

Mexican Immigration Scenarios Based on the South African Experience of Ending Apartheid

Edward Murguía and Kim Díaz

Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, USA

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Abstract

How can we ameliorate the current immigration policies toward Mexican people immigrating to the United States? This study re-examines how the development of scenarios assisted South Africa to dismantle apartheid without engaging in a bloody civil war. Following the scenario approach, we articulate positions taken by different interest groups involved in the debate concerning immigration from Mexico. Next, we formulate a set of scenarios which are evaluated as to how well each contributes to the well-being of the populace both of Mexico and of the United States. The South African scenario model has proven to be an effective tool in times of political disagreement. It fosters a common language among competing groups, non-hierarchical communication among groups, and acknowledgement of the concerns of each group involved.

Keywords

Mexican immigration, apartheid, scenarios, human betterment, policy

Introduction

On February 2, 1990, President F.W. de Klerk of South Africa signaled the transition away from apartheid by asking, “What will the new South Africa look like?”¹ Before South Africa ended apartheid in 1994, groups of South Africans worked together using a scenario approach to understand what needs had to be met and what options were available to the nation at that critical period. In phase one of the scenario approach, leaders of different interest groups were brought together to state their needs and concerns.

¹ Gailer 2004. p. 373.

During this stage, participants did not argue or negotiate about a particular outcome; they only stated their positions. In phase two, preliminary scenarios were developed as to what could happen in the future to South Africa, with varying interest groups developing scenarios reflecting their divergent interests. Each participant took a 'learning journey' to be able to see the different realities at play and to notice how the world looked from other perspectives. The last phase of the scenario model was scenario development by the entire team of participants where, depending on what was done or not done in South Africa in the present, a final small number of scenarios were developed by all the participants working together. Out of the final set of scenarios, one was selected as optimal in that if followed, life chances for most people would be enhanced.²

The scenario model presented here is a heuristic version of what ideally could take place among different interest groups involved in the current debate on immigration from Mexico. To do this, we first develop the different interest groups' positions as robustly and fairly as possible. We then develop four scenarios that address the concerns of the different interest groups, each of these four predicting a different outcome. We then select one as having the greatest potential of improving the quality of life for the greatest number of people in Mexico and in the United States.

We believe the South African scenario model to be a valuable tool, not only for offering solutions to political problems, but also for building a community of people who care about finding lasting solutions based on mutual agreement. The scenario model is a useful approach both on an empirical/practical basis given its effectiveness in South Africa, but also on a theoretical level. It reflects the Jeffersonian democratic sensibility of the United States at its best, namely, an emphasis on the value of community, and of non-hierarchical communication effective for obtaining consensus. In this context, the only intolerable stance is intolerance itself.

As opposed to other contexts where participants holding entrenched positions operate in a winner-take-all mode, the scenario model allows participants involved to meet one another on neutral ground, that is, on hypothetical ground. Participants project their interests into the future where they consider possible consequences of actions taken at present. In this way, participants become aware that their positions might not be totally fair to others. One of the virtues of the scenario model is that it acknowledges that everyone has a legitimate voice in the conversation.

²) Beery, Eidinow, and Murphy nd; Le Roux and Maphai nd; Gailer 2004.

Scenario thinking should not be confused with attempts simply to forecast the future; in scenario development, two or more futures are developed. Interestingly though, there is a better chance of actually predicting the future using a scenario approach because multiple futures are developed. Using scenario thinking, the future is addressed considering numerous factors, and this, in itself, leads to a more sophisticated analysis of what is likely to happen. After all is said and done, often one scenario comes to be seen as optimal by participants and this is the scenario that either overtly or covertly becomes both descriptive (describes what might happen) and, importantly, prescriptive (describes what ought to happen), and is supported by most of the participants.

The most famous set of South African scenarios were the “Mont Fleur” scenarios, led by Professor Pieter le Roux of the University of the Western Cape in May 1992 and held at that University. A core group of five people, including Professor le Roux, organized the meetings. As opposed to meetings at conferences where experts present and audiences listen, this series of meetings was organized in a different way. A multi-disciplinary team of 22 participants, including politicians, academics, union officials, and business people was brought together. Also invited was Adam Kahane, a recognized expert in scenario planning.³ The intent was for participants to study the nature of the South African crisis from economic, social, and political perspectives; there was a realization that simultaneous intervention in all three areas was needed. Originally, thirty scenarios were brainstormed by the Mont Fleur team, which were reduced to nine based on both on scenario plausibility and internal consistency. Finally, the nine were further reduced to four, and highly descriptive and memorable avian names were given to the four, namely, *Ostrich*, *Lame Duck*, *Icarus*, and *Flight of the Flamingos*.⁴

An ostrich in time of trouble, as ancient myth based on the Roman writer, Pliny the Elder, has it, refuses to face danger, instead inserting its head in sand in time of trouble. Also, it is unable to fly. In this case, the Ostrich Scenario described a situation where it was hypothesized that the de Klerk government would simply stop negotiations with native African groups and would stubbornly attempt to maintain the status quo, including apartheid, into the future.

³ Beery, Eidinow, and Murphy, nd; Le Roux and Maphai nd; Gailer 2004, pp. 375–6.

⁴ Gailer 2004, p. 376; Jimenez, nd.

A lame duck describes a bird with a broken wing not able to fly very far. The Lame Duck Scenario envisaged a future where the South African government saw a need for reform but did not follow through with needed changes, and where liberation movements froze in place because of fear of continued repression. Given international sanctions imposed on South Africa at the time, no international investment would flow into South Africa in the future without its abandonment of apartheid, thus blocking its economic development.

According to Greek mythology, Icarus, with wings fashioned by his father, Daedalus, and exhilarated by his ability to fly, flew too high and the sun melted his wings, causing him to fall to his death. The Icarus Scenario described a future where too much is done too quickly. A complete change in government exclusively in favor of blacks in South Africa, according to Mont Fleur participants, would lead to dramatically increased and unsustainable social spending. This, in turn, would create economic and social imbalances resented by whites formerly in power, leading to economic and social disintegration. Ultimately, this breakdown of South African society would lead to reactionary authoritarian rule by whites.

Flamingos beginning their flight tend to take off relatively slowly, but they fly together, and together they eventually attain great heights. The Flight of the Flamingos Scenario, therefore, foresaw a South Africa marked by inclusive democracy marking the end of apartheid and the end of economic sanctions by the international community. The result would be a condition of sustainable economic change and growth in South Africa.⁵ The significant impact of the Mont Fleur scenarios after they became very well known in South Africa can be measured by President de Klerk's comment, "I am not an Ostrich."⁶

As indicated, the first phase of the scenario model calls for participants who hold differing positions to state their concerns. Ideally, this scenario planning would take place in actuality, but due to the limits of this article, this is done theoretically, and we only consider seven positions. However, some points of contention advocated by other groups overlap with those of the seven interest groups represented here. The positions we consider are those held by the socially conservative right, the economic right, liberal Democrats, Latino advocacy groups, Mexico's elite, undocumented work-

⁵) Gailer 2004, pp. 376–77.

⁶) Jimenez nd.

ers themselves, and by culturally nationalist Chicano groups. The following is our best attempt to articulate objectively each of these groups' interests. Each position was written by us and in the first person to facilitate understanding of seven differing stances.

Positions Represented

The Socially Conservative Right

We are concerned with the immigration issue on several levels. One of our concerns is that the United States is losing its national identity. We believe that with so many Mexican immigrants coming into the US, Mexicans are taking over our country. This creates a 'clash of civilizations,' a clash of languages and values that undermines legitimate US national identity. We are concerned with protecting our national identity, our language, and our culture. We are in the US after all; Mexicans already have their own country. It is not right for them to violate our laws by coming into the US illegally. We should make illegal entry into our country a felony and we should make assisting illegal aliens a felony as well. Also, since they accept low paying jobs with wages near the minimum wage, a number of employers hire them rather than American citizens. This causes the unemployment rate among Americans to be higher than otherwise, since Americans have to compete with immigrants for jobs.

Because of 700,000 illegal immigrants coming into our country per year (Passel 2005), more and more Spanish is being spoken in America whose official language should be English. We acknowledge that we are a nation built upon the work of immigrants, but other immigrants have assimilated to the American culture and have learned to speak our nation's language. On principle, we do not agree with Mexicans coming into our country illegally; it is not fair to those immigrants who have had to wait by seeking entry through the legal process. Furthermore, we are concerned with Mexicans' resistance to assimilation into the American culture. If Mexicans want to immigrate into the US they must do so legally; if they want to be part of our community they must share our American values and speak our language.

Additionally, it is not fair for Americans to pay, through our taxes, for illegal immigrant access to education and to hospitals in the US. Our taxes should insure the well-being and growth of our communities; our people

should come first. There are plenty of us who are here legally, who work legally, who pay taxes, and who also need federal help or welfare.

We believe that the best way to solve this problem is by building a wall that spans the entire length of the US-Mexico border. Our current policies are not effective in keeping Mexicans from illegally coming and staying in our country; therefore we must seek added methods of law enforcement. We need to train and to station many more border patrol agents. This will create more jobs and benefit the local economies. This will be a positive side-effect of our main goal – to protect our country and our national identity from illegal immigrants.

It is also a matter of national security. It is our patriotic duty to protect our borders from terrorist groups whose intentions are to undermine America and American values of democracy and freedom. Everyone coming into the United States should be carefully checked, and enemies of our country as well as those who attempt to break our laws by entering illegally, must be jailed.

Huntington (2004) is an example of a book written from the “Socially Conservative Right” position.⁷

The Economic Right: The US Business Community

We want to further the economic interests of the United States by employing Mexican labor both in Mexico and in the US. We have invested in the Mexican economy by employing Mexican people in *maquiladoras* (factories) located in Mexico. We have been able to do this through economic partnerships such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Our corporations benefit from investing in Mexico’s economy by providing jobs in Mexico because the cost of labor in Mexico is \$2.63 dollars/hr. compared to the US which is \$23.65 dollars/hr.⁸ Our corporations save money by paying less on wages, on employment benefits, and less in the process of manufacturing generally speaking because of relaxed environmental regulations in Mexico.

We believe that it is in the American public’s best interest to capitalize on immigrant labor for our companies in the United States. Mexican immigrants are hardworking people who are willing to take jobs that most Americans do not want. They are an integral part of our economy. We support the guest-worker program because it would allow our businesses to

⁷ Huntington 2004.

⁸ US Department of Labor 2007.

benefit from immigrant labor. We believe that this is the best way to monitor the labor of immigrants, and we believe that this program would benefit immigrants themselves. The guest-worker program would grant some degree of workers' rights to immigrants, whereas currently, undocumented workers have no workers' rights. This is the least we can do to acknowledge their contribution to our economy. Their government does not represent or seem to care about their interests, and immigrant workers have to take care of their families solely through their own hard work.

For an example of the 'Economic Right' position, see Bush.⁹

Progressive Democrats

We believe that undocumented immigrants who have worked in this country, who have contributed to our economy, and whose children are now American, have in fact become part of the American community. We think that we should provide them with the opportunity to legalize their status. This opportunity would become available to them if they go through a series of steps such as passing a background check that insures the safety of our community. We support a guest-worker program that would legalize their work, would provide them with workers' rights, and would benefit our economy.

See Kennedy (2007) for an example of this position.¹⁰

Latino Advocacy Groups

We believe that immigrant workers have earned the right to join the American community through their labor. We want immigrant workers to be granted workers' rights. They need to be paid at least the minimum wage and they need to have the same rights as other workers. They should have the right to ask for a raise after a period of time or after increased productivity. They should be able to call in sick without fear of being fired, and they should have the right to report abuses at the work place. All of these are workers' rights which they do not currently have. It is not fair that the different treatment of workers is justified by a set of 'laws' that allow the abuse of undocumented workers. The morality of these laws is questionable since they allow the dehumanization of a hard working group of people. Mexican immigrant workers take jobs that Americans do not want or

⁹) The Whitehouse Office of the Press Secretary. 2004.

¹⁰) Kennedy 2007.

find degrading, jobs such as dishwashers, maids, janitors, or jobs in agriculture, in construction, or in the meat packing industry. The least we can do is acknowledge the value of their labor by granting them workers' rights.

We oppose the criminalization of illegal immigration and the criminalization of those who help undocumented workers in their struggle, such as kind individuals in the public sector, in the Catholic Church, and within our own families. We oppose building a wall to keep Mexicans from immigrating into the US. Such a wall would be insulting, degrading, and useless. We support a guest-worker program that legitimizes the labor of guest workers from Mexico by giving them workers' rights and benefits.

See, for example, National Council of La Raza (2007).¹¹

Mexico's Elite

We support both amnesty for undocumented workers currently in the United States, as well as a guest-worker program for workers from Mexico. Immigrants should be granted amnesty if they meet requirements as set forth by the U.S. government. A guest worker program would allow Mexican laborers the opportunity to work legally in the US, at the same time being able to legally return to Mexico to be with their families. This would eliminate the current vicious black market of human trafficking as well as the deaths of roughly 500 immigrants per year who die attempting to cross the US–Mexico border.¹² Mexicans emigrate to the US because wages are higher in the US than in Mexico. People are attracted to the possibility of earning more money than they could earn in Mexico. We currently are working to develop our economic infrastructure by creating more jobs; however, at this time, we cannot compete with the higher wages the US offers, and with the lure of making a great deal of money in a very short time in the United States.

We oppose the building of a wall along the US–Mexican border. A wall would be a unilateral decision in the part of the US, ignoring our preferences as well as ignoring the needs of communities along the US–Mexican border.

Mexico's elite is the group of people who would be legally representing the Mexican people at a US–Mexico bargaining table. For an example of this perspective, see Baker (2007).¹³

¹¹) National Council of La Raza. 2007.

¹²) US Government Accountability Office: 2006.

¹³) Baker 2007.

Undocumented Workers

We are only doing what any other human being would do in our situation. It is difficult to provide for one's family in Mexico. Our immigration into the US is not a complete act of free agency; our decision was in some ways coerced by the economic oppression we suffer in Mexico. It is very painful for us to leave our families behind and leave the place we call home. To do so, it is either because we have no choice in that we need to feed our families, or that we see the prospect of a better life, especially for our children, in the United States. Perhaps both of these reasons drive us north to find work. We are simply doing what any caring parent, son, or daughter would do for their family, that is, to help put bread on the table.

The economic landscape in Mexico is injurious towards us in the working class. In Mexico, we worked in agriculture, or in *maquiladoras* that are foreign owned; however wages in Mexico are not enough to support a family. This economic problem goes hand in hand with a social problem that we have in Mexico and share with most developing countries, namely that of openly displayed corruption. Unfortunately, corruption, although it exists to some extent in all governments, is ever present in Mexico. This makes it difficult for us to remain in a country run by an elitist government that often does not have our interests in mind. We feel that our labor is exploited by foreign corporations and that our own government is so unreliable that it is easier for us to risk our lives crossing a desert and start from scratch in the US than to remain in Mexico.

We are economically coerced into immigrating to the U.S where our labor is further exploited because of our illegal immigrant status. We have no rights, neither worker rights, nor legal rights; we do not speak the English language so we are not even able to make our voices heard. We cannot complain of any abuses, whether these are at the workplace or in any other areas of our lives. To whom do we go to complain when we are being abused? To whom do we complain when our basic human rights are being violated? Our illegal status becomes the justification for our subhuman treatment.

We contribute to the US economy by doing work that Americans find degrading and prefer not to take because of low pay and harsh working conditions. Also, we pay sales taxes and we have money taken out of each paycheck that we will never claim as long as we remain illegal. Because we pay taxes, we do contribute directly to the communities and to the nation in which we now live, but unlike other workers we are not able to share the benefits of living in the US. As a result, in terms of rights and privileges

that people have in the US, we exist in a social class lower than the lower class.

We want our work ethic to be acknowledged, not criminalized. We are hard-working people who care about our families and simply want the opportunity to be able to work legally. We are not asking for a hand-out or to be given free money or to receive economic aid. We are asking only for the opportunity to be able to work for our living. We need worker's rights, and we need amnesty. We need policies that allow immigrants to come into the US; that allow us to work, and if we work hard for the benefit of the US for a given length of time, that fact should allow us to stay. We no longer want to risk our lives swimming across a river or crossing the desert. We do not want to risk our safety by being at the mercy of *coyotes* (people smugglers).

We stand alone in this struggle. It has become clear to us that the Mexican elite do not have our interests in mind when recommending domestic or foreign policies. The Mexican government prefers for us to leave Mexico for two reasons. First, we send back an average of \$18.1 billion dollars in remittances annually, and this is the second largest contribution to the national income after oil and followed by tourism (World Bank, 2006). Second, once we are out of the country, we are no longer in Mexico investing the energy necessary to create social reform. We can not, therefore, challenge the policies of the Mexican elite in Mexico when we are busy paving roads and picking grapes in the US to make enough money to send back to our families.

This position is best articulated by advocacy groups such as the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (2006).¹⁴

Chicano Cultural Nationalists

We believe that current laws concerning immigration from Mexico have not been ethical and must be changed so that Mexican people are treated with human dignity. We need to acknowledge the history of the US. Europeans drove the Native American people out of their land into reservations. Anglos not only stole the land from Native Americans, they also invaded Mexico in 1846 and proceeded to take land that now constitutes the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, and Utah from Mexico (Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo 1848). Mexicans

¹⁴ National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights 2006.

have lived in the southwestern part of the US even before the United States was established. We were already here; this is our country. It was the US who stole this land from Mexico and decided to incorporate us into their country. We need laws that reflect this historical fact. We should not be treated as foreigners in our own land.

We feel a strong sense of cultural nationalism and are not apologetic about it. We do not feel that there is anything wrong in having a sense of cultural pride and as such we intend to continue teaching our children Spanish and to pass on our cultural values to them. We believe that schools should consider and reflect the needs of their communities. We want our children to have access to dual language programs which best meet their needs and encourage their development. Dual language programs acknowledge the legitimacy of both English and Spanish as forms of communication.

According to a Latino scholar, “the rapid loss of parental languages unaccompanied by English fluency is associated with negative consequences, including poor self-esteem and a more common sense of shame at their parents’ culture.”¹⁵ When a child’s (or any person’s) language is disparaged, language is not the only entity that is disregarded. Along with our language comes a world view which is dismissed as not having the same value as the American or ‘English’ world view. This creates feelings of inadequacy and/or lack of intelligence among us which, needless to say, is detrimental to our healthy development.

This approach is best explicated in Murguía,¹⁶ – and best currently represented by Mexica.¹⁷

Four Scenarios of Mexican Immigration to the United States

Based on the seven positions on Mexican immigration to the US described above, we develop four scenarios of possible outcomes concerning this issue. As in the case of the Mont Fleur Scenarios, we also use an avian typology. The four scenarios we developed are: *Caged Birds*, *Unrestrained Birds*, *Trained Birds*, and *Soaring Eagles*. The four scenarios are briefly defined and we analyze each scenario from the point of view of human betterment.

¹⁵) Portes and Rumbaut 2001, p. 134.

¹⁶) Murguía 1975, pp. 6–9.

¹⁷) Mexica 2007.

Caged Birds

In the Caged Birds Scenario, being in the United States illegally would be a felony, and assisting anyone who is in the United States illegally also would be a felony. A wall would be built along the US border with Mexico, and the border would be increasingly militarized with augmented numbers of border patrol agents, assisted by national guard units of the US military, stationed along the border.

Unrestrained Birds

The Unrestrained Birds Scenario would minimize, as the scenario's designation indicates, border restrictions. There would be a relatively free flow of people to and from Mexico similar to the free flow of goods as authorized by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Permits to work in the United States would be relatively easy to obtain by Mexican nationals, and citizenship would follow after a relatively short time in the United States.

Trained Birds

The Trained Birds Scenario describes the situation that we have now. Undocumented workers are apprehended in the United States are sent back to Mexico. Businesses caught employing undocumented workers face fines. Undocumented workers labor in the United States, but with the fear of being deported. Because they are undocumented, they are at the mercy of their employers, who are free to exploit them.

Soaring Eagles

In the Soaring Eagles Scenario, discussions occur between the United States, with a national symbol of the American bald eagle, and Mexico, with the symbol of the golden eagle. In this scenario, the United States government would shift from emphasis on 'center-right' policies to 'center-left' policies. Center-right policies are favorable to businesses, large corporate businesses in particular. Center-left policies address challenges that go beyond the production of consumer goods by corporate America. For example, John F. Kennedy, during his campaign for the presidency and influenced by John Kenneth Gailbraith's *The Affluent Society*, stated that while America had solved the challenge of providing sufficient consumer goods for its people, what remained were "those problems which lie largely

in the realm of public action – bad housing, poverty, recessions, unemployment, discrimination, crowded and obsolete schools. . . . polluted air and water.”¹⁸ Approximately fifty years later, identical problems remain in the United States.

Both governments engage in wide ranging discussions with one another with the goal of moving both nations toward prosperity. Mexico receives what it needs to progress from being a “developing nation” toward becoming a “developed nation”. The United States receives what it needs in terms of labor and manufactured goods. The two nations meet as equals and treat each other as equals. In the discussion, all groups in the United States are given a voice, but since the goal is mutual prosperity, solutions that lead toward criminalization are rejected in favor of those that lead toward human betterment of people both in the United States and in Mexico. What is proposed is a model where differences between the two nations are minimized as has happened in the European Union, making cooperation possible between nations such as Germany, France, and Spain that had been at war for centuries. These nations now have a common currency, a unifying rail system, and common economic policies. From an economic point of view, it is in the best interests of political and corporate leaders to acknowledge how dependent the United States is on the labor of immigrants in order for it to compete globally, and also to acknowledge how deeply its economy would suffer should undocumented workers decide to hold strikes.

Center-left governments concerned with furthering the well-being of their constituents would be the optimal political background for the Soaring Eagles Scenario. Center-left governments favor social programs that help the middle, working and lower classes, whereas center-right governments are characterized by limited social spending, allowing corporations maximum autonomy, maximal military spending to enable corporations to obtain and secure new markets, and tax cuts for the rich. A historical example of a center-left government in internal affairs is Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal, although Roosevelt also had to deal internationally with fascist governments in World War II during the latter part of his presidency. A second example of center-left policies would be those implemented by President Lyndon Johnson related to his *War on Poverty* in the 1960’s, although, again, his efforts would be affected by war, this time the War in Vietnam.

¹⁸) Collier and Horowitz 1976, p. 411.

A center-left government benefits non-elites to a greater extent than does a center-right government. As outlined by Bottomore, the poor stay very poor because of unemployment and illness.¹⁹ They lack affordable medical care, or may find themselves employed only to be able to pay back debt accrued by reason of illness. Center-left governments support government assistance for social programs that create jobs and thereby assist people to move from unemployment into the workforce. As unemployment rates diminish, more people have access to affordable medical care. An important trait of Center-left governments is that they transfer some wealth from the very rich to the middle, working, and lower classes when the wealth of the extremely rich becomes excessive. Center-left governments, according to Bottomore, support progressive income taxes, capital gains taxes, and inheritance taxes so that some of the wealth of the rich who have what they need in the private sector is transferred to the public sector to support entities such as public schools, public parks, and public transportation. Those who benefit most from the social structure and laws in the United States should shoulder their fair share of taxes which then go toward the human betterment of the non-elite. When the choice is between allowing the rich to purchase a second yacht versus providing affordable housing or buying expensive alcohol versus feeding hungry children, there should be no doubt as to what the United States should do. An inheritance tax is particularly important because wealth going to the children of the very rich is not based on merit but is based on chance.

Without a center-left government, the difference between the private and public sectors becomes increasingly pronounced. Generally speaking, the elite do not want to help finance social programs to benefit the public sector and the lower classes such as programs to assist public schools, public housing, and public parks. A situation of extreme concentration of wealth among the elites benefits them but damages the lower classes by limiting their opportunities for upward mobility as well as for a decent life.²⁰

¹⁹⁾ Bottomore 1991.

²⁰⁾ Galbraith 1999.

Our Analysis of Each Scenario

Caged Birds Analysis

We believe that the Caged Birds Scenario is the most damaging to the betterment of people in both nations of the four scenarios and therefore this scenario is the least recommended by us. The outcome of this scenario is the least humane in that it criminalizes what is most important to most people, namely, a deeply felt need to support one's family. This scenario is injurious as well to those who through their hard work assist their families by sending money back to Mexico. It also harms undocumented workers who live in the US and who work to support their families who are currently in the United States. It damages as well the morally conscientious citizens who assist undocumented workers by offering shelter or other assistance, and it harms religious groups who recognize this unethical situation and provide food or shelter to undocumented workers on their church grounds. We do not believe that a 20 foot wall along the US border with Mexico will serve as a deterrent towards immigrants, but it certainly does send a message indicating that Mexicans are not wanted in the US. A wall will symbolize a subjugation of one group of people by another; already this is the case given the militarization of the border. Why, one might ask, is the US-Mexico border being militarized while this is not the case with the U.S./Canadian border which provides an equivalent opportunity for the illegal entry of undocumented individuals?

A wall would also divide what, in a desert, a river naturally brings together. A large section of the US–Mexican border is along the Rio Grande and the communities in this region do not see themselves strictly as being only American or only Mexican. Communities on both sides of the border have symbiotic relationships with communities on the other side of the border. For example, many people who live on the border have extended families with relatives on the other side. This fact, however, is not grasped by legislators who have no understanding of what life along the US–Mexico border is like.

A more subtle but more pernicious aspect of this scenario is the subordination of one country by another, both symbolically because of the proposed wall, as well as directly by imprisoning undocumented workers and those who assist them in the United States. Were this scenario to actually occur, it would signal a unilateral decision that completely disregards what Mexicans have to say concerning this issue. It sends a message that the US

does not care what Mexicans have to say about their relationship with the United States.

Unrestrained Birds Scenario Analysis

The Unrestrained Birds Scenario, while admirable in terms of its faith in human nature and in the belief that human beings can live in peace with only minimal regulation, would be the least liked by non-Mexicans in the United States. Without regulations as to the flow of people entering the United States, because of the difference in wages in the two countries, it could be that numerous Mexican nationals would rush to the US. Consequently, the price of labor would fall because of a labor surplus, perhaps leading to an economic crisis in the United States. Non-Hispanic Americans would feel inundated by what they would consider the “third world”. The status quo in the United States would change and non-Hispanics would feel a loss of privilege that could fuel a counter movement toward extremely strict policies against immigration from Mexico and against immigrants themselves.

Trained Birds Scenario Analysis

Concerning the Trained Birds Scenario which describes the current situation, we believe that existing polices are not the best approach in the immigration debate. We can point to the different positions that we represent in this paper as examples of popular dissatisfaction with current policies. We violate human rights in so far as we continue to support governments that allow the suffering of so many people to go unnoticed. Roughly 500 people die each year trying to cross the border from Mexico to reach their destination in the North. This situation is clearly a human rights violation by both of our governments that continue to create policies that perpetuate a situation that undermines the flourishing of so many human beings.

In terms of workers rights, current policies are also a violation of human rights; they dehumanize people and allow them to be exploited for their labor. As mentioned previously, the current laws can be seen as legalities that justify dehumanization. In other words, they are unethical laws that are subject to criticism in that they justify dehumanizing and oppressive behavior.

Soaring Eagles Scenario Analysis

We believe that the Soaring Eagles Scenario is the best of the four scenarios because of its ability to bring about conditions that will enhance the life

chances of individuals both in the US and Mexico. This scenario espouses bilateral agreements between the United States and Mexico, crucial on so many levels. It assumes that the government of the United States will move from its current Center-right stance to a Center-left approach after the 2008 election in the US. It also assumes that the US Center-left government in 2008 will be able to influence the current Center-right government in Mexico to shift its policies away from big business toward funding a socially progressive agenda, including increased funding for schools, medical care, and other programs necessary for the well-being of non-elites in Mexico. On a practical level, by coming to a bilateral agreement, both countries commit themselves to working together to understand the causes of immigration from Mexico, and to develop viable solutions. Only by means of a bilateral effort will we be able to examine and solve current immigration problems in a way that benefits people in both nations.

By developing communal effort and a sense of community between both countries, this scenario has the greatest potential of success of the four proposed. Most importantly, this scenario proposes recognition of undocumented workers, by both the United States and Mexico, as human beings who deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

It is important here that we be specific as to how we can move from the present situation that is not satisfactory because it leads to fear, exploitation, and, in some cases, death for undocumented workers. The three elements of a better plan as to how to resolve some of the current issues relate to 1) amnesty, 2) a guest worker program, and 3) access to both sides of the US-Mexico border for residents of the border.

Concerning amnesty, we believe that the undocumented who have been here for at least 5 years and who can demonstrate their stay here for this length of time should be eligible for amnesty, assuming that they have contributed to the economy and that they have not been involved in serious criminal activity during that time. If they have been in the United States for less than 5 years, they would be eligible for an Employment Authorization Document (a temporary work permit) which would allow them to work in the United States. After they have completed 5 years in the United States, they would be eligible for a Permanent Resident Card (a green card) which would allow them to reside and to work in the United States.

Concerning a guest worker program, we have never liked the idea of guest workers because this sends the message that we value people only for their labor, but we do not value them. However, a guest worker program does have a positive side to it. It would allow workers from Mexico to labor in the United States legally, instead of the situation that we have at present with

deaths in the desert, and exploitation of workers by employers because the workers are undocumented. Therefore, if we had a guest worker program but with the possibility of gaining a Permanent Resident Card after 5 years, we believe that the positive aspects of this plan would outweigh the negative.

Concerning Mexican citizens who are residents of the border region, a visa allowing them to move through the region in the United States and back again legally would be optimal. The same option would be available to US citizens who live along the US–Mexican border. This would return the border cities and towns to the symbiotic relationships that they have had in the past.

Conclusion

We have studied the scenario approach used by South Africans to end apartheid and to move toward greater democracy to enable us to understand immigration from Mexico to the United States. We elaborated the arguments and positions of the different interest groups engaged in this question. From these positions, we formulated four possible scenarios, and we chose the Soaring Eagles' Scenario as the most promising in terms of human betterment both in Mexico and in the United States. We are convinced that Center-left governments in the US and in Mexico would be optimal for the development of international infrastructure which would benefit all except for the hyper-rich in both countries. We believe that the United States and Mexico should work together as equals to address root causes of immigration from Mexico to the US. *Both governments should address root causes of the immigration.* Social and economic conditions need to be constructed which would, on the one hand, move Mexico toward first world conditions and, on the other hand, allow migrants from Mexico to contribute to the economy of the United States. A demonstration of contributions by immigrants should be rewarded with a path to citizenship in the United States.

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