

Institute for Human Security

The Institute for Human Security (IHS) at The Fletcher School, Tufts University focuses on the security and protection of individuals and communities while promoting peace and sustainable development. To achieve this, IHS catalyzes collaboration between and creates synergies among the fields that place people at the center of concern: conflict resolution, human rights, humanitarian studies, and political and economic development. Our research, education, and policy engagement emphasize the following principles: protection and promotion of the rights of at-risk populations, empowerment of people, and promotion of responsible government and institutional practices.

For more information on the research project, please visit fletcher.tufts.edu/Institute-for-Human-Security/Research/Migration-Crisis-and-State-Fragility

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Series 2, Number 1

Journeys Interrupted: Human and Policy Challenges of Assisting Migrants in Tijuana

Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico
Saturday, May 20, 2017

Final Report and Proposal for Integrated Solutions: The Need for Multilevel Dialogue across Sectors

The 'Journeys Interrupted' workshop aimed to bridge the gap between academics and policymakers on the issue of transit migration and deportation in the Americas. The project, which is based at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, focuses on cities in Mexico that are grappling with intersecting flows of third-country migrants and Mexicans deported from the United States. The event, which was co-sponsored by the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies (CCIS) and the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), brought together practitioners from the Mexican and U.S. governments (local, state, and federal), international organizations, civil society groups, and academics from both sides of the border to share perspectives and generate proposals for improving the lives of migrants and the local communities that host them.

Rather than being structured as an academic conference, the workshop consisted of moderated roundtable discussion sessions among a range of people with shared interests, but who might not otherwise find themselves in the same circles. In this way, the workshop addressed a need for multilevel dialogue about the 'permanent transience' that characterizes migrants, refugees, and deportees caught indefinitely between sending country and their intended destinations. Tijuana has long served as a major depot in a migration corridor that links the United States with Mexico and beyond. Increasingly, however, like other transit cities around the world, Tijuana is becoming a de facto destination for people denied entry to or deported from the United States. These populations include Central American migrants and ref-

ugees, non-regional migrants and refugees (notably a recent influx of Haitians), and Mexican nationals deported from the United States. Policy responses to these converging flows tend to occur in silos, failing to recognize how migrant and local communities interact across issue areas, and thereby missing opportunities to identify shared interests and coordinate civil society and governmental efforts.

To facilitate new communication between otherwise unfamiliar stakeholders, the workshop design broke with traditional approaches to migrant issues, which are generally organized by themes or sectors: health, education, housing, food security, documentation, employment and labor markets, etc. Instead, the workshop grouped discussion *temporally*, focusing each of three roundtables on a phase of the migration process: 1) immediate humanitarian assistance; 2) access to services in the short and medium term; and 3) opportunities for sustainable livelihoods in the long-term. In order to move past identifying the difficulties for service provision (which are well known) and begin a discussion of innovative responses to these challenges, each roundtable discussion centered on a handout that identified past programs or policies, asking participants to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of these responses. At the end of each workshop exercise, moderators asked their roundtables to collectively propose new responses based on those discussions.

This workshop structure naturally led participants to think in terms of integrated solutions to the multidimensional problems faced by a diverse population. Ultimately, the workshop arrived at a series of specific recommendations and conclusions, which will be disseminated to participants in a report. These recommendations included the following:

- creation of an integrated service center, assisting all migrants, refugees, deportees, and locals. The center would be designed to improve inter-institutional coordination, holistically address needs (across both migratory phase and issue area), and educate the public about the challenges shared by local and migrant populations.
- legal reform and diffusion of information about rights and services for the impacted populations.
- creation of a directory to facilitate the communication of ‘best practices’ among civil society actors

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An opportunity approach.. emphasizes the creative and constructive potential of migration, focusing on the complementary interests of locals and migrants, and on finding areas of shared benefit.

in different geographic areas (outside and inside Tijuana) and serving interconnected needs.

To achieve these solutions, the workshop discussion pointed to four broader issue areas that must be addressed:

- 1) Dueling Approaches to Urban Integration;
- 2) The Primacy of Documentation;
- 3) Constraints and Complications from National Policies and Politics; and
- 4) Low Levels of Legitimate Governance and Public Trust.

The report, which will be disseminated to participants, provides a focal point around which they can coordinate their interventions and an advocacy tool as they confront this larger social and political context.

Dueling Approaches to Urban Integration Issues: The Need to Prioritize Opportunity over Control

The opening remarks at the workshop framed potential responses to ‘permanent transience’ in terms of dueling approaches to urban integration issues: a security approach vs. an opportunity approach. A security approach, currently the dominant response to the arrival of new populations, emphasizes the de-

stabilizing and threatening aspects of the changing migration landscape. This approach tends to focus on divergent interests of locals and migrants, and on attempts to control or restrict human mobility. An opportunity approach, by contrast, emphasizes the creative and constructive potential of the changing landscape. This approach tends to focus on complementary interests of locals and migrants, finding areas of shared benefit. Thus, an opportunity approach points policy makers toward ways to harness or leverage human mobility for the purposes of urban development.

Workshop participants welcomed the opportunity approach, but noted the dearth of broader political and funding support for such initiatives. In particular, existing funding structures privilege a security approach. This bias emerges from a politics of exclusion, and is reinforced by stigma associated with transient populations (both Mexican nationals deported home and foreigners), racism, and public ignorance. The integrated solutions proposed by the workshop participants, rooted in an opportunity approach, therefore require broader political outreach and education at all levels of governance and the public.

San Diego and Tijuana's high degree of cross-border economic, social and cultural integration requires a stable, transparent bi-national response

The Urgency of Documentation: The Need for Better Access to and Acceptance of Records and Identification

The roundtable discussions workshop left themes and challenges open for the participants to define. Across the three phases of migration (short, medium and long-term), participants recognized documentation as a fundamental challenge. Documentation is essential for the transition from immediate humanitarian aid to successful long-term settlement and integration because it is required for access to programs and services across all phases of the migration experience. Enabling documentation will thus be a focal

point for future communication and public policy coordination among workshop participants.

Political Constraints and National Policies:

The Need for Stability and Transparency in Government Response

With the high degree of cross-border economic, social and cultural integration with San Diego, Tijuana's transnational urban environment requires a stable, transparent bi-national response to permanent transience. Workshop participants cautioned that local public policy responses are often contingent on mercurial national policy changes in the United States. NGOs working with migrant, refugee, and deportee populations in Tijuana confront tremendous uncertainty due to unpredictable and ambiguous U.S. policies. In particular, NGOs worry about how the future of temporary protected status for Haitians and Central Americans in the US and the protocols for deportation of Mexicans will affect outreach efforts. Given looming political decisions about these programs, migrants confront uncertain futures and important settlement choices, and service providers cannot gauge future needs and potential resource gaps.

Federal Mexican immigration policy and the precarious legal status of migrants also undermine local and state efforts to address permanent transience. Migrants fear harassment from authorities when attempting to access services, and locals distrust officials' capacity to distribute resources. Uncertainty and lack of transparency in these state-society relationships undermines effective municipal and state programs and policies. Appropriate local response and coordinated humanitarian relief require a bi-national policy space that minimizes uncertainty and ambiguity.

Low Levels of Legitimate Governance and Public Trust:

The Need for Credible Civil Society Engagement

A stable, transparent government response would be a first step toward legitimate governance and provide a basis for increased public trust. However, given past strains and difficult relationships in Tijuana, improvement of governance requires aggressive intervention.

A pervasive distrust of all levels of Mexican government was evident among civil society participants in discussions, and for their part, government officials responded defensively. The lack of trust is mutual.

In this context, credible policymaking demands a participatory framework within which civil society can propose solutions and hold government accountable for its commitments to those solutions. A complex ecosystem of civil society actors crosses municipal, state and national lines to offer a myriad of entwined services to migrants, refugees, deportees, and locals. For these reasons, stability and transparency are a foundation for this framework, but to regain public trust and legitimacy, the federal, state, and local governments must engage and meaningfully empower NGOs, churches and individuals who represent vulnerable communities. A stable and transparent government response must also be responsive and accountable to civil society to regain legitimacy. Both civil society and government must make this first step in unison to overcome mutual distrust.

Conclusions and Achievements: Answering a Need for a Comprehensive Response to ‘Permanent Transience’

In summary, the workshop promoted constructive communication between key stakeholders around the issue of ‘permanent transience’ in Tijuana. The participants identified shared challenges and potential solutions, and highlighted the importance of continued coordination among stakeholders for coping with a larger political context of immigration restriction and xenophobia. In their written evaluations, all respondents agreed that they had met people with whom they could generate synergy in the future during the workshop, and all respondents agreed that discussion had generated innovative policy proposals. In those written evaluations, as well as spoken feedback provided throughout the workshop, several participants also expressed an eagerness to receive the report detailing the discussions’ findings, a strong interest in a directory of participants to continue coordination around these issues, and a desire to attend future meetings to continue to develop specific public policy actions and strategies.

In this way, the workshop bridged the gap between NGOs, academics, and government officials. Participants initiated an important discussion about the present challenges shared by a diverse population of locals, migrants, refugees, and deportees. They identified a focal point for future communication and coordination, which links the phases of migration and integrates responses to multiple needs and populations: documentation. In response, they proposed innovative comprehensive solutions to the multifaceted challenge of ‘permanent transience’ that confronts Tijuana. Finally, the workshop discussions clarified the pressing need for government actors to listen and respond to civil society, thereby setting the stage for future communication and coordination among stakeholders.

Next steps:

The ultimate impact of the workshop depends on continued action by the workshop organizing committee. The three next steps include:

Goal	Action
1. To provide a focal point for future coordination among stake holders	Timely dissemination of the workshop report with recommendations
2. To provide a means for communication among stake holders	Timely dissemination of the workshop directory (names, contact info); creation of Facebook page, other social media spaces
3. To facilitate communication and coordination across a broader geographic area, and to deepen our understanding of urban integration, human mobility, and legitimacy of governance in diverse settings	Follow-up meeting by end of 2017 in another Mexican town of ‘permanent transience’ along US-Mexican border