

“An analytic study of Mexico in economics, social, political, environmental and sustainable development trends by the year 2030”

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SECTION 4. Practitioner's corner

Josè G. Vargas-Hernández (Mexico), Mohammad Reza Noruzi (Iran)

An analytic study of Mexico in economic, social, political, environmental and sustainable development trends by the year 2030

Abstract

The United States and Mexico share common interests not directly with each other and because the two countries share a 2,000 mile border and extensive interconnections through the Gulf of Mexico then this interaction raises some issues in economical, political and other areas. Also, there are some links through migration and tourism, environment, health concerns, and family and cultural relationships. This paper aims to analyze the three foreseeable trends in economic, social, and political areas in the next two decades in Mexico.

At the end of the paper, the most important factors in shaping the economic, social and political landscape of Mexico in 2030 and beyond are identified. It is also examined how the Mexican society will cope with the broad range of challenges. Furthermore, it is assessed what conditions may be a key to transforming economic, social and political trends into security and social welfare issues.

Keywords: economic scenarios, Mexico, social scenarios, political scenarios.

JEL Classification: E00, E02, E22, E30, F00, F18, F30.

Introduction

1. Economic trends

Mexico has a population of approximately 110 million people making it the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world and the third most populous one in the Western Hemisphere (after the United States and Brazil). The bilateral economic relationship with Mexico is among the most important for the United States because of Mexico's proximity and because of the large amount of trade and investment interactions. The most significant feature of the relationship is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), through which the United States, Mexico, and Canada form the world's largest free trade area, with about one-third of the world's total gross domestic product (GDP) (Villarreal, 2009, p. 1).

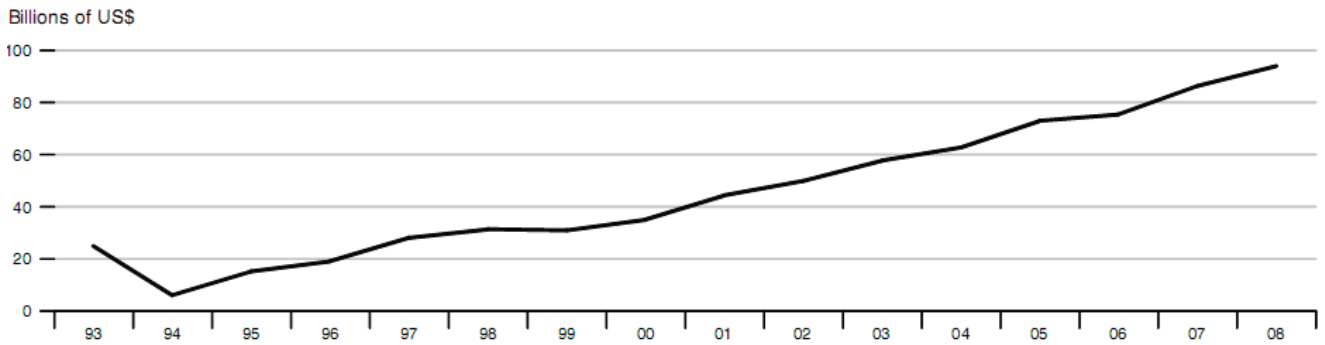
Mexico's degree of integration into the globalized economy not only depends on the strategic policies for international integration but also on the competitiveness of its production and exporting capacity. International commerce liberation and capital movement, low transportation and communication costs are reinforcing the tendency toward dividing the international labor and fostering the new entrepreneurial and industrial strategies. Multinational corporations can easily channel their production in the different places around the World as a consequence of chain value fragmentation and production disintegration. Dislocation of basic industries will continue extending from the basic industries to the services as relative advantages and competitive strategies.

In 2008, about 11% of total U.S. merchandise exports were destined for Mexico and 10% for U.S. Merchandise imports came from Mexico. In the same year U.S. exports to Mexico increased by almost 10%, while imports from Mexico increased by

about 3%. For Mexico, the United States is a much more significant trading partner. About 82% of Mexico's exports go to the United States and 50% of Mexico's imports come from the United States. FDI forms another part of the economic relationship between the United States and Mexico. The United States is the largest source of FDI in Mexico. U.S. FDI in Mexico totaled \$91.7 billion in 2007. The overall effect of NAFTA on the U.S. economy has been relatively small, primarily because two-way trade with Mexico amounts to less than three percent of U.S. GDP. Major trade issues between Mexico and the United States have involved the access of Mexican trucks to the United States; the access of Mexican sugar and tuna to the U.S. market; and the access of U.S. sweeteners to the Mexican market (Villarreal, 2009, p. 1).

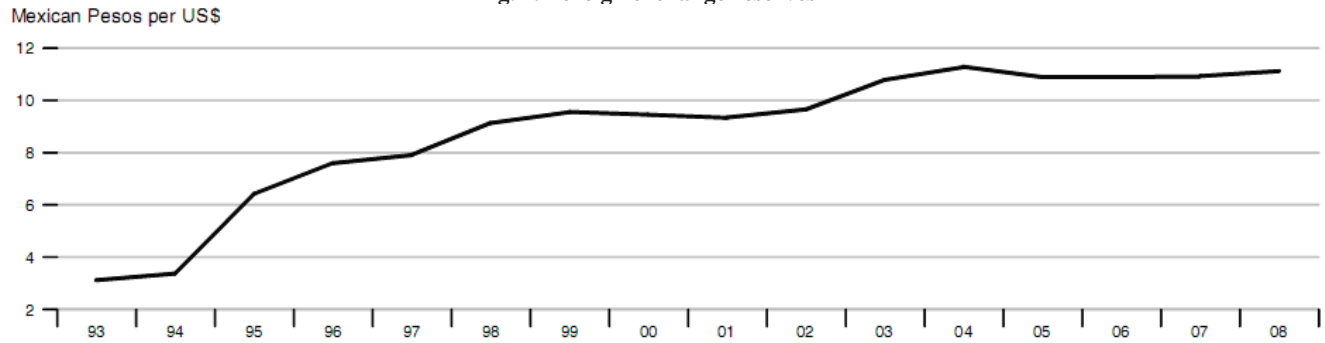
Mexico will be falling behind the tendency toward centralization and privatization regarding production and use of knowledge promoted by the competitiveness of international commercial relations. Knowledge is a strategic element for the development of the Mexican nation. The future scenario of Mexico will be strongly directed towards the creation and application of knowledge.

However, because of the proximity of Mexico to the United States, the possibility of productive dislocation will become stronger in the tendency of firms to stick around the business core and to externalize and provide outsourcing for foreign companies. The so called third generation of inbound industries or maquiladoras will be the tendency in this subject. The actual process of mergers and acquisitions among large company groups in Mexico by understanding foreign exchange rate, exchange rate and current balance rate will reinforce the tendency toward a monopolistic or duopolistic concentration of mega multinational corporations. Some graphs below show the statistics.



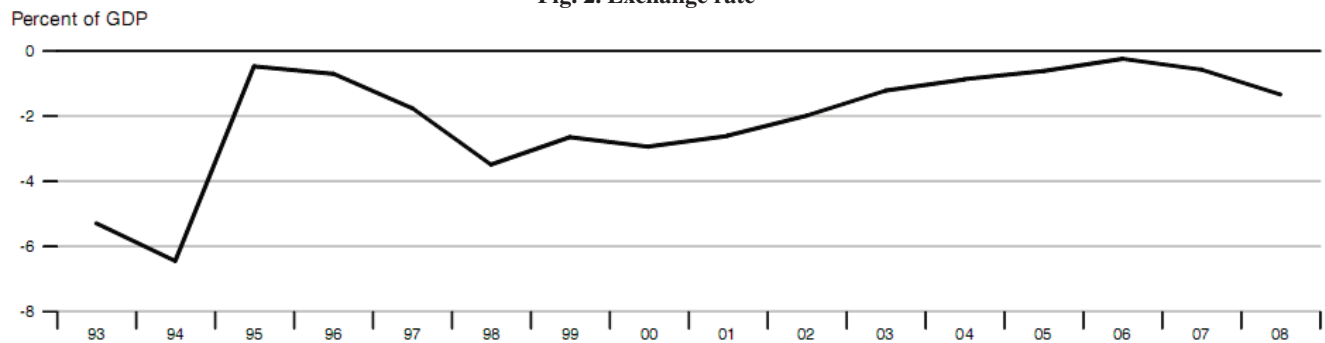
Source: Economic Research, International Economic Trends Mexico, 2009, p. 42.

Fig. 1. Foreign exchange reserves



Source: Economic Research, International Economic Trends Mexico, 2009, p. 43.

Fig. 2. Exchange rate



Source: Economic Research, International Economic Trends Mexico, 2009, p. 42.

Fig. 3. Current account balance

On the territorial transformations framework, the neoliberal model of development, which is being implemented now, will not achieve the promises of equilibrium for the economic, social, political and urban processes. In the following years, this model of development would neither be sensible to the majorities, nor be responsive to the multiple social demands. On the contrary, each time, it will be incorporated to the scenario of the struggles and competencies between the actors in their global achievements and the negations of the nation State's role. In the following twenty years, the center of the country will lose its industrial dynamics in around one tenth of its national sharing as a result of displacement of manufacturing dynamics toward the North of the country and the economic reform.

The domestic market in Mexico will reinforce the tendency toward a relative loss in such a way that national firms will have to respond to a double chal-

lenge posed by the mega multinational corporations and the countries that produce at a lower price. This trend puts pressure on the firms regarding the ratios of productivity and competitiveness and also in terms of the workers, wages and employment.

NAFTA is forcing the trend to be initiated since the arrival of the inbound industries (maquiladoras) toward a spatial reordering of productive activities and labor market, in such a way that the Northern Border, some zones and cities of the Center and coastal regions will have more opportunities to integrate to the exterior. While some zones are densely populated in the highlands, the South can distance more in terms of investments, occupational opportunities in the modern sections, wages, and possibilities of social and economic mobility. Based on underlying geopolitical trends or the political choices of the leadership, Mexico will be in

favor of partnering with the United States rather than with others. The most likely scenario for the United States will be to deepen ties with Mexico.

The scenario of Free Trade Agreement of America or FTAA (Acuerdo de Libre Comercio de las Américas – ALCA) proposed by the United States of America will not succeed in its objective to unite America in one free trade agreement. It is already counterbalanced by the important achievements of the Mercado del Cono Sur (MERCOSUR). The failure of ALCA is due to the fact that it does not resemble the economic integration but it resembles the subordination of colonies to imperial countries where the latter controls strategic sections of the economy, dominates markets and labor and dictates economical policies. Subordination, not integration, defines the nature of ALCA.

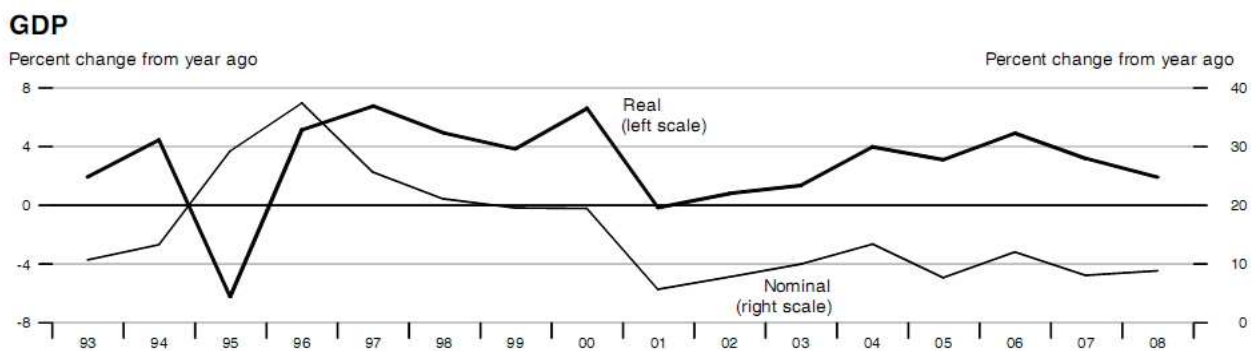
Integration implies, more or less, equal exchange of commodities, two-way flows of capital, profits and interests, joint enterprises – in a word, more or less symmetrical relations and benefits. ALCA is totally asymmetrical, with the U.S. multi-nationals accumulating Latin assets and determining the one-way flow of benefits (profits, interests, royalties) from South to North. In that sense, ALCA is very different from the European Union.

The relative failure of the FTAA plan and regional heterogeneity in dealings with the United States would mean a limitation (by action or omission) for the US hemispheric leadership. These factors will create a void of multinational initiatives in the years ahead in areas requiring political coordination such as matters involving defense and security, environment, drug-trafficking, and migration. The United States will not be able to participate as regional leader in many cases and Mexico will not be in a position to fill this vacant role except in specific situations. However, in the long

term, the hemisphere will solve this problem through the strengthening the multilateral institutions and the great leadership of key countries.

In implementing the economic policies, there are at least three scenarios: The third way sustained by the social democratic tradition will have a small impact on the economic reforms. The incompetence in transforming the organization of society and not being able to guarantee the population an increasing integration to the political system generate favorable conditions to return to the populist model. However, in Mexico, this neo populism will not be the predominant tendency in the following twenty years. The neo populism may emerge and spread fast because there is disenchantment with the results of the neoliberal economical policies already implemented, and the micro democracy will foster economical policies which will consolidate in a more vibrant national capitalism. This issue in its own turn will attract long-term investments.

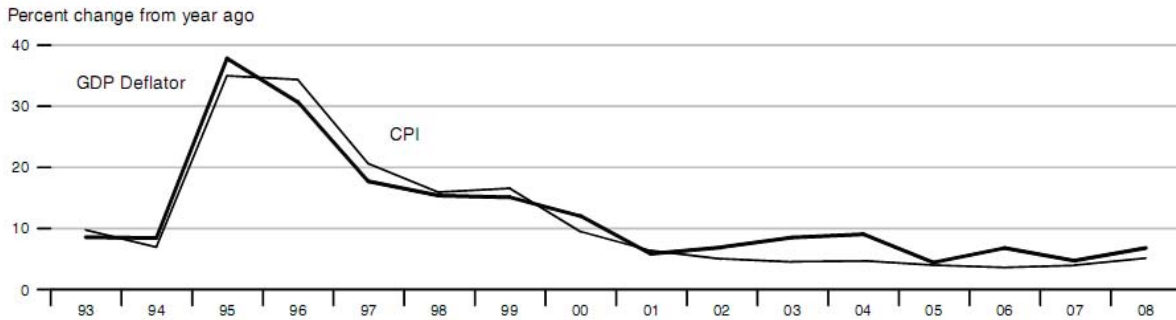
Although production and export of oil will be declining, and they will be a strong import demand and a relaxation of monetary policy, economic activity in Mexico is expected to pick up in the following twenty years as a whole GDP by 4 percent reflecting favorable international conditions with low interest rates and high commodity prices. The trend of low interest rates will boost domestic demand and construction activity. The forecast of annual percent change for the next twenty years will be an average of 3.5. GDP at market prices will be forecasted for the following years at the 3.5 percent and current account balance/GDP will be projected to grow at the annual rate of .4 percent in the following twenty years. Some economic information from 1993-2008 such as GDP, inflation, interest rate and others come below:



Source: Economic Research, International Economic Trends Mexico, 2009, p. 42.

Fig. 4. GDP

Inflation



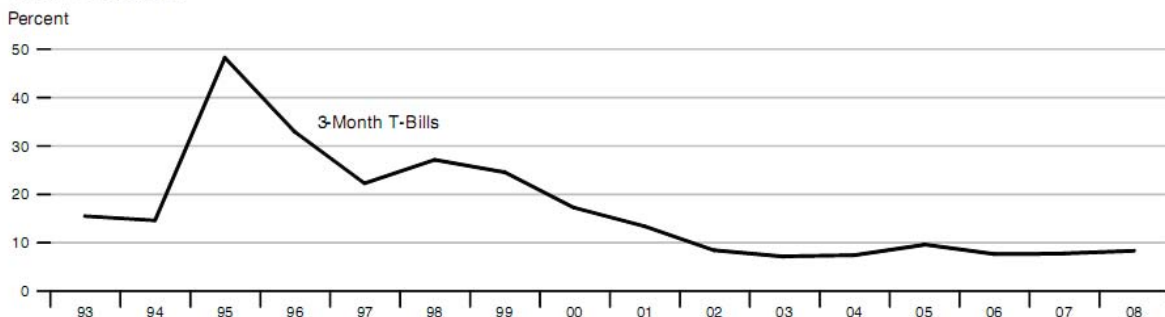
Source: Economic Research, International Economic Trends Mexico, 2009, p. 43

Fig. 5. Inflation

The tendency of the economic development is re-orientated towards services, commercial and financial activities in the following twenty years. Current projections anticipate that job creation in the next 20 years will take place increasingly in the informal sections, already affecting two out of three workers. Informal workers experienced constant income de-

clines, are deprived of social linkages and have no access to the benefits of inclusion such as credit. Thus, informal labor is related to inequality. This phenomenon has institutional consequences that impinge on long-term political and economic prospects. Some related data for commercial and financial activities come below.

Interest Rates



Source: Economic Research, International Economic Trends Mexico, 2009, p. 43.

Fig. 6. Interest rates

The retirement system of the future faces serious sustainable risks due to the sprawling informality as today's pensioners are supported by a smaller number of contributors. The funds will prove to be inadequate for tomorrow's pensioners. Starting from 18 years for men and 22 years for women in the year 2000, the projected median estimation of the lasting period of pension will continue increasing in the following 30 years. Many factors depend on future tendencies to the lasting of either the labor life or the pension period, which are still difficult to discern.

Among the Latin American and Caribbean countries, Mexico is the most dependent country on the United States' imports. Weak import demand in the United States in the following next years will affect the economy of Mexico where growth is projected to fall to 3.5 percent. The slowdown is expected to be less marked elsewhere in the region (Global Economic Prospects, 2007). The tendencies in the growth of direct and foreign portfolio investment

will have an impact on the evolution of economic and financial international markets.

The analysis of the tendencies of household's income distribution showed no relation or link between economic models and inequality of income distribution. However, the association was mediated by economic policies, intensity and temporal sequence of application and factors such as social stratification, the role of the informal section, the subterranean economy and responses of households affected by economic policies.

2. Social trends

The political economy and the resulting economic growth can not offer, in the following twenty years, an optimistic panorama of equality and social improvement. The social development can not be sustained only on a social policy because there is not budget capable of resisting this hypothesis. Based on the economic and commercial integration trend, the future scenario will be a constant coalition dynamics due to

the needs of social demands which do not match the requirements of the speculative market added to actions and facts of economic policies of the development model.

However, at the same time a dynamics of social exclusion will emerge which supersedes the development of the logic and the increment of the physical space. In the following 20 years, there will be a danger in the trend toward the loss of social cohesion, social segregation and social exclusion. The socio-spatial structure will follow a slow pattern of change which can be considered as trends that reproduce the historical segregation forms.

The need to intervene in the greater scope to struggle against poverty will lead to formulate the strategies of social policy toward the target groups as the tendency of the state solution. Poverty in Mexico is a generalized and intensive phenomenon. Since 1963 until 1981, poverty decreased very fast, but, at the beginning of 1982, the trend reversed and the poverty increased until nowadays that more than two thirds (70,6%) of people are poor and almost half of the population (44,7%) are living in extreme poverty conditions. Since 1998, Mexico is achieving better results than the other Latin Countries.

It should be very difficult to increase the income above the poverty line through the provision of basic services without creating employment (Chávez, Moctezuma y Rodríguez, 1994, pp. 34-35). Poverty acquires a new dimension due to the tendency to show the indicators of poverty to decrease more in the areas of higher relative development and less in the areas lagging behind.

Poverty will increase the established tendencies towards polarization, widening the gap between the poor and the rich. However, extreme poverty and marginality measured by social welfare indicators will continue to be high, above the national average in the Southern States of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero. The increasing poverty among the rural population will continue to be evident by the loss of acquisitive power of wages paid to the rural workers. Around 80 percent of the poor people will continue to be located in the rural areas.

The poverty levels and tendencies look very homogeneous to the interior of the States, although the conditions will be better in the urban areas than in the rural ones. In spite of the fact that, in the last few decades, there are some features of continuity in the migration phenomena, the recent evolutions of the urban migration linked to the urbanization process, confirming a tendency to the configuration of a new geography (Corona, 1992; Corona y Tuiràn, 2001).

The extent of poverty is more intense in the rural areas, although there are more poor people in the

urban areas in comparison with the rural districts. The trend shows that poverty will continue to increase in the following years. 11.7% of the increase in the poverty will belong to the middle class and only 5.5% of that is associated with the upper class. Both behaviors of the tendencies are explained by the applied differential economic policies (Alba Vega, 2006). Welfare indicators will improve gradually at the different rates from the North to the South. The long-term tendency of the services and the indicators of the conditions will experience a convergence in the income and wages.

Since poverty and inequality affect larger sectors, those people become more vulnerable to the patronage practices and the populist, demagogic and authoritarian electoral alternatives. Such alternatives will increase their influence in Mexico as long as no significant advances are made in the social field. The programs for combating the poverty will improve the nutrition and access to basic health and educative services with new measures and orientations utilizing transference of resources and incentives. By the year 2030, Mexico probably will have started to find a way to make progress toward reducing the serious poverty and improving the institutional development.

Concentration of specific associations will respond to the necessity of a new orientation to be more extensive to the poorer sectors of society that have been protected by the traditional systems of social security till now. Financial resources scarcity, at the State level, will lead to the concentration on the most needed sectors of the population.

The social program emerged from the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917 created the middle class. The distance between the Mexican classes were diminishing during the sixties and seventies. Actually, this tendency is reversing after the introduction of the new economic model more oriented toward the economic globalization processes. Since 1994, with a new economic and social environment, what is happening is the continuation of the established tendencies towards polarization and widening the gap between the high social classes and the rest of the Mexican society. Inequality has a tendency to increase while the concentration of income and equality is postponing.

In the past, there have been some factors which lead to the loss of social cohesion and social exclusion: The fast pace of structural and institutional modernization has accentuated the social and economic dislocation, changes in the structure of population inherited from the demographic explosion. From the years seventies, the human costs of two large economic crises in the years 1982 and 1994, the accu-

mulated social demands that lag behind and the development of some regions in the North were associated with globalization, free trade and NAFTA, and the South falling behind, which in turn have derived in a plural and complex Mexican society.

The debate on population tendencies is a cul-de-sac. The improvements in the development have fostered two demographic tendencies: Fertility rates will be decreasing and population occasionally will be stabilized in the future if it can be maintained that women have two sons on average. Reduction in fertility rates will bring other tendencies such as the ageing of people, reduction of active population, immigration pressure and insufficient aggregated demand of goods and services, intergenerational conflict.

The regional differences on development are deepening and will continue this trend in the following years because the government lacks a regional development planning.

Projection of the social indicators leads to a concise general panorama of trends in the social policies targeted to attend vulnerable and excluded social groups of population, including senior citizens and older people, working single mothers, poor students, etc. The dismantling of the model of Welfare State and its social policies will continue very slowly due to the strong opposition of beneficiaries such as students in public universities. But still the trend toward privatization of higher education is increasing each year.

Several changes will happen in the Institutions of Higher Education in Mexico such as changes in the academic and organizational structure, financing, national policies of evaluation, planning and development of higher education, science and technology. The needs for institutional innovation in Mexico as elsewhere are related to the functions of the economic and social problems at regional, national and global scales among other aspects.

In the new economic World order, competition takes place not only among the economic systems of each country but also among the educative systems and its policies of scientific and technological development. The institutions of higher education have to challenge velocity and magnitude of the new World economic tendencies to convert it, in the less possible period of time, into an instrument accompanying the other social sections to contribute to the increment of the population's quality of life.

There is an increasing social segmentation and fragmentation where the different sectors have different projects which exclude each other and have impelled to a collective consciousness to revert this trend (Cordera y Palacios, 2002: 5). In the following twenty years, the most vulnerable social segments

will be searching for refuge and forms of existence to survive and create the conditions to take advantage of the changing economic model of development.

There are some estimations that according to the actual trends, the rate of birth in Mexico that will live in USA by the year 2030 will be between 16 and 18 million not counting the descendants. This rise of "Hispanics" in the US population will influence the United States and its leaders as well as US relations with Mexico. It will encourage the growth of the cultural, political and economic interactions with Mexico, from which most of the future citizens and Hispanic-American voters are likely to come (National Intelligence Council, 2004).

The registered remittances will continue to flow mainly concentrated on the States of Michoacan, Jalisco, Guanajuato and Zacatecas, the main territorial sources of migrants. There is a confirmed tendency towards a greater territorial areas in the diffusion of the dynamic process of migrants to the United States which, in turn, sustain the tendency patterns of increasing permanent and temporal, documented and no documented and urban migration, more wide regions of origin and destiny and sector diversification (Corona, 1992; Corona y Tuiràn, 2001).

The Mexico – United States emergent patterns of migration will be more complex and extensive, with the profound binational implications. Given the complexity and transnational nature of migration, a solution will be to formulate and implement bilateral strategies of negotiation for development settled under a shared welfare to reduce the increasing migration flows and pressures.

The trend of migration will change more profoundly with the incorporation of women demanding employment and more urban than rural population as a reflection of the demographic change and migration will be more stable according to the changes in the labor market. The economic cycles in periods of economic boom and depression will affect the tendency of migration less in the future (Alba Vega, 2006). In a context of continuity, there is an increasing tendency towards both documented and undocumented Mexican migration to the United States.

The characterization of the new patterns of migration to the United States shows us a burn out in the circular mechanisms and tendency toward the increment in time of permanency in United States, an increment in the magnitude intensiveness of permanent flows and stocks in documented as well as non documented migrants and diversification of original regions and destiny. There is a tendency towards the configuration of the national migration pattern and not the regional one, a heterogeneity in the profile of migrants such as major proportion of urban and feminine

presence, major education, and a considerable occupational and sector diversity (Durand y Massey, 2003; Corona y Tuirán, 2001; Alba, 2000a; Gómez de León y Tuirán, 2000; Escobar, Bean y Weintraub, 1999; Corona, 1997; Santibáñez, 1997; Verduzco, 1997).

The tendency towards migration from the countryside and the rural areas will continue to be strong as the consequence of the accelerated tariffs elimination of imports for agricultural products. Also, some tendencies towards the reproduction of Mexico – Estados Unidos migration will continue in the following years as the influence of social and familiar networks.

Tendencies and patterns of temporal and permanent migration will be more complex and heterogenic. For example, the migration experience will not be important and will lose relative importance in the migration circularity between Mexico and the United States. Control border measures will be inefficient; the undocumented migration will continue with more human costs and at the expense of mafias and migrant traffickers. Regarding the place of destiny, the tendency towards the preference for the temporal migration will exist in all over the United States and not only in Texas and California which had been before the traditional destinies of the migrants but also, California and Texas will continue to loose relative weight in the preferences of destiny for migrants.

The trends of behavior of demography and employment have a close relationship with the tendency of migration, as well. Some tendencies towards employment are marked by deep adjustments on the traditional patterns on the organization which affects the formal employment with social costs of great dimensions. The formal employment in Mexico can not accommodate the entrant economically active population, creating serious dysfunctional ties.

Labor trends such as average of life labor duration for men and women will be converging in the following 30 years, showing a growing tendency for women and bridging the gap with men.

The migration flow from the countryside and poor neighborhoods to the large cities in the center and Southern regions of Mexico will increase in the following years, a trend that is related to the lack of opportunities and new jobs that more than one million of the new entrants to the job market require per year. The Mexican economy has been only able to provide around 300 hundred thousand new employments in the formal economy, leaving room for the youngsters less privileged to migrate to United States, to enter into the informal and shadow economies or to enroll in violent organized delinquency.

Migration from the Mexican countryside to the large cities and to the North of the United States of Amer-

ica will continue in the following years. This trend of migration from the countryside is related to the failure of the North American Free Trade Agreement negotiations (NAFTA) in agricultural products, which have been beneficial to the agricultural producers of the United States.

Two trends are relevant: migration of higher income families from the large cities like Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Puebla, León, Tijuana, etc. moving out to the rural communities. A continued migration trend of the higher economic income segments from the rural communities moving out to the higher income communities forming isles of social groups will be observed, as well.

There is an increasing complexity in the cities because the different segments are found to be mixed in the increasingly smaller geographical spaces, which implies also the increasing of frontiers because the divergent social groups increase their efforts to separate each other and to maintain distances. These social processes are interpreted as the diminishing of homogeneity which in turn can be defined also a less marked segregation.

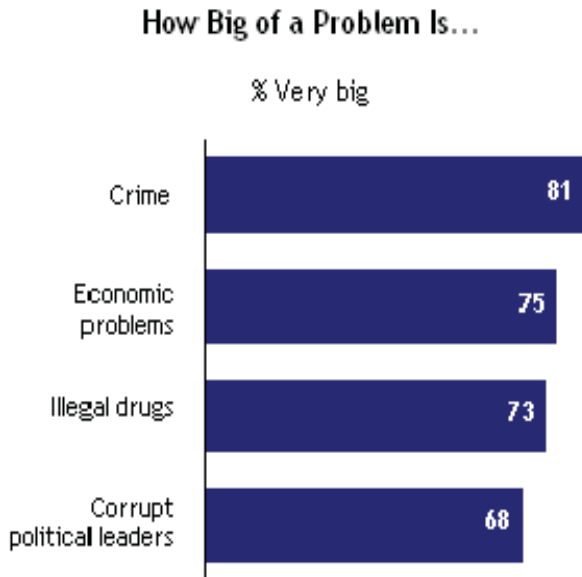
In the following twenty years, the Mexican State will be abandoning the observance and fulfillment of these rights. It would not be possible to proclaim under these conditions the guarantee of economic and social rights without attending the economic situation and trends. The social rights of the Mexican population, such as satisfaction of essential needs, new and diverse social services and goods linked to the universal values of equality, affirmative action, tolerance and acknowledgement, demanded by social groups today will be partially fulfilled in the next twenty years.

There will be contradictions in the tendencies of the cultural policies between the process of democratization according to the forms of decentralization and citizenship participation and the impact of external factors supported by the economic processes of globalization, such as the higher education policies under the NAFTA framework. The global tendency, in higher education, is toward a standardized service not responding to social local conditions.

Changes and effects in social space are generally slow and impersonal but very deep. Tendency reversibility takes time and generations.

Pew Research Center Publications conducted a survey in September, 2009 about Mexican social subjects like, Crime, the Economy, Drugs and Corruption. These are the latest findings from the 2009 survey of Mexico by the Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 1,000 adults in Mex-

ico between May 26 and June 2, 2009. This research says that: Facing a variety of national problems – crime, drugs, corruption, a troubled economy – Mexicans overwhelmingly are dissatisfied with the direction of their country. With drug-related violence affecting much of Mexico, large majorities describe crime (81%) and illegal drugs (73%) as very big problems.



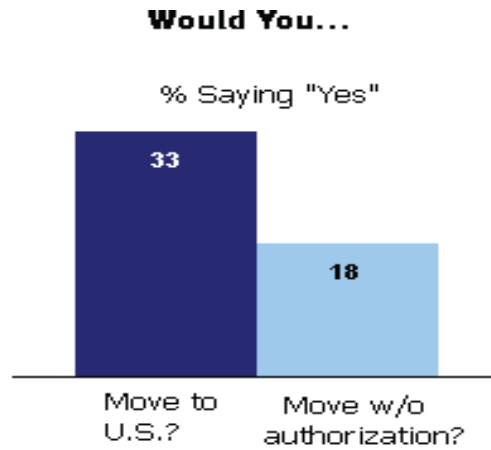
Questions 9a, 9b, 9e and 9g.

Source: Pew Research Center Publications, 2009.

Fig. 7. Mexican social subjects

Mexicans like to migrate to the US, because Most believe life is better in the United States. Close to six-in-ten (57%) say that people who move from Mexico enjoy a better life in the U.S., up from 51% in 2007. And the vast majority of those who are in regular contact with friends and relatives living in the U.S. say those friends and relatives have largely achieved their goals (Pew Research Center Publications, 2009). A substantial minority of Mexicans say that if they had the means and opportunity to go live in the U.S. they would do so, and more than half of those who would migrate if they had the chance say they would do so without authorization.

Nonetheless, immigration data show a drop-off in recent years in the annual flow of Mexican immigrants to the U.S. This decline may be tied in part to the economic downturn in the U.S., which has resulted in fewer jobs for immigrants. Four-in-ten Mexicans say they know someone who left for the U.S. but returned because they could not find a job, although even more (47%) report knowing someone who returned because they were turned back by the border patrol (Pew Research Center Publications, 2009).



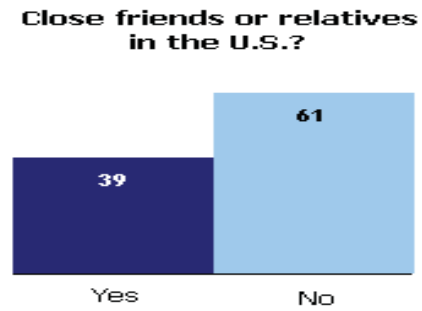
Questions 68 and 69.

Source: Pew Research Center Publications, 2009.

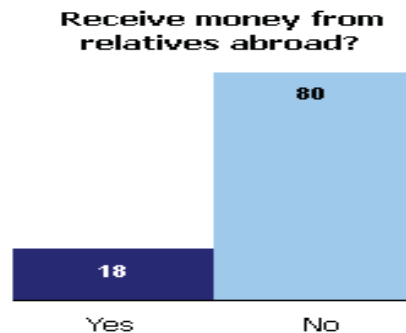
Fig. 8. Mexican immigration to the US

And some may see expanding job opportunities in the Mexican economy. Although 69% say the current economy is bad, most are upbeat about the future: 61% expect the national economy to improve over the next 12 months, while only 14% think it will get worse.

The close ties between people in the U.S. and Mexico are reflected in the survey's findings – 39% of Mexicans have friends or relatives in the U.S. Nearly one-in-five (18%) Mexicans say they receive money from relatives living in another country, although this represents a slight decline from 2007, when 23% said they received money from outside (Pew Research Center Publications, 2009).



Question 84.



Question 86.

Source: Pew Research Center Publications, 2009.

Fig. 9. Close monetary ties between people in the U.S. and Mexico

Also Mexican hygiene is going to be better in the next years as compared to past years; this can be confirmed by Mexican government measures taken to handle Swine Flu recently.

Nearly all of those in Pew surveyed (93%) had heard of the swine flu (also known as the H1N1 virus). And most of those who had heard of it were worried that they or someone in their family could be exposed to the illness. Even so, despite the fact that the first outbreak of the 2009 swine flu began in Mexico, concern about the disease was lower among Mexicans than among several other publics included in the spring 2009 survey – in eight out of the 25 publics, the level of concern about swine flu was higher than in Mexico.

The Mexican government received high marks for its handling of the swine flu outbreak. Roughly three-in-four (76%) of those who had heard about the virus said the government was doing a good job of dealing with it. Support for the government's handling of the crisis was widespread, both among those who identify with President Calderón's National Action Party (PAN) (83% approve) and those who identify with the opposition Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) (77%) (Pew Research Center Publications, 2009).

3. Political trends

Major political changes are underway in many of the case study countries (Bass et al., 2005). Politics is oriented by the economic trends which will degrade the quality of life of most vulnerable population provoking a deeper social gap in the following years. In this sense, the tendency will be to link the economic sector to the political and social sectors. The tendency will be to design and implement public policies oriented to a general welfare where the opportunities of growth exist for all.

The Neoliberal State as a model of development of Mexico will be implemented very slowly in the following twenty years because there is a strong political culture tradition of centralization of governmental functions, paternalism and political clientele in the provision of public services and corrupted behaviors. In this respect, the Mexican State will be diminishing its sovereignty in front of the globalization tendencies. It will disincorporate and disregulate the economy to design policies of appropriation and use of resources.

It is forecasted that the changes from the welfare state model to the Neoliberal State Model will tend to result in more expensive and insufficient services, low quality and elite targeted and a tendency toward a wealth polarization (CEPAL, 1992; Vilas 2000, p. 111). Still, the tendency is to reduce to the least the

public expenses, to slim the State and to leave the social needs attention to a free market forces (Calderón y Dos Santos, 1990).

The tendency toward centralization was strengthened during the 90s, but in some specific areas of education, health, etc. Still higher education services are centralized and the trend is more oriented toward privatization than decentralization. This process is moving at different pace and will result in a set of effects difficult to evaluate. State and local governments will achieve more capacity in decision making in a formation process in which serious problems will subsist in managerial operation, institutional and organizational frameworks. These problems must be resolved in order to grant to municipalities and state a greater capacity of decision and action.

From a historical perspective, during the last two decades, the political scenario of Mexico called for a questioning the democratic government, but it is doubted whether the present conjuncture is or is not another cycle of instability. The decreasing democratic quality trend in much of the Latin American and Caribbean countries will not be even. Nonetheless, in other cases, the democratic trend could be the opposite, yielding greater institutionalization, democratic governance and adaptation to globalization. Mexico has moved in this direction for the last decade and shows the conditions to continue in that same course. Mexico will be more mature and cautious in terms of democracy and macroeconomic policies.

In the last decade, Mexico has improved in terms of democratization, some institutional development and a broad consensus on the virtues of financial stability, but it is also experiencing poor social results, inconsistent economic growth, deep loss of legitimacy of its political players, and declining international relevance. In the next twenty years, Mexicans will be both more mature and more cautious in terms of democratization and macro-economic policies, but they will struggle with social problems, low institutionalization and recurring governance crises. Weak administrations and populist or authoritarian leaders will make little or no contributions to institutionalization. Mexico will bear a heavy mortgage of social problems, low institutionalization, weak and even undemocratic governance.

The president of Mexico faces serious problems when trying to reform the state, enforce modernizing public policies, or reduce growing unemployment and poverty. This obstructs governments' performance within a framework of mediocre economic growth rates and erodes the Mexican states' ability to satisfy demands and guarantee the basic needs of the population. The political institutions, the rule of law and the level of accountability fail to work effectively to meet citizens' expectations.

A gap between people's expectations and governments' and societies' satisfaction of those expectations will be the common denominator: poverty and inequality coupled with decreasing political capabilities to implement solutions and the failure of reforms to achieve persistent economic growth will erode the legitimacy of governments and political players. These problems are conducive to high levels of social conflict.

However, there are objective conditions necessary to create a stable democracy in the following twenty years, although it will be necessary to remove some obstacles, resolve some problems and dilemmas that the Mexican democracy should face to achieve a democratic consolidation. Mexico is heading for a scenario which will make greater advances in the democratic governance. Also, it will be prepared for a successful adaptation to globalization as the major driver of heterogeneity in the upcoming years. In this case, greater macroeconomic stability, development of political institutions, and trade integration with the United States and other world powers will result in successful governance, greater social development and reduced influence of the *poderes fácticos*.

One of these dilemmas, in this democratic scenario, is the risk to seize control of the indigenous social movement in Chiapas and subordinate it to the larger agenda of opportunistic leaders. Radical, politically revolutionary indigenous movements in Mexico could eventually converge with some non-indigenous but radicalized movements. The emergence of politically organized indigenous groups may also entail a risk to the national and regional security. If in the years ahead the indigenous movements do not attain a legitimate role in the political system and certain levels of social inclusion, then many are likely to resort to claims of territorial autonomy (rather than insertion in national politics), as happened in 1994 in the south of Mexico.

In this scenario, by 2030 the groups will have grown exponentially and obtained the majority adherence of indigenous peoples to their countries, and a "demonstration" or "contagion" effect could cause spillover into other nations. The resulting indigenous irredentism would include the rejection of the western political and economic order causing a deep social fracture that could lead to armed insurgency, repressive responses by counter-insurgent governments, social violence and even political and territorial balkanization.

The next 15 years will see a growth of cultural contradictions in society resulting from the emergence of new ethnic influences. The most resounding expression of this phenomenon will be the indigenous movement, whose influence is expected to grow particularly in the south of Mexico.

Territorial claims driven by irredentist indigenous groups could set the stage for armed insurgency and political violence. The impact and nature of indigenous movements, advocates of old social values and historic claims, will depend on the degree of inclusion that existing societies and powers give them. Where successful inclusion occurs, they will gradually join the representative system and, perhaps in some cases, pursue greater autonomy at local and subnational level.

But where political and economic exclusion rigidities prevail, indigenism will evolve into more radical expressions that will openly confront the social, political, economic and cultural institutions of the colonial structures prevailing in Mexico. In these potential situations, the values of historical identity and compensation will displace economic growth expectations as the key driver of people's actions.

In the worse case scenario, there is a latent risk of a regression to a more authoritarian regime if the political actors are unwilling to acknowledge that their behaviors are contributed to be trapped in a "victim centered" discourse of their own misfortunes. Considering the less likely scenario of recurring governance crises affecting the country, the fragile conditions, the emergence of radical left-leaning or nationalist governments in Mexico triggered by the "contagion effect" from the other countries, this continental "anti-imperialistic" scenario would entail sub-scenarios of international isolation, impoverishment and capital flight plus conflicts and un-governance on a regional level.

The media and more specifically the electronic media are tightly controlled and will continue being controlled for the following twenty years. The electronic media allied to some government sectors will corner and destroy the credibility of opposition leaders and politicians to maintain the conservative National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional – PAN) in power for the following twenty years at least. Oppositional Parties such as Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional – PRI) and Democratic Revolution Party (Partido de la Revolución Democrática – PRD) will continue to be strong, counterbalancing the executive power in the Congress.

New forms of political crises are likely to appear in the years ahead. The region's poor socio-economic results, coupled with the inability of leaders and elites to improve governance, have caused a deep loss of legitimacy and credibility in players and political parties. Against a background of social deterioration and exclusion set to prevail in Mexico, the political preferences of the excluded will favor the emergence of populist and charismatic leaders

little interested in the development of institutions. In these cases, the political parties and institutions of representative democracy will lose influence on movements and the *poderes fácticos*, and phenomena such as patronage, personalism and arbitrariness of governments will flourish.

The political parties face crises of a different order, and some party structures will disappear. Popular disaffection, social fragmentation, and the failure of existing structures to absorb sectors demanding inclusion, such as the mobilized indigenous groups, will have negative effects on politics and governance. The weakness of political parties – instead of leading to the emergence of a new group, will favor phenomena such as “mobilizationism”, videopolitics, the emergence of charismatic leaders, and the mounting influence of societies’ “de facto powers”, *los poderes fácticos* including elites, media, business groups, military, criminal organizations, etc., in electoral contests.

There is a risk that after serious political confrontation the PRD, defeated by questionable elections like the past federal election of 2006, will remain solely focused on resistance without proposing alternatives, especially vis-à-vis the sectors that want a more immediate solution to their demands, or that there will be insufficient internal discussion or insufficiently strong ties with other social movements. If this scenario plays out, we will be entering a period of much greater tension between society and the political system. In the best scenario, this would occur through manifestations of discontent throughout the country, the appearance of direct, plebian democracy; in the worst, it would mean the proliferation of outbreaks of irrational violence, in attempts to vent pent-up rage.

However, in a more optimistic scenario, if the PRD and its allies consolidate and become an authentic, collective, popular actor and a decisive political and social force for the transformation of Mexico, it is probably the occurrence of formulation of a solid strategy on the left, with the convergence of all of the country's democratic, popular, and progressive forces, combination of civil resistance with actions in favor of direct democracy and with legislative proposals to establish and consolidate participatory democracy as the general rule and not the exception in the country's most important political and social processes, and the establishment of ongoing, systematic ties with social movements in all regions in the country.

On the following twenty years, there will be some achievements, although not enough, regarding the reliance on participatory mechanisms to design, reach consensus on, and carry out a plan for the social transformation of the country and the eradication of inequality and extreme poverty and to lay the

foundations for economic development with a sufficient number of dignified, well-paid jobs and with a type of social development that meets the needs of all citizens, both men and women.

In the following twenty years, there will be more promotion of the participation of citizens as effective stakeholders rather than as an excuse to channel lavish amounts of money to political parties and electoral institutions, especially the Electoral Federal Institute (Instituto Federal Electoral – IFE) and its state committees and institutes and federal and state agencies charged with ensuring transparency and public access to information, etc.

There is a tendency of political actors and their interests in utilizing the social organization with extra community ends. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in Mexico, will be more ideologically involved in the following years abandoning the political and ideological neutrality, in order to reduce any possible antidemocratic and authoritarian tendency. Most of these NGOs will be actors of new social movements in Mexico in the following years.

Civil-society organizations (CSOs) in Mexico will become stronger and more powerful in the following two decades to continue facing with the urgent, immediate task of rescuing the political system from the monopoly that professional politicians made it depend on. Above all, those involved in grassroots communication and education will actively participate in constructing the new social and political actors who will bring about some significant actions of social transformation. To construct the social actors CSOs will join other forces, such as the coordinating groups of peasants (*campesino*) and labor organizations, to reinforce each other's efforts in that construction.

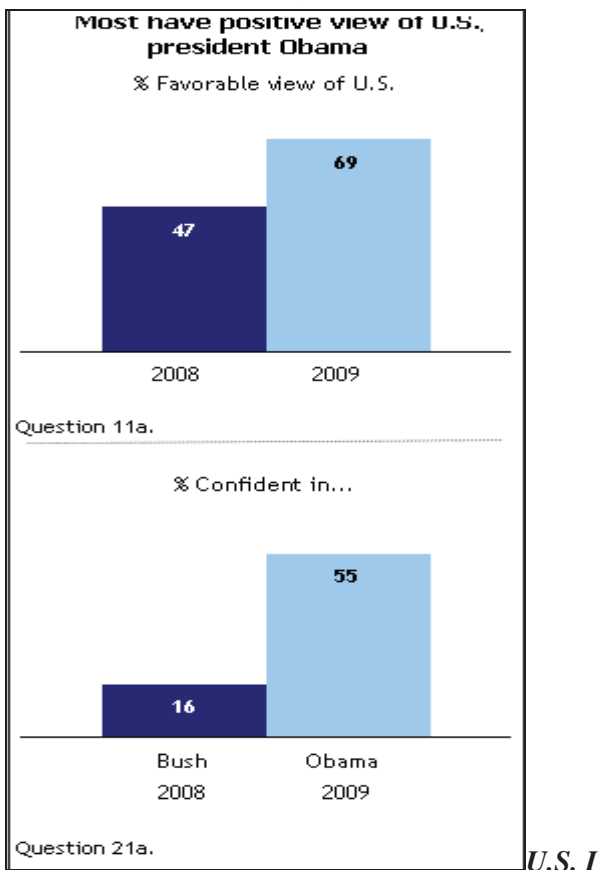
CSOs will continue fighting for greater citizen participation in all the institutions referred to above; publicly criticizing the squandering of public monies and the high salaries and generous benefits of the political elites and proposing an ongoing austerity policy; promoting the adoption and implementation of mechanisms for participatory democracy; and, above all and at all times, making a systematic, creative, efficacious attempt to promote a new political culture in Mexico, that is, a new type of relationship between the citizenry and the political system. A relationship in which citizens are the actors, the ones who demand, who insist on accountability, who make proposals, and in which politicians, as neo-Zapatistas say, “lead by obeying”.

To accomplish this, the CSOs will contribute all their experience, knowledge, critical capacity, values, and working methods. They also will overcome some of their limitations, their narrow outlook, and their difficulties in moving beyond micro social levels, and their distance from the masses and lack of access to the mass media.

Also, U.S. Image Improving among Mexicans according to The Pew Global Attitudes survey found that America's overall image improved significantly across much of the world over the last year, and Mexico is no exception. While slightly less than half (47%) expressed a positive opinion of the U.S. in 2008, 69% do so now. Views of the American people also have become more positive since 2008.

And in a pattern found throughout much of the world, President Barack Obama receives considerably more favorable reviews than his predecessor, George W. Bush. Interestingly, however, Mexico is one of the few countries included in the survey where the U.S. as a country receives higher marks than President Obama or the American people.

Overall, Mexicans believe they benefit from the deep economic ties between the U.S. and their country – about three-in-four (76%) say that these ties are good for Mexico. Nonetheless, many see America's economic crisis spilling across the border, and most say that, right now, the U.S. is having a negative economic impact on Mexico (Pew Research Center Publications, 2009).



Source: Pew Research Center Publications, 2009.

Fig. 10. Mexicans beliefs from the deep economic ties between the U.S. and Mexico

4. Insecurity

Starting from the analysis of relevant political processes to explain the sources of problems and con-

flicts, the dimensions and extensions of changes that the country has experienced also modified the parameters of conflict management sustained by the post revolutionary Mexican State. However, the application of international coercive measures to countries like Mexico that occasionally experiment scenarios of conflict, instability and crisis is doubtful.

The advance of democratization and trade integration, despite all the remaining problems, contrary to what was expected, had not set strong trends to mitigate conflict involving non-state actors such as irregular armed groups or mafias. In a 20-year perspective, the poderes fácticos and non-state armed players such as mafias, drug-traffickers, and international terrorist groups will seek partnerships or mergers or at least a *modus vivendi* with irregular armed groups.

The drug-trafficking mafias operating in Mexico would probably attempt to adapt quickly to the new conditions of changes in the international drug-trafficking situation as a result of the legalization of drugs, the replacement of cocaine with another product that does not require coca leaves (e.g., synthetics), or another imponderable. But this illegal trade would experience an immediate income drop, which would be strongly felt in a country dependent on the drug-trafficking economy.

The insecurity problems are direct threats to the population, and unfortunately it will continue increasing the level during the following years, particularly in the growing urban areas. Social and political instabilities in Mexico are explained by the problems of insecurity due to the drug traffickers and the weak development of citizenship representativeness, the persistence of political cultures centered in personalized power, the social exclusion and the unfair wealth distribution. This instability and violence do not follow a national pattern. They are more intense in certain cases and regions, according to local political, social and institutional variables (Guajardo, 2006).

Public insecurity and crime in the large cities have shown an upward trend for many years and will grow in importance in the next 20 years, reflecting the increase in poverty and inequality. The basic indicators of human development such as life expectancy, literacy rate and income will be above the national average but the indicators of social disintegration such as drug trafficking, robbing, ganging, domestic violence, etc., will have the highest level in the country. These tendencies will prove that improvement in economic conditions does not necessarily mean improvement in people.

In other national indicators registered, the tendencies show that the national average of illiteracy among the population of 15 years and more will be reduced, although, in the southern states of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero, it will be still high.

These patterns of instability and violence will continue in the following twenty years and eventually there will be severe conflicts and crisis, mainly due to the reaction of governments privileging the security approaches as the framework of analyses and actions to confront the phenomena. The increasing quantity of youth will bring some violent crisis by enough problems of its own, Mexico will have difficulty in understanding the U.S. political agenda focused on domestic security and the "war on terror". In the next twenty years, Mexico will continue to be one of the countries with the lowest relative exposure to the world conflicts of the 21st century. Compared to other countries, Mexico will be relatively peaceful in the years ahead and a scenario of armed confrontations is unlikely.

Considering a scenario of more democratic and major political and social complexity, major uncertainty and action of freedom margins there are questions to answer in the future, namely how the conflicts must be resolved, how the resources must be channelled, and how institutional tensions must be overcome. The risks imposed to the decision processes for treatment and solution of such conflicts are also worrisome. The key term guiding is "management" in the threefold sense, namely processing, solution, and risk. It is necessary to identify the variables which constitute the inputs useful in deal-

ing with conflicts and the state of the system's differentiation (particularly the relationship between politics and law) as well as to determine the new spheres or environments of conflicts in the modernization processes.

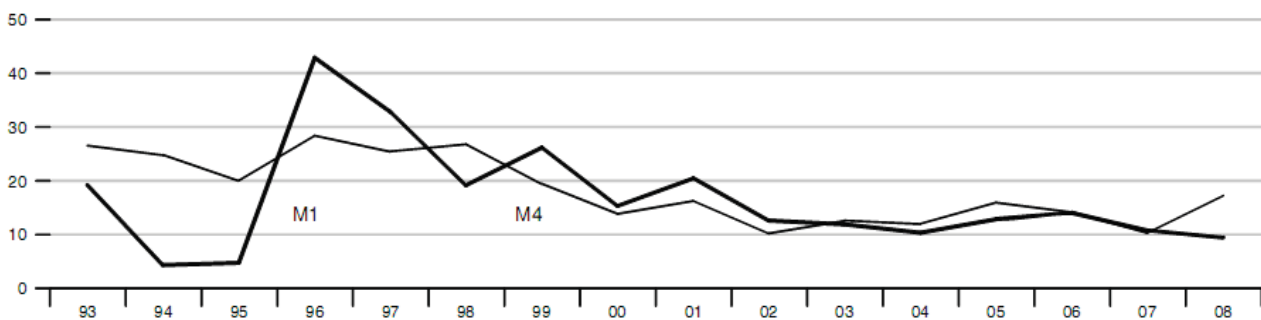
The Mexican State should provide mechanisms of security to confront the armed conflicts. Multilateral and international efforts for conflict resolution will have a positive effect on Mexico in the next twenty years. However, some trends involving internal conflicts related to non-traditional threats will prevail. The remnant armed group structures will not be easily dismantled.

5. Environmental and sustainable development trends

Regarding the scenario in sustainable development, the programs based on the environmental policies such as the instrument of the General Law of Ecological Equilibrium and Environmental Protection will achieve small results in regulations of the soil and productive activities.

The role of government in sustainable development trends is very important and it can foster sustainable development. The monetary issues in government for achieving its goal are important. Some monetary statistics come below for consideration:

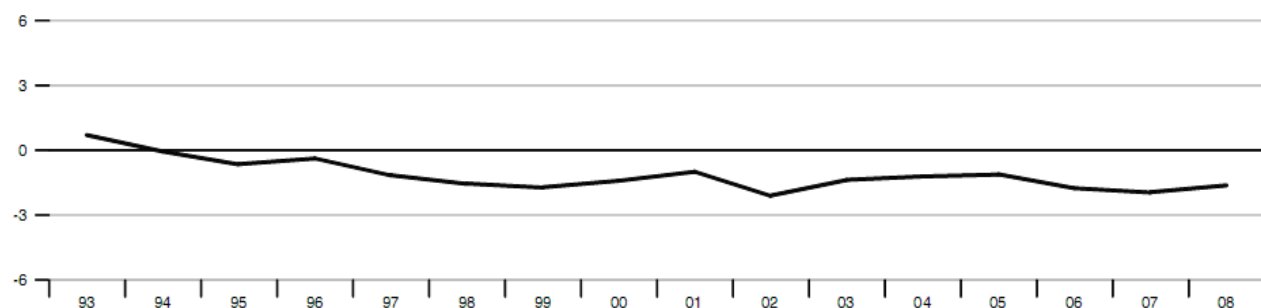
Percent change from year ago



Source: Economic Research, International Economic Trends Mexico, 2009, p. 43.

Fig. 11. Monetary aggregate

Percent of GDP



Source: Economic Research, International Economic Trends Mexico, 2009, p. 42.

Fig. 12. Government budget balance

Mexico's biodiversity will be one of the greatest regional assets in 2030, although the environmental forecast is unfavorable in climatic change; degradation

of land, soil, sea and coastline; the depletion of forests and fresh water supplies, etc, which will deepen. The country will be particularly vulnerable to the eventual

economic impact of climate change such as droughts, due to the relatively high percentage of the population that relies on the natural resources economy.

Reliance on the production of raw materials will make the region particularly vulnerable to ecosystem transformations. Replacement of oil with renewable power resources or other major changes in the world energy situation would alter the political matrix and would have sizable effects that would immerse Mexico, a country highly dependent on oil revenues, into a structural crisis.

The trend analysis of the environmental deterioration, preservation and sustainable use of natural resources indicates that the future looks very gloomy. Pollution in large cities in the center of Mexican territory and along the border with the United States are very well known places where this trend is increasing.

Migration, soil speculation, infrastructure concentration policies, capital, privatizing tendencies, etc. will continue to be the transforming forces of the territorial structure. Political parties and organizations managing clientele relationships will continue to take advantage of the promoting invasions of empty soil for construction, despite the ownership claimed by the real owners.

The specific policies of urban planning until now in most Mexican cities have allowed an irregular pattern of urbanization which has contributed to increasing the level of fragmentation in residential segregation. The trend toward urbanization creates additional pressures in the environment and elevates the vulnerability of natural dangers between the poor which tend to live in informal settlements, and living quarters of deficient construction materials. Concentration of people in urban and coastal areas will continue degrading the environment and exacerbating the over hitting of the planet. Urbanization process is a growing trend with different behavior patterns marking the medium sized cities of Mexico and the tendency is to augment its size and population resulting in a more complex urban problems. Most of the growing urban spaces are of irregular character.

Based on territorial restructuring within the limits between Mexico city and the conurbation area, present tendencies of polarization and segregation have respect to the inhabitants which at the turn of the past Century were in the zone of the historical center of the city and the surrounding areas. However, changing the uses of soil, valuation and differential rent of space in the central part of Mexico City, the inhabitants will neither have possibilities to confront the speculative tendency nor the economic support from the local authorities. However, in front of such trend of privatization in urban soil, there will be several contradictions which in turn would lead to more segregation.

Geography conspires with human activity to produce a poisonous scenario in Mexico City. Located in the crater of an extinct volcano, it is about 2,240 meters above sea level. The lower atmospheric oxygen levels at this altitude cause incomplete fuel combustion in engines and higher emissions of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and volatile organic compounds. Intense sunlight turns these noxious gases into higher than normal smog levels. In turn, the smog prevents the sun from heating the atmosphere enough to penetrate the inversion layer that blankets the city.

The problem to attend populations in inappropriate areas and difficult access multiplies the public services to be satisfied, the costs of attention and nullifies the planning and regulation of growth. The trend to adhere urbanization policies more to the logic of the market will have specific impacts on the policies of segregation due to the recent, complex and partially contradictory urban development and planning of the larger cities, which are difficult to evaluate in their total scope. The need of urban development will demand more space in proximity to the limits of the City center, and thus increase in prices for real estate, which will generate an inflationary trend under the logic of reproduction in the city as in the real estate capital, financial, industrial and construction and which finally will make an effect on the workforce of migrant people.

A trend toward uneven concentration of population and disordered growth will lead to a peripheral development in most of the medium sized cities. This dysfunctional development will be manifested in the struggle between the city limits and numerical reality of demands. It will also be manifested in the duality of real estate markets (Horbath, 2002). Medium cities will grow in dispersing and expansive tendencies where the limits of metropolitan development lacking good urban planning will lead to a confrontation between population growth and economic development. A city with population exceeding the needs and demands of the city will be always in serious contradiction.

These trends of population concentration and metropolitan increase are due to economic model and politics. The trends will originate an accelerated process of irregular occupation by inhabitants always putting at risk the forests and the potential agricultural production and thus, the sustainability of future development, although the rate of population growth is diminishing. These trends in the organization of the geographical space will continue for the following twenty years as the causes of contradictions, social inequalities and injustices due to the weak institutional framework in enforcing the rule of law.

Results and conclusions

Forecasting is kind of tricky action and this paper tried to investigate Mexico in three trends, namely economic, social and political trends, in upcoming twenty years. This survey aimed to look at the all issues in Mexico logically and using pessimistic, realistic and optimistic views, but the main frames were discussing in more detail. With regard to economic trends, we find that Mexico's degree of integration into the globalized economy depends on much more factors such as strategic policies for international integration and the competitiveness of its production and exporting capacity and as to social trend, it is important to say that the need to intervene in the greater scope to struggle against poverty will lead to formulating the strategies of social policy toward the target groups as the tendency of the state solution. Poverty in Mexico is a generalized and intensive phenomenon. Since 1963 until 1981, poverty decreased very fast, but, at the beginning of 1982, the trend was reversed and up to date the poverty increased so that more than two thirds (70,6%) of people are poor and almost half of the population (44,7%) are living in extreme poverty conditions. Since 1998, Mexico is achieving better results than the other Latin Countries. Finally, when it comes to the political trends, we discussed that the Neoliberal State as a model of development of Mexico will be implemented very slowly in the following twenty years because there is a strong political culture tradition of centralization of governmental functions, paternalism and political clientele in the provision of public services and corrupted behaviors. In this respect, the Mexican State will be diminishing its sovereignty in front of the globalization tendencies. It will disincorporate and disregulate the economy to design policies of appropriation and use of resources. Also, starting from the analysis of relevant political processes to explain the sources of problems and conflict, the dimensions and extensions of changes that the country has experienced also modified the parameters of conflict management sustained by the post revolutionary Mexican State. However, the application of international coercive measures to countries like Mexico that occasionally experiment scenarios of conflict, instability and crisis is doubtful. Moreover, environmental and sustainable development trends were analyzed during this study in Mexico and it was found that, part Natural catastrophes such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and climatic change would have a deeper detrimental effect with profound socio-economic impact for rural populations that are

highly dependent on natural resources (desertification, droughts). Calamities caused by extreme climatic conditions can not be considered a natural accident only. The tragedies are the combination of environmental risks and the socioeconomic situation, particularly demographic and environmental tendencies which amplify possible disastrous consequences. The risk of natural disasters interaction with demographic tendencies, environmental transformation and the normative options and economic factors will foster change. The tendency will be toward more programs of prevention to avoid calamities and tragedies, but the results will not be successful unfortunately. In general, according to our study and Pew research survey conducted in September 2009, we can conclude that:

- ◆ The economic downturn has not led to a decrease in support for trade. In fact, the share of the public who believes growing trade and business ties between nations are good for Mexico has increased, rising from 69% in 2008 to 79% in 2009 (pewglobal.org, 2009).
- ◆ Mexicans are less enthusiastic about the free market than many others around the world. Just 52% say people are generally better off in a free-market system, even though this means some may be rich while others are poor; about four-in-ten (41%) disagree with this point of view. Only four of the 25 publics in the survey express less enthusiasm about the free market (pewglobal.org, 2009).
- ◆ Almost universally, political corruption is considered a problem. Fully 94% of those surveyed say corrupt political leaders are a big problem, and 68% say they are a *very* big problem (pewglobal.org, 2009).
- ◆ Despite seeing a host of problems afflicting the country, the vast majority of Mexicans (87%) say they are very or somewhat satisfied with their own lives.
- ◆ The economic downturn is having an impact on the lives of Mexicans – 54% describe their personal economic situation as good, down six percentage points from last year (Pew Research Center Publications, 2009).
- ◆ Most Mexicans think their country has a poor image abroad – 61% say Mexico is poorly regarded by people around the world (Pew Research Center Publications, 2009).

This scenario tries to look at the three mentioned trends logically and it will be useful for investigators and scholars who do researches on Mexico as well as for other researchers.

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