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This is the second volume of the Migration Perspectives series, resulting from CIDE-MIG’s joint work. The first volume was published on September 2010, under the following title: “Perspectivas migratorias: un análisis interdisciplinario de la migración internacional” (“Migration Perspectives: an interdisciplinary analysis of international migration”), Jorge Durand and Jorge A. Schiavon coordinated this issue.

This second volume is divided into two parts. The first one analyzes, from a general perspective, the role of the main actors involved in the migration phenomenon in regards to the global governance process. The second part opens the discussion on social capital and labor mobility in migration, especially the case between Mexico and the United States.

Without a doubt international migration is a permanent element in the social and political agenda of an even more communicated and globalized world. Migration flows are changing the economic, social, political, demographic and cultural profile of each country at a global level. The social, economic and political relevance of migration processes make it essential to study this phenomenon in depth, looking to understand it in an integral manner.

The first part includes a chapter written by Jorge Durand, who analyzes the versions and dimensions of contemporary global migration. The author states that international migration has become a central topic in the global political agenda, due to the fact that migration flows have significantly increased in different parts of the world in recent
decades. Nonetheless, since 2008 migration flows to Europe and the United States have started to decrease due to financial crises and demographic, social and political factors. Along these lines, Jorge Durand scrutinizes global contemporary migration flows. Durand’s work focuses on the most relevant cases of global migration dynamics of countries that receive and expel.

Durand’s main discovery is that recent data allow the highlighting of two constants that are essential to understand contemporary migration flows. On the one side, the geographical factor is relevant to determine the regional and vicinity dynamic. On the other hand, the historical context allows us to explain the phenomenon through previous relationships between people and countries.

The following chapter is presented by Cecilia Imaz. The work of this author analyzes the role of a key actor for migration: organized civil society. In this context, the author evaluates this actor’s role in the construction of an international framework on migration and development. Imaz confirms that international migration has become an essential part of globalization processes; human mobilization between borders is of approximately 215 million people. The author thinks that international organisms’ and civil society organizations’ labor openly contrasts with immigration policies’ incongruences, which recognize the need for immigrant workers, but do not accept the full enjoyment of their rights. This is why, according to the author, there is a need to build an international governance framework that works as an instrument to have a more efficient and human management of migration.

Along these lines, Cecilia Imaz’s work focuses on organized civil society’s contribution in formulation processes of a global migration framework. This chapter discusses the importance of the global governance term; it also presents a brief review of five world migration forums that took place until 2010, and civil society’s conferences which were included in said forums and lastly it presents a brief review of the topics developed in these conferences. The author concludes that efforts have not been in vain. Despite all difficulties found in multilateral processes, Imaz states, governments and civil society are building a platform of ideas and convergences that will be the basis of guidelines for a better management of global migration.

The third chapter by Brenda Valdés and Azucena Aguirre reflects upon government governance processes between diaspora and the Mexican government. The authors state that the governance process
includes two aspects: in the first place, it is an event that is developed in specific moments of public policy; secondly, it is the way different actors adapt to new demands and social needs. In this sense, Valdés and Aguirre speak about governance processes in response mechanisms that the Mexican government has given to the migration phenomenon. From a set of indicators, both authors evaluate the existence and quality of regional governance processes in regards to Diasporas and their governments of origin. The authors conclude that in the relationship established between organized Mexican diaspora and the Mexican government, governance processes show poor quality indicators, highlighting the challenge of trying to improve said relationship.

On the other hand, Alejandro Anaya and Alejandra Díaz de León discuss a central topic for migration studies’ literature: transnational activism related to the human rights of immigrants transiting through Mexico. The authors argue that some of the most serious human rights’ problems in Mexico are kidnapping and extortion by organized crime on migrants transiting Mexican soil. Consequently, state said authors, human rights’ problems in Mexico have been the target of international attention. Thus, Anaya and Díaz de León look to answer these questions: What international actors have reacted and pressured the Mexican government? How much transnational pressure is being generated? Is the pressure going to increase in the immediate future? These authors conclude that, given the ramifications of the internal policy of the migration agenda within developed democracies, their participation in a pressure process against Mexico is less than probable.

The next chapter written by David Crow and Gerardo Maldonado includes interesting work on public opinion regarding migration in four Latin American countries: Mexico, Ecuador, Peru and Colombia. Crow and Maldonado present the main results derived from the survey The Americas and the World 2010, published by CIDE. These authors say there are four little known facts and four paradoxes on migration in these four countries.

The little known facts are: 1) the percentage of homes that include relatives that have emigrated is greater in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru than in Mexico; 2) the percentage of homes that receive remittances is greater in these three South American countries than in Mexico; 3) the range of migration destinations is broader for the three South American countries than in Mexico; and 4) despite numerous
intrusions from Washington into their neighbors’ business, U.S. immigrants are welcome.

The four paradoxes are: 1) citizens of these four countries demand rights for their countrymen, although not a lot of them are willing to give these to immigrants in their own country; 2) those that were surveyed favor the deportation of illegal immigrants even though they demand openness and would be willing to emigrate (illegally); 3) the free movement of goods and money principle is amply favored; however, the free circulation of people is rejected; and 4) those that were surveyed prefer immigrants from similar cultures, but Latin American immigrants are considered the worst.

This first part ends with Enrique Figueras’ chapter who writes about a little know topic: the relationship between migration and climatic change. The author thinks not all consequences of climatic changes are visible. That is why Figueras states that there have to be no limits regarding environmental migration. In this sense, this chapter deals with the urgent need to connect climatic change and migration agendas. Nonetheless, the author recognizes there is an incipient theoretical, statistical, legal, political and social framework that makes it difficult to make advances in that direction.

In this context, Enrique Figueras’ chapter is an introductory text on this topic; nonetheless, the author gives some ideas for Mexico, as part of the second stage of the Special Program on Climatic Change (2013-2050) and shows the difficulty of advancing public policies for immigration. The author’s proposals are a challenge for society at a national and international level. Cross-section criteria, according to Figueras, should be that the immigrant community carries on a proactive role to promote national, regional and global goals before climatic change.

The second part begins with Rafael Velázquez’s and Jorge Schiavon’s work. This chapter analyzes the topic of migration in the bilateral relationship between Mexico and the U.S. Both authors argue that the perception of both governments and societies regarding immigration affects the construction of public policies to address this phenomenon. Velázquez and Schiavon also point out that different perceptions have caused a difficult bilateral relationship.

On the one hand, the US government and society think that irregular migration is a threat to national security and their own customs. On
the other hand, the Mexican government and society consider that Mexican immigrants contribute positively to the US’ economy. Conservative visions make the US government implement policies that are considered by Mexicans as ones that violate the workers’ human rights. The authors state that these perceptions have made migration a source of conflict between Mexico and the US.

The following chapter by Patricia Arias analyzes two economic elements that are closely related to each other: migration and remittances. There is obviously vast literature on this topic. Nonetheless, the author suggests an innovative approach: the relationship between government programs, changes in migration patterns and collective remittances. In this sense, Patricia Arias argues that institutional efforts to transform family “migradollars” (migradólares) into collective remittances have been modest and controversial.

The author thinks that in the last couple of years there have been family and community tensions and conflicts that affect the fulfillment of economic and social commitments of immigrants in their places of origin. Thus, the chapter’s goal is to explore these changes and how an understudied factor has affected them: negative social capital that in current conditions seems to be present in every situation that immigrants face in their places of origin and destiny.

On the other hand, Adriana Ortega analyzes a more specific topic from a regional point of view: migration and international government strategies in Puebla and Jalisco. The author states that emigration to the US is one of the main local-international connections. This is why; the text discussed how emigration is a factor that affects the international agenda of Mexican state governments and its international linkage strategies. Ortega’s goals is to show, through a comparative analysis the cases of Jalisco and Puebla, the importance of emigration as local internationalization “from below”, state governments deploy international relations strategies in the US, especially through their representation offices abroad: la Casa Jalisco in Illinois and las casas Puebla in Nueva York and Los Ángeles, California.

The book’s last chapter is written by Carlos Heredia. The author analyzes the topic of human mobility and its relationship with labor market integration between Mexico and the US. Heredia starts this chapter with a very important idea: “The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) facilitates the flow of goods and services, capital and investment, but not labor mobility.” The author states that
the millions of Mexican workers who have migrated into the US have made its economy to be growingly dependent on that workforce. The author also analyzes the main variables of the migration phenomenon in the Mexico-US relationship. Thus, Heredia states: “the most important variable for Mexican migrants to the US is employment. Since the economic crisis of 2008 in the US, the total flow of illegal migration from Mexico has approached zero, but future recovery will trigger migration again”. Carlos Heredia also poses some specific proposals in regards to these problems. For example, he thinks Mexico should take advantage of the final stage of its “demographic bonus” and present three points to the US government: 1) transition from commercial liberalization to productive integration; 2) ask the US government to grant visas so those workers can work legally; and 3) make labor mobility an essential ingredient to alleviate labor shortages in specific sectors and to increase North America’s competitiveness against other global economy blocs.