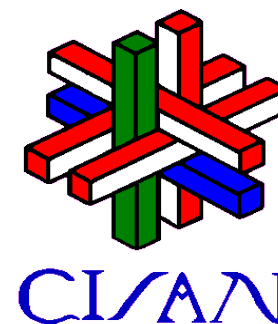


Diplomacia científica y migración calificada: un estudio de caso de los médicos en Texas

by **Camelia Tigau**,
Investigadora del Centro de Investigaciones
sobre América del Norte, UNAM

ctigau@unam.mx



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HIPOTESIS

- a) Los migrantes calificados experimentan la percepción global de los mexicanos como grupo minoritario homogéneo que incluye a migrantes indocumentados o de bajas calificaciones, por lo que sus condiciones de contratación presentan más estrés y hasta discriminación que los nativos y los asiáticos.

- b) La migración de profesionistas debido a la violencia, inseguridad y baja calidad de vida en México demuestra que estas personas emigran y permanecen en el extranjero no sólo por motivos profesionales (individuales), sino también por razones familiares. Por lo que las iniciativas políticas deberían considerar las unidades familiares más que las soluciones individuales para emigrar, de una forma parecida ala migración de calificaciones medianas o bajas.

1. CONTEXTO: MEXICANOS CALIFICADOS EN HOUSTON, TEXAS

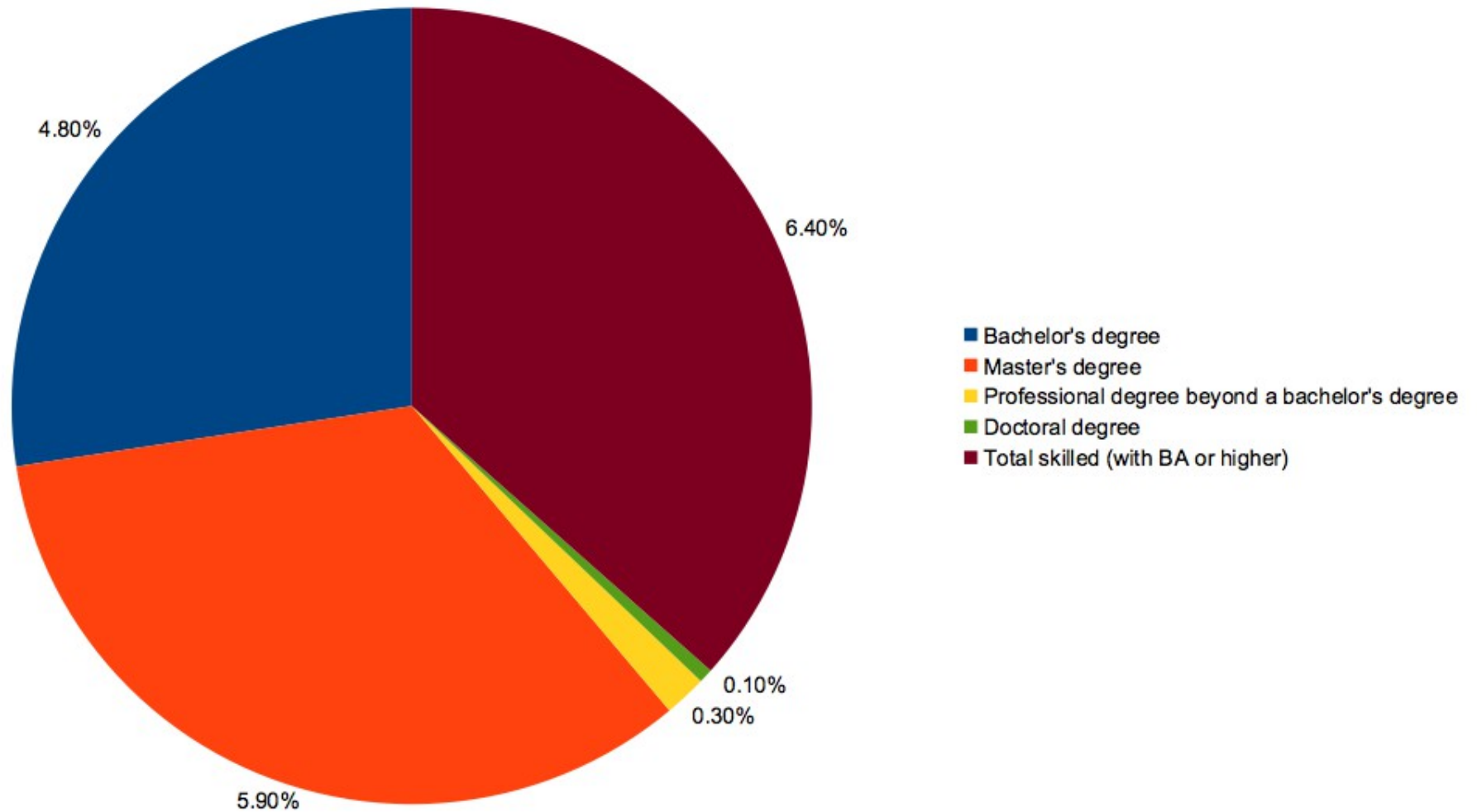


Table 1. Educational attainment of skilled Mexicans in Texas and Houston- The Woodlands-Sugar Land metropolitan area. Source: Estimations based on IPUMS: American Community Survey (ACS), 2014.

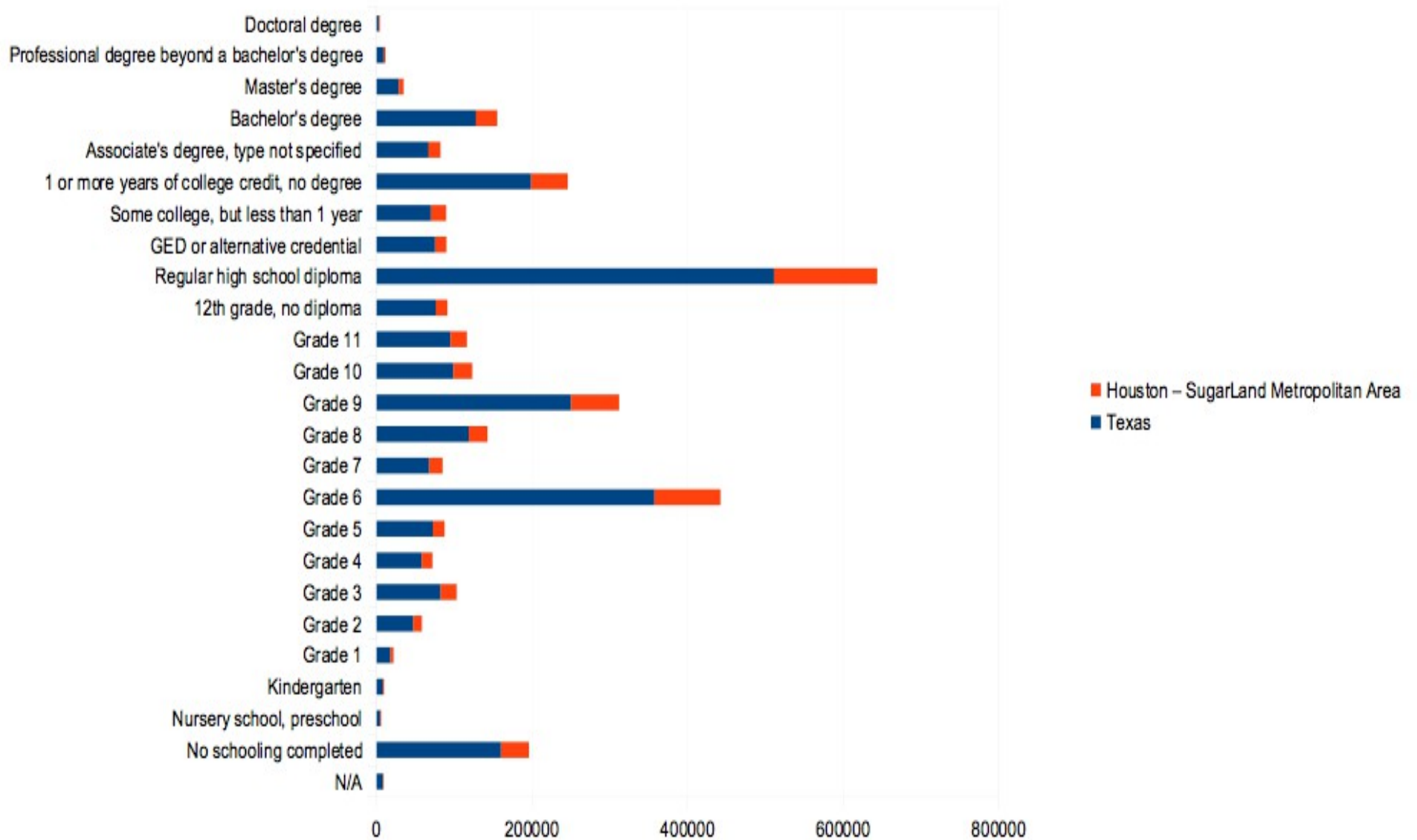


Figure 1. Educational Attainment of the Population of Mexican Origin in Texas. Source: Estimations based on IPUMS, American Community Survey (ACS), 2014.

2. METODO

Entrevistas semiestructuradas con 10 médicos mexicanos y 5 de otras nacionalidades (China, Colombia, Líbano, Perú y Rumania)

Los principales temas de interés de las preguntas fueron:

a) Información personal

b) Historia de la migración

c) Integración al mercado laboral estadounidense

d) Participación en asociaciones y redes con otros migrantes

profesionistas latinos o mexicanos

e) Deseo y perspectivas de retorno.

4. RESULTADOS SOBRE LA FUGA DE CUIDADOS

Entre los médicos mexicanos aquí, sólo conozco a una mujer. Creo que en México todavía no tenemos la cultura en donde la mujer sale por si misma a estudiar en un país extranjero. Es un problema familiar, pero también una opción personal. (*Dr. Y, Médico por la UNAM, 1991, practica e imparte clase en el M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Universidad de Texas*)

1. Different generations of Mds who emigrated since the 80s to the 21st century show the **same quest for better opportunities of doing research and achieve an academic profile abroad.**

While my friends at the University were looking for their wedding white dresses, I was looking for my white coat.

2. Certification abroad:
High payment or repeat the career

3) Persisting problems in Mexico (factors of outmigration and stay abroad): limited economic support at origin as opposed to better salaries abroad, corruption in the political field and a system of hiring based on personal networks rather than on merits, bad environmental and transportation conditions. I also found that the conditions of outmigration are oftentimes the same as the ones for remaining abroad, that is, the migrants' perspectives on Mexico have generally not changed and they do not make up their minds about having migrated.

Lastly, all the interviewed Mds are willing to give something back to Mexico, since they have generally benefited from public education or just because they feel a certain affection for their country of birth. This is an opportunity for future collaboration but also a reason for ongoing cooperation

I still feel a lot of affection and I still have roots in Mexico. I could advance a lot more as a scientist, being abroad, I am recognized internationally, so I can bring back resources and watch for the Mexican interests. I think that from this point of view, I am a gain for Mexico. (Dr. X, MD by the National Autonomous University of Mexico, 1999, at present with Memorial Hermann and McGovern Medical

The Feminization of Mexican Skilled Migration

Nivel de escolaridad de mexicanos en EU

(retomado del Anuario BBVA de Migración y remesas 2016, con base en estimaciones del Current Population Survey, 2007 – 2015, para población de más de 25 años)

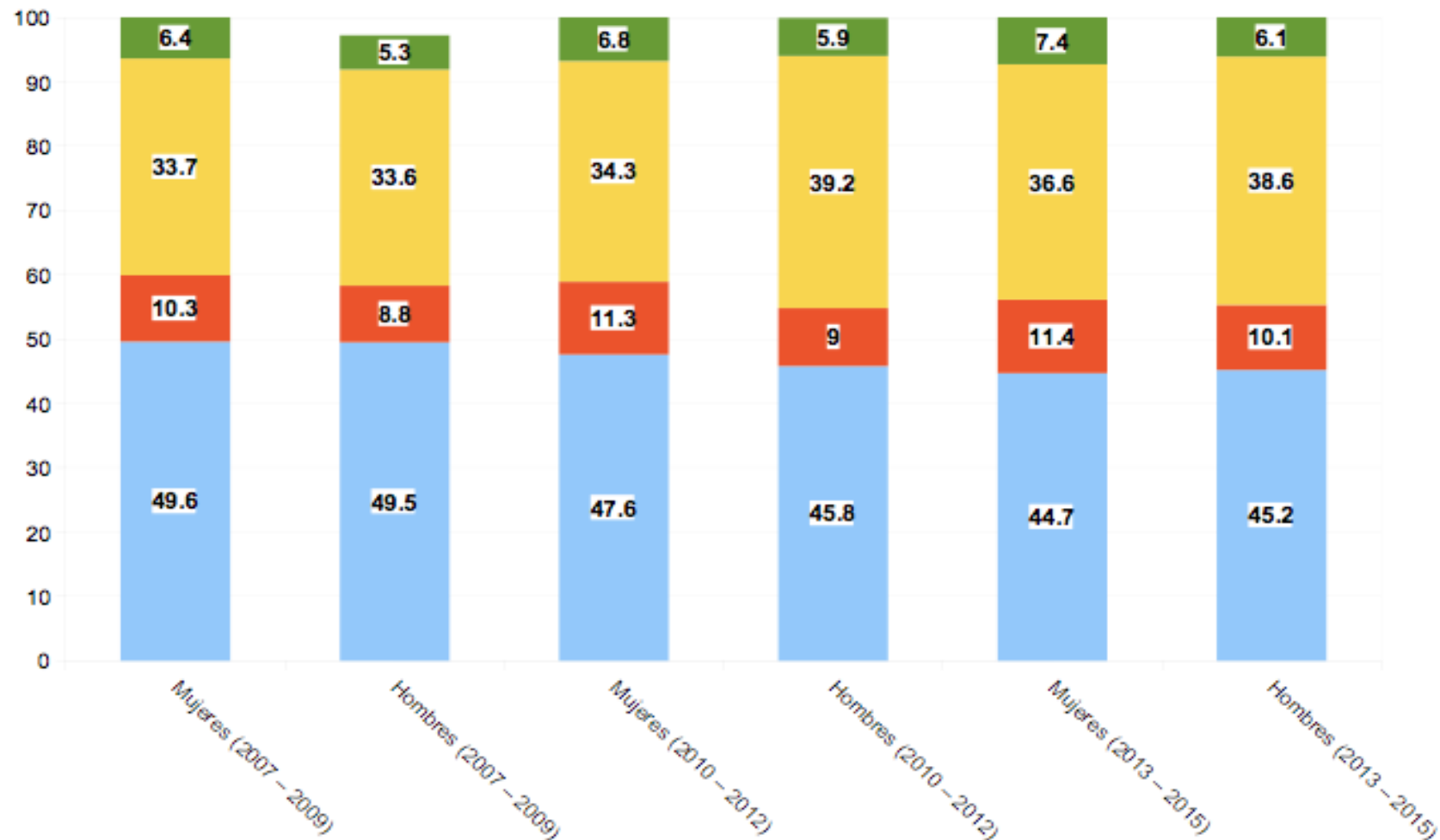


Table 2. Educational Attainment and Gender of Mexican Migrants to Texas. Source: Estimations based on IPUMS: American Community Survey (ACS) 2014.

One interviewee, a psychologist in San Antonio who is 27 years old, puts it this way: "In Mexico, the idea that the man provides and the woman stays home, still prevails. Women don't have as much power of decision as men do. The idea of 'machismo' is much more present in Mexico than here."

Do they plan to return? Most of the repatriation aspirations of the individuals interviewed do not depend necessarily on the number of years in the U.S. but on the relationships they have maintained with Mexico—something that became evident during several of the interviews.

5. DISCUSSION ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE MEXICAN SKILLED DIASPORA

Even though many of them do not consider the possibility of returning to their home country permanently, some also do not aspire to obtain U.S. citizenship; something that can perhaps be considered a “mechanism of resistance.” Many highly skilled migrants still want to be considered Mexicans, even when they hate corruption in their own country and they never plan to get back. Identity is more a symbol than action, but it still exists. For these types of people, the networks and associations of skilled diasporas should be attractive, or at least that is what theoretical perspectives on talent circulation assume.

However, some of these consuls are not particularly interested in boosting the community of skilled Mexicans. As the consuls change, the life of the association depends on these continuous fluctuations of policy and consulate needs at each moment in time.

Another important difficulty of organization refers to scarce financial resources.

One of the options to obtain funds is to structure the local chapters of the RTM like an NGO in order to institute formal mechanism for fundraising. And although the project needs money, local representatives of the RTM often reject the idea of being sponsored by the Mexican government, as they believe that they would lose their independence.

And the Mexican government does not have a budget for that anyway.

Other non governmental forms of organization of the skilled Mexican diaspora in Texas are the Association of Mexican Entr

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study confirms previous research showing that highly valuable Mexican talent contributes to the advancement of research and economic development in the US in general and in Texas in particular. Based on evidence from the medical migration, I also found that all the Mds are interested and actually do return knowledge to Mexico while they participate in epistemic groups, take part in academic events and therefore share their experience with their home country. From this perspective, medical migration is beneficial from at least three point of view: for the countries of origin that receive the experience acquired abroad; for the patients in the countries of destination, that receive good care based on the latest findings in medical research; and for the individuals themselves and their families, as they improve their life quality. These people actually get to share their know-how in the global health system, proving that the global networks of care may actually be more of a brain gain than a brain drain.

In more general terms, I could confirm two main hypothesis on the causes of the expatriation of Mexican professionals to the US: the economic one and the violence one, that do not necessarily contradict each other, but are symptoms of development challenges in Mexico. The reasons for outmigration may also roughly correspond to the years of emigration, that is, migrants of the 80 and 90s mainly pointed to economic reasons and/or the lack of funds for research, as main drivers for their decisions to leave their country. By comparison, most of the migration that is violence induced occurred in the period after 2006, which is the term of ex-President Felipe Calderon and his policy on the drug war.

Several different routes were identified from particular Mexican states to Texas, reconfirming, for instance, the study of Hernandez de Leon on the migration route of the middle classes from Monterrey to Houston. Texas was found to be a limit in between a further migration and a way to be close to family while not actually living in Mexico, due to its geographic proximity but also to cultural similarities and the presence of the Latinos and wide use of Spanish as a second or first language for work and leisure activities.

In terms of skilled migration, the presence of routes and networks is also a sign of more efficient flows of knowledge and an increased mobility of people.

The existence of these migration routes shows regions, states and cities to be equally or more important than the federal level of migration policies. Therefore the decentralization of cooperation on skilled human mobility could explore particular routes and their characteristics, rather than refer to the entire flow of Mexican skilled migration to the US. State – to – state cooperation programs may work better than federal level agreements, as they can focus on certain populations, industries and fields of cooperation.

Further research must assess whether the reluctance of Mexican physicians to study a specialization in the U.S. is the result of negative perceptions of the bilateral relation, associated with the controversial subject of undocumented migration. In fact, previous field work and surveys have highlighted that the skill prices of Mexican migrants are pushed down by the low literacy of the average Mexican labor force.

A qualitative comparison of Mexican skilled diaspora with others nationalities, in order to clarify discrimination and the perception of the skilled Mexicans as a group may also be useful.