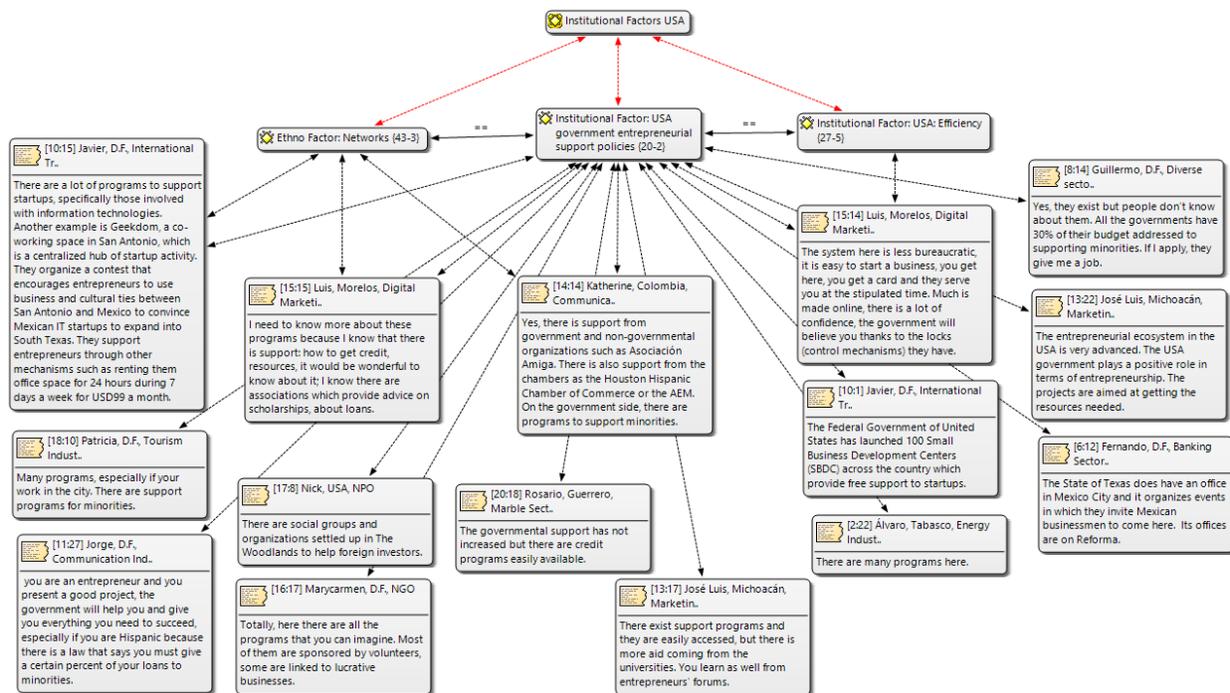
U.S. institutional factors pulling entrepreneurs to immigrate in United States

U.S. government entrepreneurial support policies

Entrepreneurs have positive views on this, with many mentioning support offered to minorities. They talked about specific initiatives such as Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), which provide free support for startups. They underscored the confidence demonstrated by the government towards entrepreneurs thanks to efficient control mechanisms government agencies developed within the corporate field. Others also referred to nongovernmental initiatives they found helpful. Some provided examples about specific sectors or industries, such as programs that encourage Mexican IT startups and associations that guide entrepreneurs to access credit or let them know about scholarships. These programs foster interaction with other Mexican or Hispanic entrepreneurs, extending business and social networks.

Figure 11 references the opinions of Mexican entrepreneurs about the U.S. government’s policies. It depicts the family code Institutional Factors U.S., which includes governmental entrepreneurial support, and corresponding quotes. It also portrays some co-occurrences among factors, such as the association between these support policies and increased opportunities to build networks and how the perceived efficiency of the U.S. system is associated to such governmental policies.

Figure 11. U.S. government entrepreneurial support policies

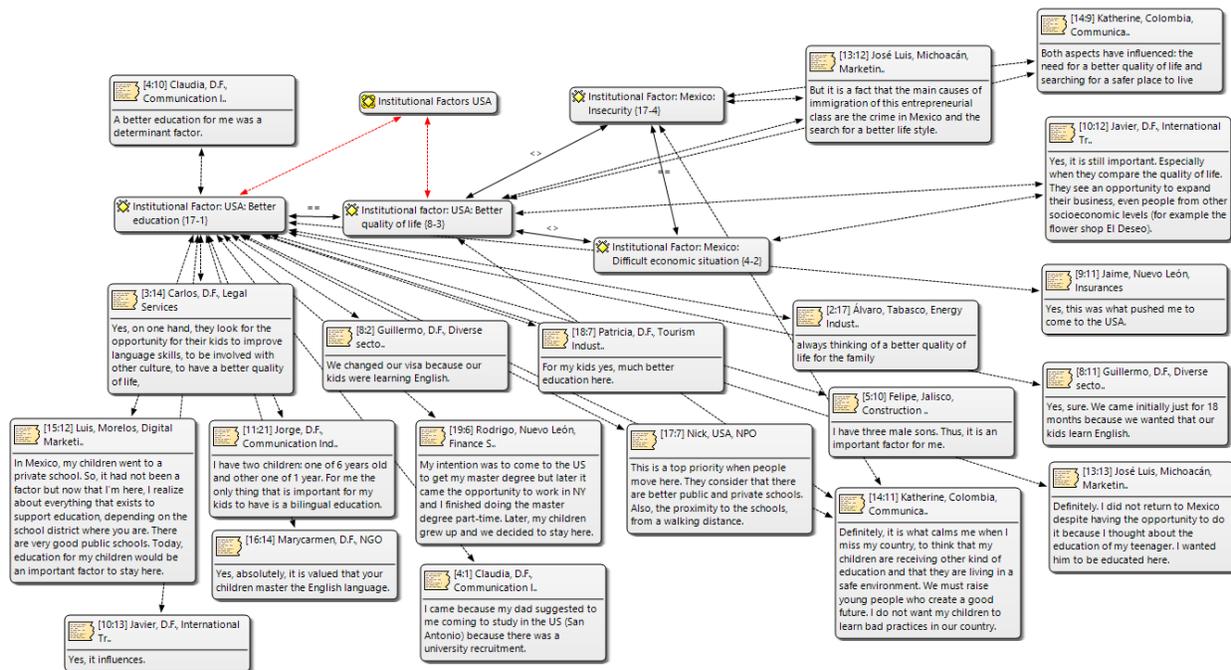


Source: Author’s own elaboration.

Education system and quality of life

These pull factors were salient in enticing Mexican entrepreneurs to stay in the United States. Some interviewees decided to stay in order to take advantage of educational opportunities for their children as well as the possibility that their children learn English. In some cases, educational opportunities include the entrepreneurs or their spouses going to graduate school. They also think the quality of public schools is high. This perception has implications for Mexico in terms of education policy. This is not new—witness education reform—but it is important to note that it is one of several medium-term strategies or mechanisms the government can undertake in order to reduce the appeal of staying in the United States for Mexican entrepreneurs. This is not just about brain-drain implications, but it is also about the talent shortage most economies are facing or will face in the near future. Figure 12 illustrates interviewees’ perceptions about the aforementioned institutional factors. Again, the family code is Institutional Factors U.S., and the issues analyzed are education and quality of life and their corresponding quotes. The figure reflects the association between a better education and a perceived better quality of life. This last element contradicts both the insecurity and the perceived difficult economic situation in Mexico, as it has been explained before.

Figure 12. U.S. institutional factors: better education and better quality of life



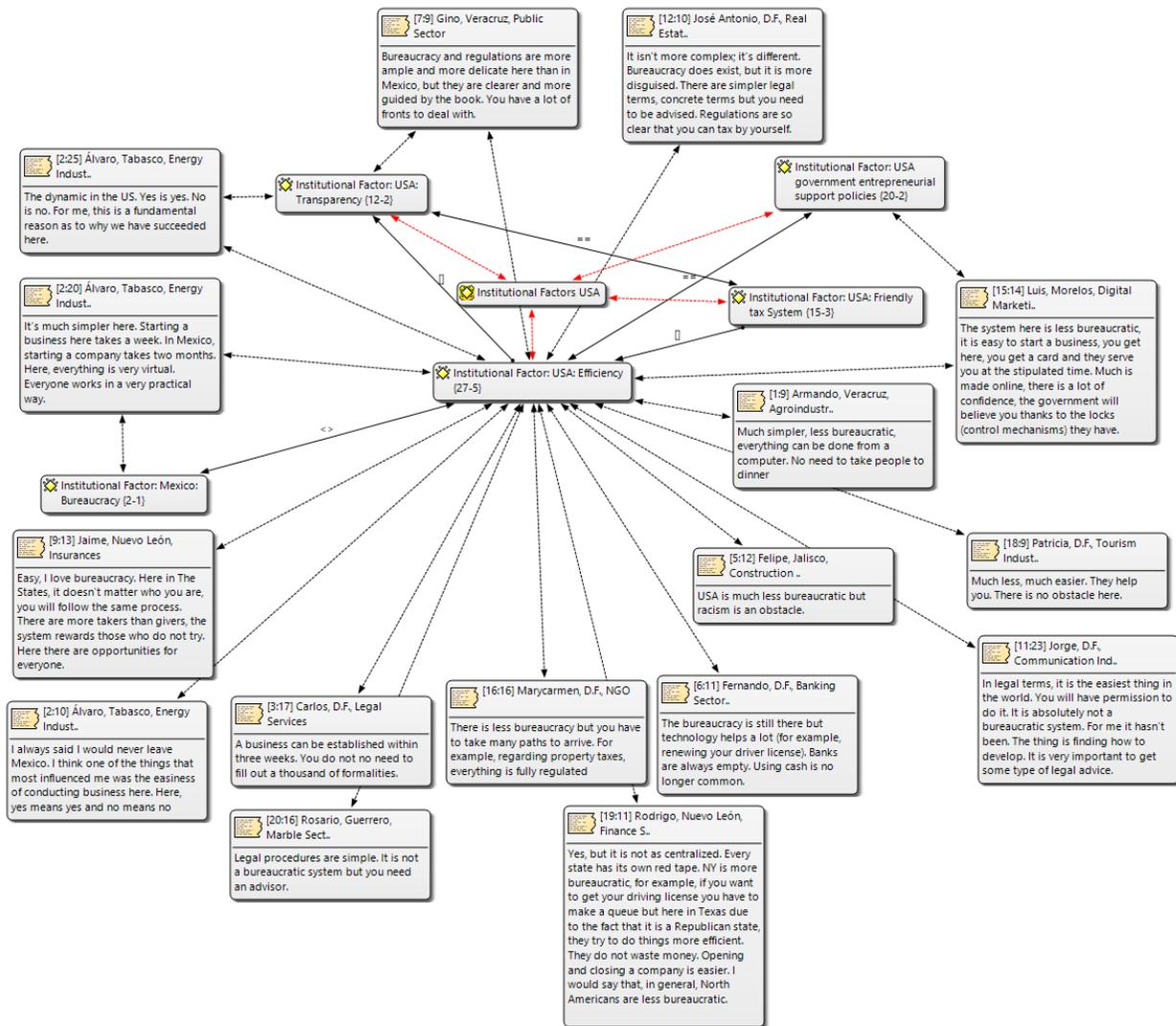
Source: Author’s own elaboration.

Efficient procedures

When asking entrepreneurs about their perception regarding procedures and regulations, most expressed forceful opinions: rules are clear and enforced in the United States. So, it is important for any businessperson to hire specialists (lawyers, accountants) to fully comply with the law. According to interviewees, the prize for the strict application of rules is certainty, an aspect they stand for because this does not happen in Mexico. Entrepreneurs consider that the implementation of technology fosters efficiency in the U.S. system, allowing the fast opening and closing of businesses and facilitating requirements. It is interesting that entrepreneurs do not associate this efficiency only with the governmental and nongovernmental agencies but also with the general business and social environment in the sense that people are direct, explicit, formal, and committed. They also relate efficiency to the meritocracy culture that prevails in the United States, which minimizes practices such as clientelism or nepotism. Some of the interviewees' comments link efficiency with equity in the sense that, according to them, systems such as the tax system work well because everybody pays taxes, and, even though the taxes can be high, the quality of the services received are worth it. This equity notion is also related to the fact that in the United States, it is not necessary to have connections in order to get a service or to solve a problem. The role played by networks has a different purpose, compared to Mexico.

Figure 13 depicts these perceptions. It refers to the same family code: Institutional Factors U.S., but this time the aspect under consideration is efficiency. As mentioned before, the figure displays the association between governmental support policies and the perceived efficiency of the U.S. system. It also shows that a friendly tax system is part of this efficiency and the perceived transparency. Finally, the figure depicts the contradiction between the perceived efficiency of the United States and the bureaucracy of Mexico.

Figure 13. U.S. institutional factors: efficiency



Source: Author's own elaboration.

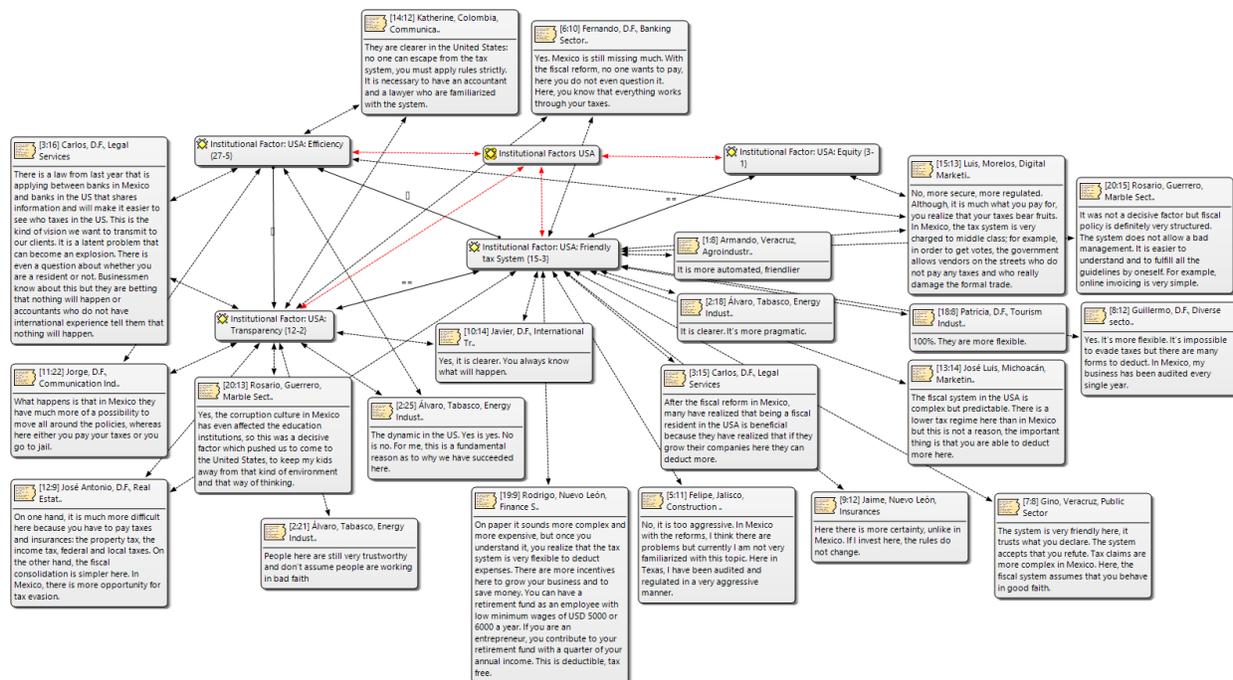
Tax system and transparency

Most of the entrepreneurs consider the U.S. tax system much friendlier than the Mexican system. As stated, the flexibility of the system is part of the efficiency that characterizes U.S. institutions. It is related to the perception of both a fair (equal) and transparent system. In fact, even though some interviewees state that the tax system by itself was not a pulling factor to move to the United States, they recognize that once they are in the United States, the very structured tax system is easy to understand and applicable to everyone. The attractive economic dynamics of the U.S. market, along with a friendly tax system, are part of the opportunity structure concept referred to in the literature, which comprises the social, economic, political, and regulatory systems. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that entrepreneurs consider the U.S. tax system friendly in its application (online application,

more deduction possibilities) but very strict (even aggressive) regarding the supervision of its application. According to the interviewees, the control mechanisms established by the government have become stricter recently; everything is regulated. Hence the importance of hiring lawyers and accountants familiarized with the system. Moreover, entrepreneurs relate transparency in the United States to the pragmatism of the business ecosystem in the sense that in both the public and private sector, a contract is what it is; there are no further interpretations—“yes” is yes, “no” is no, end of the story. This pragmatism provides a high level of certainty, vital for entrepreneurs when planning long-term (although this recently has been questioned due to new visa requirements that sometimes do not allow Mexican entrepreneurs to get involved in long-term investments because they do not know if their migrant status will be renewed or not).

Figure 14 summarizes Mexican migrant entrepreneurs’ perceptions regarding the tax system and the level of transparency in the U.S. business environment. They are analyzed together because they are interrelated (the figure shows the association between the level of transparency and the perception of the tax system as a well-structured, efficient system). This figure also portrays an association between the tax system and the institutional factor equality in the sense that, as stated above, it is applied the same way to everybody. Furthermore, both the transparency and the tax system are part of the perceived efficiency of the U.S. system.

Figure 14. U.S. institutional factors: tax system and transparency



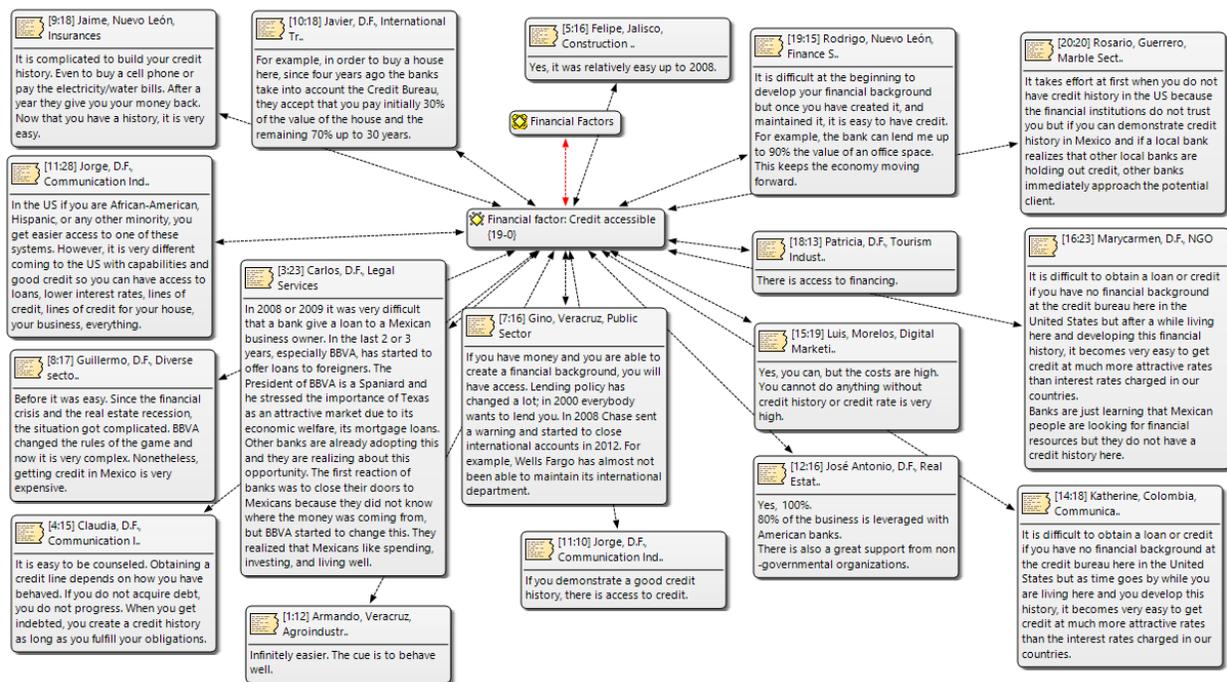
Source: Author’s own elaboration.

Financial Factors

Mexican migrant entrepreneurs underline that it is difficult to create a financial background at the credit bureau in order to be able to get credit as an individual or a company. On the other hand, they state that once the person or company has developed a financial history, access to credit is very easy and more affordable than in Mexico. There is also the perception that financing has changed during recent years because the banking sector implemented a lot of locks in order to prevent money laundering, but some banks recently have started to offer loans to foreigners. Interviewees also refer to the financial aid that can be obtained through nongovernmental agencies.

Figure 15 displays comments around financial access in the United States. The family code is Financial Factors, and the issue under analysis is the accessibility to credit.

Figure 15. Financial factors: accessibility to credit



Source: Author's own elaboration.

After examining Mexican migrant entrepreneurs' perceptions about ethno, managerial, institutional, and financial factors, it is clear that the opportunity structure Mexican entrepreneurs have found in the United States is one of the recurrent explanations of their decision to live and do business there. This is portrayed through a combination of elements such as attractive economic dynamics in the U.S. market; an approachable regulatory system; a more transparent business environment; clearer fiscal rules; and more solid educational alternatives for their children.

These factors are not the only drivers of the positive business experiences some of these entrepreneurs have had while living and working in the United States. There is also a set of personal and professional qualities (human capital) that has been a determinant for success in the United States as a migrant entrepreneur. Table 2 summarizes the qualities most of the interviewed entrepreneurs referred to.

Table 2. Points of view of Mexican migrant entrepreneurs about determinant human capital to succeed in the U.S. business environment

HUMAN CAPITAL	FURTHER DESCRIPTION (when required)
Knowledge about business dynamics in Mexico.	Some entrepreneurs provide consultancy services to U.S. clients who want to enter into the Mexican market or who are investing in an emerging Mexican industry (energy, for example).
Knowledge of specific technical terms within a particular sector or industry.	
Mastering the English language.	
Pragmatism.	This approach avoids clientelism and/or nepotism. It saves a lot of time when entrepreneurs are direct and explicit.
Respect of rules.	
Anticipation.	
Commitment.	Being formal, punctual, and reliable.
Humbleness.	Hierarchy is not as accentuated as in Mexico. Titles are not as important. In the United States, the meritocracy culture prevails.
Resilience.	Competition is hard, so entrepreneurs need to keep trying.
Hard work capacity.	Entrepreneurs learn to do every kind of task by themselves (no secretaries).
Rootlessness.	Entrepreneurs need to go ahead and forget about the things that tie them to Mexico in not such a positive way.
Networking.	
Service attitude.	
Sense of urgency.	
Willingness to learn.	
Qualifications.	Improvisation does not work in the United States because functions are more structured. There are specialized people for every discipline, kind of activity, or job function.
Differential value (innovation).	Competition is so hard and most of the entrepreneurs are so qualified that demonstrating the differentiation of their product/service is essential.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

From a public policy perspective, the results from this research can be encouraging, to a certain extent, in the sense that overcoming the drain Mexico is facing with the exit of this group of entrepreneurs does not lie solely on the solution to organized crime but also depends on the implementation of concrete, manageable actions that provide a more friendly business environment for these entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

Research results complement the literature about entrepreneurial migration by identifying push and pull factors leading high-skilled Mexicans to work and live in the United States. The impact of the social, human, and financial capital (concrete embeddedness) on Mexican entrepreneurial migration was studied through the identification of ethno, managerial, and financial factors that influence Mexican entrepreneurs' decision to migrate. Similarly, the impact of the socioeconomic, political, and regulatory environment at the home (Mexico) and host (United States) countries was viewed through the institutional factors (abstract embeddedness). Most previous studies about entrepreneurial migration have used a quantitative approach, applied from a sociological or anthropological perspective. This paper analyzes this phenomenon from a managerial angle through 20 interviews.

As for the ethno factors, the interviews reveal that having family and friends living in the United States shapes the entrepreneurs' migration decision. The existence of social and business networks is not a determinant factor in their migration decision (as it is in most cases for traditional migrants), but it is an aspect they consider useful and valuable once they are living in the United States. In regard to ethnic resources, Mexican migrant entrepreneurs do not think they exist among this new migrant class.

Analysis of the managerial factors shows that the majority of Mexican migrant entrepreneurs interviewed have a higher education degree, which fosters a dynamic entrepreneurial activity. Moreover, previous knowledge and competences developed in Mexico are useful for migrants' entrepreneurship, such as being bilingual, adaptation capacity, and bargaining skills. Nonetheless, migrants have to develop a whole set of new capabilities, such as the ability to solve daily operational business issues, being direct and pragmatic, and being formal and strict in the application of rules and regulations.

With respect to the financial factors, in the past most entrepreneurs moving to the United States had already solid capital and did not depend economically on their business ventures in the United States, whereas today's entrepreneurs do require financial support to start and keep their businesses and they do depend on them economically. Therefore, as the financial profile of the Mexican migrant entrepreneur is changing, access to credit becomes a factor that contributes to perpetuating or at least extending Mexican entrepreneurs' stay in the United States. In other words, access to credit is not necessarily an initial pull factor to come to the United States, but becomes one once Mexican entrepreneurs are living in the country, although they admit it is hard to create a financial background. This has significant implications for public policy, because the Mexican

government needs to enhance financial access through corresponding reforms as part of a short- or medium-term strategy to decrease the migration of high-skilled entrepreneurs to the United States.

The findings confirm that institutional factors play a major role in the entrepreneurs' migration decision. Most of the entrepreneurial migration literature has emphasized the importance of taking into account the host institutional context surrounding business opportunities, but it is clear that to have a thorough understanding of the entrepreneurial migration phenomenon, analysis of the home country's institutional environment is also crucial. The sending country triggers migration, even when the host country subsequently plays a key role in securing or discouraging the permanence of migrant entrepreneurs. The Mexican institutional context is evidently the primary force that stimulates them to go to the United States. Surprisingly, even though insecurity has been a determinant push factor for some, the main factors behind the decision to migrate in recent years have been the corruption, fiscal uncertainty, bureaucracy, and informality of the Mexican business environment. The U.S. institutional context represents the opposite situation for entrepreneurs who initially have the perception that the country will offer them and their families a safe, transparent, certain, efficient, and well-regulated environment. Once they are living and working in the United States, they confirm this perception, and it becomes a factor that keeps them in the country. In other words, insecurity is not the only push element, but market dynamics are as well. Mexican entrepreneurs do not react only to the structural disadvantages; rather, they try to profit from advantages emerging from market dynamics.

Interestingly, a significant number of entrepreneurs interviewed (40 percent) operate business in both Mexico and the United States, even though they live in the United States. Previous studies have shown that this economic dynamic leads to transnationalism. This transnational perspective has major implications in terms of public policy, because it presents the opportunity for the home country government to develop closer relationships with high-skilled migrant entrepreneurs and provides a solid platform to promote the government's image abroad.

The Mexican government should consider this new migrant class as strategic to foster transnationalism. While root problems (e.g., organized crime) cannot be solved in the short term, transnational migration can prevent this drain from becoming a zero-sum game. Migrant entrepreneurs' participation in business, political, and social initiatives in Mexico allows transfers of knowledge, skills, competences, and capital to Mexico. This is imperative, considering that more qualified workers are leaving rather than remaining in Mexico. Several entrepreneurs said they did not need financial or monetary support but instead adequate social platforms or business spaces to share experiences, lessons, and learning through forums or seminars based in Mexico. These could be organized by the private sector, academia, and the government. The government would be the coordinator of these initiatives, laying the foundation for making this new class an asset rather than a loss.

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Appendix A: In-depth Interview Guide

Interview design based on the main push and pull factors of immigrant entrepreneurial activity suggested by recent literature.

ENTREPRENEURS' CLASSIFICATION:

- a) Operating his/her business and living in the US: _____
- b) Operating his/her business in Mexico but living in the US: _____
- c) Operating his/her business both in Mexico and the US but living in the US: ____
- d) Operating his/her business in the U.S. but living in Mexico: _____

Demographic Data:

- a. State (county) of origin (in Mexico). _____
- b. When did you arrive in the US? _____
- c. Kind of industry or sector where your business is in? _____
- d. Have you moved to another industry? _____
- e. How would you classify your business in terms of size: small, medium, large?
 - a. Number of employees: _____
 - b. Annual sales: _____
- f. Schooling years: _____
- g. Did you study in Mexico or overseas? _____
- h. Marital status: _____

ETHNO/CULTURAL FACTORS:

1. Was your decision to live/work in the US influenced by the desire to settle close to family and friends who migrated earlier?
2. Is there some kind of social network (for example, associations, clubs, religious groups) that encouraged you to establish your business here in the US/in Mexico/in both Mexico and the US? Have the ties developed through that network been a key resource for you while living and/or working in the US?
3. Has the fact that you belong to a specific Mexican entrepreneurial network such as the AEM (or La Red) contributed to the further development of your business or do you consider that your business was already consolidated when you became a member of the network? Was the existence of these networks a pulling factor to come to the US? From your point of view, what are the major advantages to belonging to networks such as AEM?
4. In your opinion, what are the most common areas of self-employment and entrepreneurship for Mexicans who share your profile here in the US?
5. What kind of ethnic resources (group cohesion, solidarity, access to private loans and credit associations, assistance and loyalty from relatives, co-ethnic employees and customers, opportunities to purchase businesses from co-ethnic owners) can you identify as helpful in your business venture in the US?
6. Do you serve a broad clientele or primarily a Hispanic or a Mexican-born clientele? Who are your clients?
7. How would you describe/classify your workforce?

MANAGERIAL FACTORS/PERSONAL FACTORS

8. Do you think that your education, and in general, your cultural background have been key factors to become an entrepreneur working or living in the US?
9. Can you identify differences in the way your skills, competences, knowledge are applied here in the US for entrepreneurial purposes (versus Mexico)?
10. Can you identify specific resources (human, financial, social, and technological) acquired in the US which have been helpful for running your business in Mexico and/or the US?
11. Has the language been an obstacle to run your business here?

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

12. Was your engagement in entrepreneurial activities in the US motivated by necessity and/or by opportunity?
13. To what extent were insecurity and organized crime determinant push factors to establish your business in the US or to take the decision of living in the US?
14. To what extent was the economic situation in Mexico a push factor to establish your business in the US?
15. Was the search for a better education for you or for your children a determining factor in your decision?
16. What about tax policies? Have you found them friendlier here in the US to operate your business? Was this an important factor in your decision to move to the US?
17. How easy or difficult has it been to establish your business here in terms of regulations, legal procedures, red tape? / How easy or difficult has it been to continue operating your business in Mexico from here? Can you identify specific limitations to operate your business in the US? Have you experienced any kind of block mobility here in Texas or has it been the opposite?
18. Are there US government policies and/or entrepreneurial activities such as counseling programs, tax incentives or credit assistance programs, that you consider as pulling factors to establish or transfer your business to the US? Do you think that the support received from government agencies in the US has increased due to the amount of Mexican entrepreneurs established in Texas, or has it remained stable?
19. Is there any kind of support from the Mexican government addressed to Mexican entrepreneurs working or living in the US?
20. In your case, does the fact of living and/or working in the US reveal the cancellation of opportunities in Mexico, or does it primarily reflect the dynamics of a binational market?

FINANCIAL FACTORS

21. Has a better access to credit been a pull factor to transfer your business to the US?