



International Migration Institute
James Martin 21st Century School
University of Oxford



Transatlantic dialogues on migration and development issues

Objectives, activities and work-plan

Funded by the
German Marshall Fund of the United States
Support for transatlantic programming of key
immigration & integration institutions 2008-2009

Background

- German Marshall Fund of the United States: Support for *transatlantic* programming of key immigration & integration institutions 2008-2009
- IMI project proposal to look transatlantic migration issues from an origin country ('southern') perspective.
- The Morocco-Mexico comparison is relevant because of striking similarities in their geo-political and migratory position right on the world's main 'migration frontiers'

The receiving country bias

- Debates and policies on ‘South-North’ migration are dominated by ‘northern’ perspectives.
- Strong policy emphasis on ‘migration management’ (i.e., control)
 - how to reduce illegal migration
 - how to collaborate with Mexico and Morocco to curb transit migration (externalisation)
 - interest in migration and development often framed within migration control perspective (“development instead of migration”).
 - stimulate temporary and ‘circular’ migration
- This reveals an overall focus on restrictions and border controls: portrayal of South-North migration as a problem to be solved, or even a threat, rather than an opportunity

*US-Mexico border at
Tijuana*





« Europe under siege »



« The fight against illegal migration »



The receiving country bias

- The frequent failure of policies to meet their stated objectives can partly be explained by
 - Limited attention for diverse causes and consequences of migration from the perspectives of sending countries (e.g., migration and development, poverty and migration)
 - Limited exposure of the 'experts' to the diverse migration realities on the ground, which challenge policy and scientific dogmas (a reality check)
- There has been surprisingly little comparison between different major 'South-North' migration systems (Mexico-US bias)

Morocco-Mexico

A unique comparison

- Morocco-EU and Mexico-US cases share striking migratory characteristics
- But are very different in economic, social, political respects
- These contextual differences make the comparison relevant, because it can help us to understand differences in
 - Migration trends
 - Remittances
 - Development impacts (economic, social, cultural, political) of migration
 - Activities and impacts of 'home town' associations, *co-développement*, etc.

Aims of this project

- To facilitate a transatlantic dialogue on migration and development issues
- To involve policy makers, civil society actors and scholars from Morocco, Mexico, the US and the EU → a mutual learning experience by combining/confronting different perspectives
- To develop an agenda for research and policy

This is achieved by

- Preparation of background paper
- Workshops and simultaneously programmed study tours in migrant sending areas in Mexico (2009) and Morocco (2010).
- Comparative reports and policy briefings
- Ideally, a future research project.

Key questions

1. How have migration and remittances affected development processes in migrant sending areas
2. How can *differences* in migration impacts among regions and between sending countries (i.e., Morocco and Mexico) be explained?
3. What can we learn from experiences across the Atlantic (Mexico-US and Morocco-EU) in order to formulate policies that are both more effective and optimise the development potential of migration?

Morocco-Mexico

a unique comparison

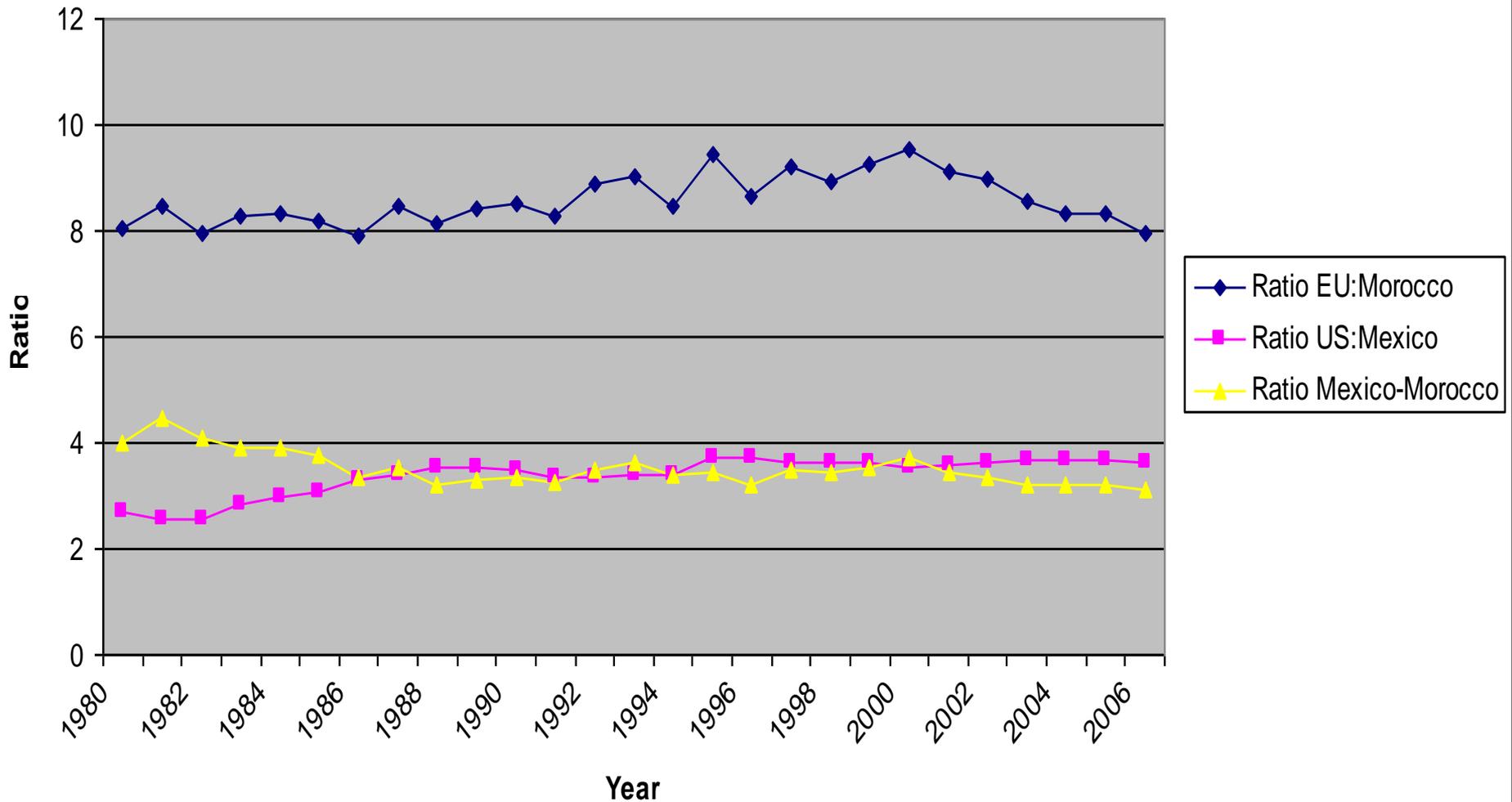
- Emigration countries *par excellence* (low skilled, South-North)
- Increasingly countries of transit migration and settlement
- Since the days of recruitment, political relations with EU and US dominated by migration issues
- Contradictory policy trends: Control vs trade and labour market liberalisation
- Persistent migration notwithstanding migration controls → settlement, illegalisation and diversification
- Migrants represent 10-12 percent of the entire population living in Mexico and Morocco.
- Importance of *remittances* for poverty reduction and improving livelihoods, particularly in rural areas
- But, can migration trigger 'development'? (contested issue!)

Morocco-Mexico

Similarities and differences in development trends

- Development indicators suggest that Mexico's level of development is much higher than Morocco's
- Income gap Mexico-US is as big as Mexico-Morocco income gap

Ratio GDP per capita (PPP) between US-Mexico, EU-Morocco and Mexico-Morocco



Morocco-Mexico

Similarities and differences in development trends

- Development indicators suggest that Mexico's level of development is much higher than Morocco's
- Income gap Mexico-US is as big as Mexico-Morocco income gap
- But income inequality is much higher in Mexico → poverty rates in Mexico and Morocco are almost equal
- South-North income gaps remain high, but there is a remarkable **convergence** on other development indicators (demographic, education, life expectancy).
- Spectacular decrease in fertility from 7 in 1960s to appr. 2.3 now; slowdown of population growth and increasing life expectancy
- Key question: How will this affect future migration?

Morocco-Mexico

development impacts of migration

- Differences in development impacts of migration between Morocco and Mexico
- Difficult to generalise on country-level → the need to look at local and regional level.
- The need to look at differences in impacts and to understand why impacts differ
- The importance of confronting 'experts' to diverse concrete migration and development experiences *in the field* → *to challenge our own and others' certainties.*
- In subsequent debates, we will discuss experiences and develop an agenda for future research and policy
- We will see!



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