

Tufts Seminar 2019

TIJUANA 2019

Briefing Paper – Delegation of Tijuana

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Introduction

Representative: Amanda Palamar

Estoy al límite. I am at the limit. I have come as far as I can, and I now stand at the border. These words, each letter two-feet tall, greet those who have journeyed to our city's northern border, painted onto the wall that has put us in the international spotlight. To Central and Latin Americans, our border holds promise and opportunity for a better life. To San Diegans, our border presents sightseeing and economic opportunity: the *Gateway to Mexico*. Migrants travel to our city from the south in hopes of continuing their journey to the country bordering our north. Others come to expand their economic networks. Many from both ends wind up staying permanently. Tijuana's growth rate has risen to 2.5% annually, intaking 80,000 immigrants each year. We live on the busiest border crossing in the world, in a city where only 47.6% of our residents were actually born here—the other 52.4%, more than half of our population, is made up of immigrants. Tijuana has benefitted from our location, growing economically with the introduction of San Diegan corporations and *maquiladora* factories. But now we have had no choice but to declare a humanitarian crisis. Immigrants continue entering our city with the intent of only using us as a waiting ground, and yet thousands will remain in the camps and shelters we have hurried to prepare—cramped, hungry, resourceless—for years or maybe forever. Our own federal government remains indifferent to our requests for assistance, inter-state border restrictions, or national cooperation. Our resources and funding must be spared for the care of our own citizens; our citizens must not live with fear of the violence some newcomers have presented; our government officials must not continue to deal with disrupted routine. *Estamos al límite.* We now ask for the United Nations' aid in leveling this crisis before we are overrun from within. Our fabled border does not exist on its own: the international borders of the United

States, Latin America, and Central America are all linked to it. We must receive aid and become a connected international community if we are to restrain the humanitarian crisis that has already taken over our city.

Demographics

Tijuana is located in the Mexican state of Baja California, one of 32 federal states and districts. We are the most populated of the five municipalities in Baja California, and we have the 6th largest population in all of Mexico (1.6 million as of 2015), with a density of 6,900 people per square mile. Our extreme population growth is not due to our birth rates—in fact, our birth rates are declining, with an average of only 1.7 children born to each woman. Our growth is based on the large amounts of immigrants we receive; we have one of Mexico's most rapid population growth rates—2.5% annually, which equals about 80,000 immigrants per year. Many of these immigrants are of working age, between 15 and 60 years old. The ratio of our males to females is 102 to 100, since we receive mostly male immigrants who come in search of work.

Due to the high rates of immigration, our city is incredibly diverse, with 52.4% of our residents born outside of Tijuana. Mexicans from other federal states migrate from all over Mexico. United States citizens from Southern California find Tijuana's location to be convenient: they immigrate because Tijuana's housing is cheaper, while they continue to work in San Diego. Tijuana happens to also contain people of various Asian ethnicities—mostly Chinese, Korean, and Japanese—and has one of the highest Asian population percentages in Mexico. Immigrants from Latin America—including from Cuba and Guatemala—contribute to the

population of Tijuana. Recent surges in migration have brought a large amount of Haitians and Central Americans to our city.

There is not a lot of diversity in our residents' religions. The overwhelming majority, over 80%, are Christian, which is split into almost two-thirds Catholics, and over one-third Protestant. Other religions include Taoism and those who do not identify under a particular religion or belief: atheists and agnostics.

The majority of Tijuana residents have not received an extensive education, and for the most part, are only educated on a basic level. As of a 2010 census, the average duration of a Tijuana resident's schooling was 9.3 years.

Though our cosmopolitan city receives many immigrants each day, the majority do not come with the intention of staying. We are merely the waiting point as they make their journey to their goal destination of the United States. Our border city becomes a permanent rest-stop for many. The thousands of people immigrating to Tijuana from poor situations and regions causes our city's poverty levels to rise as we take them in. This has contributed to our problems associated with suburban sprawl: illegal homes are built to house those in poverty and those deported from the United States. These areas are typically affected by crime; crime rates are high due to our proximity to the border and therefore the amount of angry and possibly violent migrants we contain. However, housing estates have recently expanded in the suburban area, creating safer and legalized homelands in reach of city services. The areas of Tijuana least affected by these poverty and crime rates are the downtown area and the beach area.

Some immigrate to experience the benefits of our economy, which is better than the economies of other cities along Mexico's northern border. For example, 68% of Tijuana

households have a vehicle, while at the national level, only 44% of Mexican households have a vehicle. Due to our location near the United States border, many corporations extend their reach across the border into Tijuana. Many factories (*maquiladoras*) have been established, and host working-class Tijuana residents.

Key Points

- ❖ The avalanche of incoming migrants—some with violent tendencies—to our city disrupts our residents' lives and government officials' routines. The federal government is indifferent to our requests for aid, leaving us to deal with thousands of unemployed and homeless migrants (federally granted humanitarian visas are required for employment).
- ❖ Migrants are densely packed into areas of the city converted into temporary shelters. NGOs and volunteers work with us to provide these migrants with basic necessities, but we lack the resources and funding to properly care for and house our rising population.
- ❖ Tijuana has a thriving economy due to its proximity to the U.S.'s Southern border. Migrants arriving in our city generally are unable to contribute to Tijuana's economy, as they do not see our city as their final destination point, so they take advantage of our systems, generosity, and resources, only to fail to make a contribution.
- ❖ An internal drug trade and human trafficking has arisen in our city due to the recent difficulty to smuggle goods over the U.S. border. A large percentage of crime is due to such practices, and in order to maintain the safety of our population, such illegal practices must be addressed.

- ❖ The recent influx of Central American migrants is not only fueling tensions between them and our residents, but is also pitting our own people against each other as nativism rises and, along with it, backlash towards anti-immigrant rhetoric.
- ❖ We are right on the U.S.-Mexico border, meaning that many U.S. citizen children of parents who were in the U.S. illegally come to Tijuana schools after their parents have been deported. We have made special efforts to integrate these students into the Mexican school system and provide emotional and academic support to bring them up to speed and to instill self-confidence in the children.
- ❖ The recent policies implemented by the U.S. government on the border have worsened the situation in our city. More and more migrants find themselves stuck in Tijuana as they await U.S. immigrant proceedings, and we have started to let people apply for jobs and to allow migrant children to attend schools.
- ❖ The underlying infrastructure of health services, of all kinds, in Tijuana is insufficient to take care of its native population. This includes sanitation, public clinics, emergency services follow-up and follow-through with patients. This has led to a series of major health epidemics like HIV, TB, and diabetes. Tijuana, already struggling to maintain the health of its own citizens, is not in a position to allocate resources towards the healthcare of individuals who intend only to pass through. Without the assistance of NGOs there would be little to no health services available to migrants. As that help is not sustainable, Mexico must begin to dedicate federal resources or deter migrants from arriving in Tijuana.

- ❖ The safety of migrants in Tijuana is being threatened due to the violence against migrants by various cartel groups, a growing anti-immigrant sentiment among native citizens, and the lack of necessary supplies and support for migrants in need.

Background Information

Though our city of Tijuana is relatively young, the peninsula on which we reside has witnessed a long history of conquest, trade, and division. Until the 16th Century, the Cochimí, Guaycura, and Pericú tribes resided along this peninsula. Hernán Cortés, after conquering the large Mexico mainland, expanded his quest westward in search of gold. He left the peninsula uncolonized, however, and it remained unexplored until 1592 when it was realized that this location would be tactical for trade with the Philippines. Natives to this land resisted the consequential expeditions, and only in 1693 was there a successful conquest and permanent settlement on the peninsula. These Jesuit settlers faced initial resistance from Spain's monarchs, but in the late 1700s, their missions started once again.

Our land became the federal territory of Baja California as a result of the Mexican War of Independence, which lasted from 1810 to 1821. At the time, the land of Tijuana contained ranches. José Maria Echendía, a political chief, gave the land of Tijuana to Santiago Argüello, attracting more settlers to the ranches. The Mexican-American War of 1846 to 1848 sparked changes in Tijuana's purpose and production: when the territory north of Tijuana, at the time known as Alta California, was ceded to the United States of America, our people were split by the new border. Instead of remaining as a ranch area, our border location caused us to focus more on agriculture, livestock, and prospecting.

Over time, settlers of Tijuana under Santiago Argüello began developing the land into a more urban area. On July 11, 1889, we officially became a city. Our border city quickly rose as a tourist destination with sightseeing and gambling as the main draws. Californians, especially, visited from across the border, and in the 20th Century, Tijuana became the most used border crossing for tourists from the United States. In years to come, we remained a popular tourist destination for Americans. When the American government banned alcohol in the 1920s with the Prohibition Act, our convenient border location attracted many.

For a brief time in May of 1911, our city was under the rule of the Mexican Revolution's rebellions, but we were relatively uninvolved in our country's troubles: our location kept us protected from most of the mainland's issues. Our country's constitution, released in 1917, created the position of governor to rule over the 31 states and federal district of Mexico. After the Mexican Revolution, our status as a territory and city began to rise. In 1925, we were almost forced to merge with a nearby city, but instead continued as our own municipal council. In 1929, we were upgraded to a municipal delegation. Under the Municipal Organic Law for Baja California in 1953, we officially became Mexico's 29th state: our own municipality with a new constitution and legislature.

Mexico's two main political parties—the Institutional Revolutionary Party and the National Action Party—have dominated our local politics, in addition to national. From the 1920s onward, the Institutional Revolutionary Party dominated our local government. From 1929 to 2000, the Institutional Revolutionary Party won every Mexican presidential election and almost all at our local level.

The National Action Party, founded in 1939, entertains more conservative viewpoints and has a connection to the Roman Catholic Church. Their belief that the government should remain mostly uninvolved in the economy has gained support mostly from urban middle class citizens. 1989 brought the National Action Party's first governor win, and 1994 brought an expansion of their grasp of the legislative branch. On the local level, in state and municipal politics, is where they have been more successful.

It was not until the 1980s that the National Action Party spoke out against the ostensible election fraud committed by the Institutional Revolutionary Party. In the coming years, the Institutional Revolutionary Party lost its tight grip on Mexican politics with the election of Vicente Fox as president from the National Action Party in 2000. Because of Mexico's highly centralized government, the president of Mexico's influence over local elections has caused our local politics to reflect the national trends. Currently, our office is held by representatives of the National Action Party.

Our local government, *El Ayuntamiento de Tijuana* (Tijuana City Council) popularly elects a municipal president, or mayor, for a term of three years. Our political headquarters, *El Palacio Municipal de Tijuana* (Municipal Palace), has existed since 1986, when it was started by mayor René Treviño Arredondo. In addition to the municipal president are fifteen aldermen that make up our city council. Broken down further, our city is split into municipal delegations managed by mayor-appointed delegates; these take care of community needs and social development. Sub-delegations address public concerns outside of our main urban zones.

Our current administration's main concern has been our border crisis. Thousands of migrants have come to our city in the hopes of continuing onto the United States—we hold the

gates to another life, and our city represents possibility. The little aid and support we receive from the federal government does nothing to help the humanitarian crisis that affects our citizens' lives. The lack of federally granted humanitarian visas has forced thousands of unemployed, homeless migrants into our camps; though we are doing our best to organize them, we rely mostly on NGOs and volunteer groups to help provide them with resources such as food and water. Our growth rate has rapidly increased, bringing tens of thousands of migrants to our city each year, mostly from Mexico, the rest of Central America, and Latin America. The majority are not granted asylum in the United States, or spend months on end waiting to try, and many end up settling here permanently.

Committee on Leadership and Governance

Representative: Amanda Palamar

What is the status of political representation for different strata of society in your city, including migrants and other marginalized groups?

- Our delegates and sub-delegates that are assigned to different portions of the city create communication with people living across different neighborhoods, including those living in poor conditions on the periphery of our city.
- We prioritize the needs of our own citizens. We want to focus our resources on our own people, rather than using our public materials and tax funds on migrants who come to our city with the sole intention of using us as a pathway to another country. NGOs and volunteers, alongside some government officials, provide the aid these migrants receive, and are their source of help.

Does the model of representation tend toward majoritarian rule or protection of minorities or authoritarian rule?

- Our City Council does what is best for the citizens of Tijuana; we use our resources and tax money to protect our own residents.

- The members of our City Council are elected by our people. Tijuana's high rates of abstention from voting contribute to the social and political exclusion of some minorities within our citizens.
- The usage of delegations allows us to stay in touch with the service needs of citizens living in different areas of our city. With these delegations, the service needs of all neighborhoods are represented, even if it is hard to fulfill all necessary requests.

How does the city government interact with the central/state government in relation to migration policy?

- The federal government has recently tried to restrict the way in which we speak about our migration issue. We have publicly addressed the disruption migrants pose to our city, causing a federal judge to attempt to limit our free speech on the subject, which they deemed as too negative. Not only is the federal government not aiding our situation, but they are trying to subdue our rightful anger towards this inconvenience.
- We are extremely displeased with the indifference of the federal government in addressing our pleas for aid with the migration crisis in our city. The avalanche of immigrants is taking energy and resources that should be spent running the city for our own people. We have made requests for better inter-state control of migration across Mexico, in order to limit the amount of migrants that flood our city, but the Mexican government has done nothing to address these requests.
- Often, the federal government only pays attention to the needs of those that are part of their same political party, causing the rest of our requests to go unaddressed or even countered.
- We have declared a humanitarian crisis, requesting help from the United Nations, since our own federal government has abandoned us in their unwillingness to help us deal with this problem. They have let these migrants travel across the entire country until they end up in our city and become our issue to deal with. They ignore the United States' threats to close their side of the border and trap all of the migrants in our city.

How does the government interact with non-state actors such as other cities, but also with NGOs within the city and civil society?

- Other cities in Mexico are cutting off migrants' access to shelters, forcing them to continue moving north to end up in Tijuana. The Jalisco state has established rest stops

along the highway instead of shelters to keep the migrants moving on their path. This inconveniences us, bringing large waves of migrants that crowd our already overfilled camps.

- Our city officials work alongside volunteers and NGO workers to distribute donations to the overwhelming amount of migrants in our camps. The Border Angels nonprofit organization has sought to inform outsiders and raise donations on behalf of immigrants to our city. Some NGOs teach English classes in shelters.
- Volunteers and NGO workers encourage migrants to settle in the shelters, to keep them off the streets and in a concentrated area to bother our citizens less.

What are your current policies toward migrants, both legally recognized and those not legally recognized?

- We have created temporary shelters to contain the thousands of migrants in our city. This seeks to prevent illegally built houses and migrants living homeless on the streets. With the recent arrival of 2,500 migrants from Central America, we have had to convert a sporting complex into a shelter to house them all.
- Buses travel between the largest shelters and the immigration offices for those who need to apply for asylum.
- Migrants who require assistance arranging travel plans to leave Tijuana to return home can request aid from the Office of Municipal Assistance.
- At the border, migrants wishing to cross the border into the United States as asylum seekers are given slips of paper with a number: their position on the waiting list. Once called, the migrants have an interview with the United States immigration officials.

What are your policies with regard to undocumented migrants seeking to access police services and other city services?

- The leader of our department for social services, Manuel Figueroa, has aided migrants by bringing services, such as toiletries, to them in the shelters. In addition, our state's government is working to identify jobs that the migrants can try to take.
- Our municipal delegates and sub-delegates are assigned to zones of the city; they address concerns of those living even in the peripheral edges of our city. But those living in the

illegally developed slums do not have access to services such as transit, which is why we encourage them to move into our shelters.

Do you currently provide some form of identification and documentation for all migrants?

- We do not currently provide identification and documents for all migrants. Migrants can obtain a position on a waiting list for asylum seekers at the border.
- Migrants coming to Tijuana are not here to stay—they all come with the expectation that they can apply for asylum in the United States. While waiting, they apply for a temporary humanitarian visa, which comes from the Mexican federal government, in order to find work.
- There are too many migrants to set up a plausible identification and documentation system, which is why we have reached out to the federal government to help us handle the multitude of migrants overcrowding our city.

What role can technology play in allowing effective governance with regard to migration and enhancing participation and representation of marginalized groups?

- Technology can allow us to productively distribute identification of some sort for each migrant—a machine that documents their name and information, takes a photo, and immediately prints an ID card—without long lines and the use of government workers.
- With identification, migrants that care about the future of Tijuana can vote in our elections, to decrease our extremely high voting abstention rate.
- A high-tech, futuristic technological system that takes virtual scans of each shelter and slum area would give us more accurate numbers for the demographics and quantity of migrants we contain. This would allow our sub-delegations to better and more evenly address their needs.

What is the overall attitude of your residents toward migrants?

- Wealthier members of our city are not pleased with the swelling numbers of migrants entering from the south. A group of 300 Tijuana residents recently protested the arrival of 2,500 Central Americans, shouting outside of the massive shelter within the sporting complex. The actions of a few migrants have tainted the reputation of them all:

circulating news about attempts to rob stores or jump the wall have angered our citizens into protesting.

- Many feel the arriving waves of immigrants should be classified as invasions of our territory.
- There are, however, other Tijuana residents who do not share these harsh feelings. Tijuana is already a very dense city, and many arriving migrants settle in the same area—within a few blocks of the sports complex—which makes their presence less stifling for some. These residents do still understand that without proper aid, the crisis will increasingly affect us all.

Committee on Urban Planning

Representative: Shivakumar Iyer

How would you explain the organization of your city?

- Our city, Tijuana, has been built without any sort of urban planning (building codes or zoning ordinances).
- Most streets of Tijuana are not paved, and only $\frac{3}{4}$ of houses have sewage and drainage.
- Because our city was developed without any kind of plan, it can most aptly be described as an urban sprawl.
- The center of our city is occupied by the “tourist strip” and its commercial and industrial activities have been located in the valley, off to the south.
- Residential areas can be found as we move more outward from the center of our city.

What is the density of your city in terms of population per area?

- With an area of 246 square miles, the population density of our city is 6,900 residents per square mile.
- Our city is considerably large, making it Mexico's 6th largest and one of North America's largest and most densely populated cities.

Are populations integrated in your city or are the communities more provincial, separate?

- Our city is separated into three different sectors based on “Architectural” differences.
- The distinct divisions of Tijuana can be accredited to the fact that the city grew at three different stages in history.

How did this develop?

- Our city was never developed with any “plan.”
- Tourism from San Diego has often defined the extent to which the city limits can be defined by.
- Our city is split into three distinct sectors: the valley (downtown), the dissected uplands (slums), and the suburban sprawl that surrounds the city.

Where is the migrant population in your city concentrated?

- The majority of migrants in our city can be found at the border and the slums (Dissected Uplands).

How are migrants housed in your city?

- Despite the relentless work of our administration and government initiative, most migrants live in the streets (housing centers are three times over capacity).
- Migrants have unfortunately grown distrustful of our city due to fear of family separation and incarceration.

Do migrants have access to safe housing in your city?

- There is currently no safe housing for all migrants of our city.
- Most migrants are sleeping in tents on the border or in the slums.

Do you face a housing shortage, and if so, why?

- Our city is facing an enormous housing shortage.

- This is primarily due to a large influx of migrants towards the border in the past 30 years.
- Even in the face of the rising number of migrants, our administration has had trouble dealing with it because of low government funding and a high tax rate.
- The direness of our situation is further exasperated by the fact that there's almost no money for modernizing our already antiquated city for our current citizens.

Do migrants in your city have adequate access to social welfare programs based on where they live?

- No, Tijuana as a city is unprepared for the current immigration crisis we are facing and we do not have adequate funding to provide for migrants.

Are migrants in your city connected to the power grid?

- Tijuana itself is slowly becoming a modernized city, but access to electricity is limited.
- Most migrants don't have any access to electricity, and are exasperated by the fact that only tourists and wealthier citizens have it to begin with.

Do they have reliable access to electricity?

- Migrant access to our city's power grid is nonexistent.

What about other commodities/necessities such as clean water, or even access to internet?

- Only $\frac{3}{4}$ of houses in our city have running water/ plumbing.
- The $\frac{1}{4}$ of the population that doesn't have any plumbing is the migrant population (non permanent residents).
- Despite public works initiatives to modernize the city, plumbing and public wifi remain at the bottom of the list.

Committee on Economic Planning

Representative: Gabriel Klass

How is Tijuana's economy? What are important sectors for locals and for migrants, and who is participating in them?

- Tijuana has developed a market that is interdependent with Southern California which supports its innovative and thriving industrial economy. In our city, over 580 companies are involved in the manufacturing industry, making Tijuana the largest base of export manufacturing firms in Mexico.
- Technology companies such as Bose, Foxconn, Panasonic, Pioneer, Plantronics, Sony, and Samsung have set up bases in Tijuana. Assembly and manufacturing plants make up nearly two-thirds of our city's official economic activity.
- Tijuana's proximity to the United States, specifically Southern California, offers local businesses immense support. Tijuana is less than three hours away from three major international airports, and as a coastal city, can transport goods quickly and at a low cost to Western coastal cities in the United States and Mexico.
- The immense growth of our city's economy has been recent. In Tijuana 30 years ago, over 71% of its workforce was made up of unskilled workers. Today, 54% of Tijuana's workforce is made up of unskilled workers.
- Migrants who are able to attain jobs typically work in manufacturing plants and sectors such as hospitality at lower wages than locals.

Is there an informal market in the migrant community? Are migrants entrepreneurial in Tijuana?

- Tijuana's location next to California's southern border has made it a ideal site for trafficking organizations hoping to control its trade routes. However, due to the fact that it has become very difficult to cross contraband over the U.S. border, our city has developed its own growing internal market.
- There are two major concerning practices within Tijuana's internal market: commercial sex and prostitution due to trafficking, and the drug trade, specifically regarding methamphetamine. In 2018, 2,518 of our citizens were killed making it one of the deadliest cities in the world. Competition in a growing local drug trade is linked to approximately 90% of those deaths.

- Considering Tijuana is not the final destination city for most migrants, as most hope to eventually reach the United States, few migrants have become entrepreneurial in our city. It is much more common to see young migrant men, who would be entrepreneurial under the correct setting, instead selling cigarettes for 4 pesos and phone chargers for 40 pesos. There are of course outliers, but for the most part, migrants generally stay financially conservative, saving up as much money as possible for the border crossing.

What are the unemployment levels for residents and for migrants? What skills are migrants coming to Tijuana with and are there instances of “brain waste”?

- Over 2,000 migrants in Tijuana have applied for a yearly humanitarian visa that would allow them to hold jobs legally in Mexico. There are reportedly over 7,000 jobs still available and/or unfilled in Tijuana factories and in the hospitality sector. However, many migrants are unwilling to apply for such a visa, as it would require them to request asylum in Mexico, meaning they could not do so in the United States, so most of our available jobs remain unfilled.
- Compared to other Mexican border cities with large migrant populations, Tijuana has an extremely low unemployment rate amongst its citizens (3.7% in 2016), specifically for both male and female unskilled workers. Our city, in 2016, had a lower unemployment rate than national unemployment rate (3.88%).
- Migrants coming to our city can be unskilled or well-educated and skilled, as it typically requires great funding in order to get from host-countries to the Mexican border.
- As most migrants in Tijuana hope to reach the United States and typically don't see our city as the final destination, their capabilities, skills, and education are not always used to the advantage of the our city.
- Compared to other Mexican border cities with large migrant populations, Tijuana has the highest percentage of unskilled workers making up its workforce. When blocked for gender, Tijuana has the highest percentage of unskilled workers for both males and females in the workforce.

Does Tijuana provide welfare to migrants? Are they a strain on the social services system? Are they a perceived strain on the social services system?

- In 2018 the federal government announced its “You are in your Home” plan, which allows for migrants in Mexico’s southern border states of Chiapas and Oaxaca, who

approach the migration authority and make a request, to access the Temporary Employment Program. Migrants must also obtain a Temporary Single Registry of Population Registration (CURP) membership, which ensures they can access services offered by the Mexican government such as: the ability to enter and leave shelters, get medical attention in specified clinics, manage procedures such as opening a bank account for minors, receive education for minors, and obtain housing in local hostels. These services are not offered to migrants in our city, because they are only offered to those in Chiapas and Oaxaca, in hopes that some migrants will move away from Mexico's northern border.

- The federal government in 2018 opened up a large indoor shelter in the southern part of Tijuana, capable of holding approximately 6,000 migrants. However, many migrants refuse to move farther away from the border, preferring to remain in tents on the street, so the shelter remains unfilled.
- We spend approximately \$30,000 a day on caravan arrivals. This has recently put us in budget trouble, and city officials have publicly stated that they do not want to cut back on municipal services.

Are migrants seen as contributing to the economy?

- Migrants are a potential solution to filling the 7,000 jobs still available in our factories and our hospitality sector. However, as most migrants cannot officially work until they have a working permit or a humanitarian visa, and to obtain this visa they'd have to request asylum in Mexico (meaning they could not eventually do so in the U.S. for the same reasons they did in Mexico), they do not fill such openings.
- The internal market, specifically in regards to the practices of human trafficking and the drug trade, has been criticized by our citizens who see Tijuana as potentially the city in Mexico with the highest economic rate of growth and still with much potential to grow.
- Migrants are overall seen by a majority of our city's population as a drain on social services and goods. As many migrants do not want to request asylum in Mexico, they cannot contribute fully to our economy, cannot fill vacant jobs, and contribute to increased government spending, which could eventually lead to our city's bankruptcy.

Committee on Social Cohesion
Representative: Selim Dangoor

Why are migrants flooding our city?

- The bulk of migrants travel from Central America—chiefly the crime-ridden countries of the Northern Triangle (Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador)—to our city, hoping to make it to the U.S. Our city has been a primary destination for thousands of migrants due to our proximity to San Diego.
- While crime and general violence is a huge factor for migrants, many also flee poverty and unemployment.

What is the makeup of your migrant population?

- Our migrant population is quite diverse in terms of familial structure. If one listens to President Trump, one might think that this most recent influx of people has been predominantly comprised of unaccompanied, young men. While such migrants do make up a significant percentage of our migrant population, there is also a vast number of parents—single parents as well as couples—who have travelled with their children.
- Children currently account for 21% of our migrant population.

What are the current relations between the local populace of your city and entering migrants?

- As of November last year, “Welcome” was a sentiment shared by a large portion of our residents. Polls showed that over half of our population supported allowing the migrants to travel freely through our city. Many organized groups—primarily faith groups such as the Salesian Refuge of Tijuana—have been eager to lend a hand to the Central American migrants. Such faith groups have provided meals, shelter, and other forms of aid.
- However, current relations between our residents and migrants are very poor.
- A recent survey, conducted by El Universal, shows that 7 in 10 Mexicans are displeased with the incoming migrants and more than half of the population would support barring undocumented migrants from entering the country.
- Anti-immigrant sentiment has taken shape in various protests and attacks on migrants. Just before the New Year, two young migrants were stabbed and strangled to death by three of our residents and another minor was seriously injured. These crimes reveal the mounting unrest in our community as we do our best to accommodate the migrants.

- Not only is this situation driving a wedge between migrants and our residents but it is destabilizing our society. In November, a few hundred residents rushed to the Rio area and protested the arrival of Central Americans. Some of our residents then lashed out at the protestors, insisting that we should welcome all migrants. Division amongst our native population continues to increase.

Is discrimination a prevalent issue? What forms does it take?

- Migrants have experienced much discrimination at the hands of our community.
- Discrimination towards migrants usually manifests in intense verbal taunting as well as assault and even murder.
- The most extreme violation of human rights is perpetrated towards women and the LGBTQ community. These violations usually take form in kidnapping, rape, and murder.
- In May, 2018, a group of men robbed a shelter where multiple transgender women were placed and, a few days later, the shelter was set on fire. While police have been unable to find the guilty parties, LGBTQ advocates proclaim that the harassment of the transgender migrants shows there is a microcosm of the greater discrimination towards women and transgender people in our community.

How has your federal government or advocates responded to discrimination?

- Formed in 1990, the Beta Tijuana Group (Grupo Beta) is a humanitarian group that, in conjunction with our National Institute of Migration, provides aid to migrants who fall victim to discrimination and violence in our country.
- In May 2011, established in Article 71 of our Migratory Law, our government created the Migrant Protection Groups act. Article 71 states that our government “will create protection groups for migrants that are in national territory, which will have the purpose of protecting and defending their rights, regardless of their nationality or immigration status.” These migrant protection groups aim to provide “humanitarian aid, first aid, migratory assistance, guidance and information to migrants about their rights.”

- However, these groups are not enough to curb the violence and discrimination towards migrants. We currently do not have the manpower nor the means to take effective enough measures when combating such discrimination.

Is religion an area of integration or has it created challenges in absorbing migrants?

- Over 80% of our city practices Christianity, mainly Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. This has been a great source of integration for Central Americans. While statistics regarding the beliefs of migrants are unknown, the predominant religions in the Northern Triangle countries are similar forms of Christianity.
- In El Salvador, almost 50% of people hold Roman Catholic beliefs; in Honduras, over 60% of people are Roman Catholic; and, in Guatemala, 65-70% of the population are Roman Catholics.
- Besides Roman Catholicism, other practiced religions in these three countries include Lutheranism, Protestantism, and Mayan Spirituality.

Are you using technology to provide assistance?

- While we have not directly used technology to provide assistance for migrants, migrants themselves have taken advantage of the limited technology available to them.
- Recording oneself on “La Lista”—The List—is usually the first step to take for proactive migrants. It is a numbering system which provides much needed order to the waitlist for meeting with American immigration authorities. La Lista is an incredibly valuable tool for migrants; however, it has no affiliation with the U.S.
- La Lista is run by asylum-seekers for asylum-seekers. Control over La Lista is fluid; when those who are in charge find themselves at the front of the line, other migrants assume their roles.
- While we currently are not directly involved in these processes, members of our National Migration Institute oversee the process and are given ledgers at the end of each day.

What is your history of migration policy?

- After gaining independence in 1810, our country had quite progressive and liberal immigration policies up until the Mexican Revolution when policies shifted toward greater restrictions. The General Law of Population, which was remodeled in 1974, made it nearly impossible for migrants to obtain permanent work authorization. Furthermore, the General Law of Population was extremely discriminatory.
- Article 37 states that the Department of the Interior can deny any foreigner the ability to enter our country if he or she “is not deemed physically or mentally sound, in the opinion of the public health authorities;” has the potential to upset the “domestic demographic equilibrium;” or that any “other statutory provisions so stipulate.” Thus, until it was reformed in 2008, the Law practically allowed for the extortion of foreigners without consequence.
- Our country has long been a transit country for migrants and rarely a primary destination. Other than the recent influx of Central American migrants, thousands of migrants from Haiti, Africa, and Asia have come to our city with the hope of making it across the border.
- We have a long history of dealing with migrants, rather than welcoming them. For instance, when the U.S. government resumed the deportation of undocumented Haitian migrants in 2016, our city bore the brunt of the policy and did not take effective enough measures to accommodate the migrants.
- Those making their way to the northwestern border with the U.S. were forced to relocate in our city. Our government issued temporary humanitarian visas to those migrants but Haitians were still unable to obtain decent medical care and, in several cases, were not given the correct documents for formal employment. Thus, they were subjected to improper treatment from their unofficial employers.
- Recently, our city has deemed the Haitian immigrant as a model of how Central Americans should behave. We have lauded their ability to begin new lives without asking for money or shelter. However, these Haitian migrants were not viewed the same as Central American migrants and Mexican deportees at that time. Our community welcomed the Haitians and our citizens provided humanitarian aid while, at the same time, condemning Latino migrants for asking for the same assistance. This situation reveals the unfortunate stigma we have against our own people and Southern neighbors.

- Nonetheless, these Haitians were forced into a sink or swim situation as our federal government provided them with little access to resources.
- That response should not be view as a model for success.

What are your policies on integration?

- Article 15 of the recently passed Migratory Act of 2011 states that “Mexico will promote the access and integration of migrants who obtain a lawful status as temporary and permanent residents to and into the different spheres of Mexican economic and social life, guaranteeing respect for their identities and ethnic and cultural diversity.” This is the only sentence in our entire immigration policy that mentions the word “integration” with respect to immigrants.
- While this seems to be a policy of integration, it holds no weight in our community as almost Central American migrants have been housed in shelters. This dense congregation of migrants results in an immensely difficult assimilation process because they are disengaged from large swaths of our community. Thus, they are unable to become accustomed to our way of life.
- However, last November, the Ministry of the Interior, in conjunction with the National Institute of Migration, recently reported that the government provided some 700 Central Americans in the greater Baja California area with the necessary forms to attain proper employment. Many of the Central Americans who entered without authorization are now also able to search for jobs as they have been granted the proper paperwork.
- Employment is one of the first steps to assimilation for immigrants because it may ease our residents’ animosity towards them for “free-loading.” But, still, many of our residents share the sentiment that we need to look after their economic safety.
- While this is a step in the right direction, much more is needed of our federal government if we are to ease any tension in our community.

How does social media in your city shape the perceptions of migrants/refugees?

- Videos and memes on social media continue to spread anti-immigrant sentiment throughout our city.
- There is a Facebook page titled “Tijuana Against the Migrant Caravan” that is dedicated to discriminating against the Central American migrants. Members even post pleas for residents to murder the migrants.
- Also, a WhatsApp group chat was created to spread xenophobia and incite violence toward the migrants.

Committee on Youth Education
Representative: Alexander Chan

How would you describe your public school system?

- In Mexico, government funded education is guaranteed to all children up until junior high school. It is obligatory and secular in nature. The Federal Government is responsible for generally administering education, but the states are given responsibility for administering basic education.
- Families still have to bear some costs like those of uniforms and transportation. In addition, from high school onwards in some places, private schools are the only viable option. The high cost this entails causes some students to drop out.
- Literacy rates and enrollment numbers in schools have improved, and the system has responded well to illiteracy and high birth rates but problems remain.
- Because of poverty, some children drop out to help earn money for their families and many schools in poorer and more rural areas have less funding and fewer resources. Schools in indigenous areas are have less funding and indigenous students still face discrimination. Curricula and teachers need to adapt better to indigenous needs. Girls are more likely to drop out of school and return home to help with domestic tasks. As child marriage is on the rise, girls who marry are unlikely to go back to school.

How are migrant children guaranteed access to education?

- We have the special challenge of students born in the US to Mexican parents who were in the country illegally.
- Many families, once deported, bring their US citizen children with them. Baja California has the second largest number of US citizen children enrolled in its schools. Programs in our city have been established to help integrate students into Mexican schools. Counseling in the Spanish language is given, and teachers and school administrators are trained to look out for students who may be experiencing emotional distress. Every effort is made so that students do not feel isolated and can feel part of the community as quickly as possible.
- However, some children still cross the border to go to school in the United States.

What are some problems facing youth in your country?

- Around 30% of the population between 15 and 28 is unemployed or not in school. In addition, many youths from other regions of Mexico come to the border regions like ours to look for jobs.
- Many organizations help young people in the city by preparing them to pursue productive livelihoods. Many of these organizations also provide health services and mentoring

What is the impact of migrants and how are their needs met?

- With the political situation on the US-Mexico border, more and more migrant shelters have been set up and more migrants have been living in them
- This situation is also causing unaccompanied minors to arrive in Tijuana. Because the US government is reducing asylum applications on the border, many of these children are staying in Mexico and specifically in our city. However we are overwhelmed with the number of arrivals. All unaccompanied minors who present themselves to the government are taken into our care as much as possible, but due to the demand, we are unable to properly take care of all of them and protect them from criminals while their US applications are processed.
- As time goes on, people have started to apply for jobs in Tijuana and children are starting to go to school. The Federal Government has promised to increase wages along the border region and migrants are eligible to apply for humanitarian visas as they wait for US immigration proceedings so they can find work and support their families.

- In the camps, immigration services and English classes are provided.

Committee on Health

Representative: Emma Sare

How is are health services structured in Tijuana and are they effective?

- In Mexico as a whole, up until 2004 you only had insurance if you a) paid for it privately which only 2-3% of Mexicans could afford to do, or b) if you were employed by a private enterprise or a government agency.
- If an individual were unemployed, self-employed, non salaried, or worked in an informal sector, up until 2004 they were without coverage. The bill that was passed gave an additional 55 million people health insurance. These people are now covered by the Seguro Popular program. While Mexico's healthcare is now considered "universal" there are still large gaps in access and affordability to impoverished citizens.
- Depending on your sector of employment you are insured by a different agency with its own network of doctors, clinics, pharmacies. There is no crossover between these networks, which often leads to disparities. High income areas in Tijuana have multiple clinics from the different agencies, and thus have the potential for a much greater capacity than they serve. Meanwhile, lack of access in low income areas is exacerbated by the necessity of using services directly tied to a specific provider.
- The underfunded and scantily resourced public healthcare programs in Tijuana are put in harsh comparison to the quality of private practices, which are a booming business catering to a phenomenon known as medical tourism. It has become a common practice for Americans to cross the border to take advantage of the vast price differential between American and Mexican health services.
- Generally speaking, public health services in Tijuana are inadequate to cater to the needs of the population, with people uneducated about the spread of diseases, overcrowded clinics and doctors who cannot spend enough time with each patient. Emergency services are almost nonexistent. There are only 13 ambulances available to cater to a city of almost 2 million and dated technology means that it can take up to an hour for an ambulance to be able to deliver a patient to a hospital.

How effective are sanitation agencies in Tijuana?

- Trash collection has been a problem in Tijuana for decades and has shown little to known improvement. As a government we are responsible for waste disposal. Trucks do not follow a set schedule and at best pick up trash once a week in middle income neighborhoods, at worst it can be up to a month of refuse piling up before it is collected. The poorest areas of Tijuana are known for having “hills filled with garbage.” In 2017, reportedly only 30 of 130 garbage trucks were operable.
- Sewage is a more complicated and intrinsic issue. Over 20% of Tijuana residents do not have indoor plumbing. Tijuana’s wastewater infrastructure is horrifically inadequate and frequently dumps toxic waste into the Tijuana River.
- Water treatment plants have been able to combat some of the highest levels of toxicity, as there are less instances of ear infections, rashes and other ailments in people simply living in close proximity to the Tijuana River. However, the pipes and storage facilities simply cannot keep up with volume and there is a major sewage spill every time it rains.

What are the largest health concerns in Tijuana?

- Tijuana has the highest rates of both HIV and tuberculosis in Mexico. With the city’s scanty resources being directed towards treatment of those already diagnosed, there are no effective preventative measures in place, such as testing, sex education, or greater availability of condoms.
- The highly infectious and airborne nature of TB makes it difficult to contain, especially as most diagnoses are made late into the infection. Tijuana presents approximately 800 new diagnoses of TB every year. In the future, the problem promises to be exacerbated by lack of follow through in treatments. The large number of individuals who are treated for TB but do not complete the full cycle of medication is creating drug resistant strains of the disease.
- Tijuana has the highest rate of AIDS mortality rate in Mexico. This can be partially attributed to the fact that the demographics it affects in the greatest proportion are minority communities with limited access to healthcare.
- Diabetes is the third leading cause of death in Tijuana and is on the rise both in type I and type II. Given the lack of time and resources public doctor’s are able to dedicate towards each individual patient, most of the people diagnosed are not educated on the severity of

the disease and the necessity of its treatment. Of the 34,000 people diagnosed, only 13,000 follow a course of treatment and it is estimated that only 50% of them actually have the disease under control.

- Type II diabetes is largely a result of the fact that most people in Tijuana consume far more calories than is necessary. While there are markets that sell fresh produce, the ease and affordability of products like sodas and processed foods with high calories and low nutrition are a large contributing factor in diabetes II amongst poor communities.

What are the sanitary conditions of migrants/refugees in Tijuana?

- Tijuana, a city with incredibly high rates of poverty and poor resources, is having trouble sustaining the thousands of migrants arriving. A majority of the initial wave of migrants that arrived with the November 2018 caravan were housed in an open air sports complex, which was closed down less than a month later due to untenable sanitary conditions.
- In the complex no tents were provided for migrants and most were forced to sleep on concrete. However, the open sewage and refuse that portable toilets could not contain eventually created such a health crisis that the complex had to shut down.
- The conditions of the refugee population have improved marginally, with camps and tents being set up with more organization and in locations that have shelter. Those living in these camps do not have access to indoor plumbing and use a few dozen porta potties that service thousands of people. Bathing is often done in communal space with limited water.

What health and food services are provided for these refugees?

- Refugees in camps are fed twice a day a meal of rice, soup and sandwich. It is a subsistence kind of consumption but has largely combatted malnutrition, especially amongst children.
- Healthcare within refugee camps is taken care of by a mixture of government employed workers and humanitarian NGO agencies, such as the UN, UNICEF and MSF. Migrants living outside of these camps must fend for themselves with the occasional help from independently organized medical volunteers.
- MSF and UNICEF offer limited mental health treatment as part of the clinic treatments in the camps. There are no drugs being distributed on its account, and this help is confined

to interviews and therapy. For migrants suffering from severe mental disorders, including pre existing ones like bipolar disorder, this is often not enough.

How can Tijuana prepare for the health of future migrants?

- Given the coming influx of refugees to Tijuana and the hardline being taken by the US in terms of asylum applications, we need to make efforts to incorporate migrants into the community with humanitarian visas.
- This is especially important given the fact that it is unlikely the Tijuanian government will be able to allocate any serious resources towards caring for coming migrants.
- The inadequacies of our healthcare and sanitation systems in regards to taking care of our native population makes it difficult to argue for increased spending on such services for migrants. The most Tijuana could do for the health of migrant communities at this point would be an investment into our own underlying infrastructure, such as expanding and improving sewage and trash collection, not to mention availability of health services to impoverished communities.

Committee on Resilience

Representative: Zachary Pizer

How does Tijuana deal with emergencies?

- Tijuana is rather ill equipped to deal with emergencies. The city only has 13 ambulances and 4 rescue vehicles. This is not nearly enough in the case of a natural disaster or medical crisis in a city with a population 1.6 million people.
- With the few ambulances we are equipped with, the response time is also very slow, taking 24 minutes for an ambulance to arrive. This is partly due to the poor radio contact system that is employed in our ambulances but also because of ineffective GPS tracking system.
- Tijuana is also prone to earthquakes due to the many faults surrounding the city, so we take many preventative actions to prevent a national crisis. We have created shelters in case of emergency, we host monthly meetings to prepare for how to deal with earthquakes and mudslides, and we use drills and plows reduce the risk for mudslides after an earthquake.

What is the situation with food security in Tijuana?

- Food Security is not a large problem for the citizens of Tijuana, as the average citizen consumes around 3,000 calories a day (1,000 more than the minimum designated by the United Nations). The city has many markets where vegetables, grains and other goods can be purchased. Unfortunately much of the food our citizens consume are snack foods and sugary candies. In order to improve health in our citizens, we must focus our attention towards improving the diets of our citizens.
- With respect to migrants, there is not enough food to feed everyone at the standard designated by the U.N. We have not received enough support from the federal government or from private citizens in the form of donations.

How does Tijuana respond to influxes of people entering the city? Is there a department to manage this?

- In response to the increasing numbers of migrants entering Tijuana, we have set up several camps for the asylum seekers in and around the city. Recently, one large soccer stadium has been designated as a temporary shelter. These shelters not only provide a place to live for the migrants but also a place where they can receive food, supplies, such as blankets and sleeping pads, and health care.
- The social services department of Tijuana is responsible for the response policies for influxes of people. They outline where to set up camps, what needs to be implemented in camps, and what aid is needed. The police of Tijuana also helps respond to the influxes of people by protecting the camps and those have fled persecution in their country.

How does Tijuana assess the needs of migrants? How does Tijuana address these needs?

- The needs of migrants are assessed primarily by NGOs who work with migrants every day and can see what materials they are lacking and ask if there is anything additional they can help supply. Our government workers also do a similar reconnaissance but on a much smaller scale.
- The immediate needs of migrants include: food, water, clothing for the winter (i.e. jackets), blankets, mattresses, diapers, new underwear, toilet paper, soap, women's hygiene products, dental care products, and money for utilities

- To address these needs, Tijuana has typically relied on the aid sent by the federal government to help manage influxes of people. Recently however, the Mexican government has not worked with the city of Tijuana to deal with migrants, ignoring the plight of the asylum seekers and refusing to help integrate them into society. The limited aid that the government has supplied has been in the form of border reinforcements. This aid would be more effective if it was in the form of essential foodstuffs and supplies, improving the lives of migrants.
- Because our government was left to fend for ourselves, we have recently declared a humanitarian crisis and have requested additional support from the United Nations to help deal with the problem. This will allow the us to secure the necessary funds and manpower to address the situation head on.
- Currently, the primary source of funding we receive to deal with migration comes from non-for-profits such as churches and private citizens who donate food, supplies, and money on their own volition.

How safe is the city of Tijuana?

- While there are some safe neighborhoods, on the whole Tijuana is a dangerous place. When walking down the streets, one has to be wary of petty criminals such as of pickpockets and armed thieves.
- In addition, Tijuana has a very large cartel presence. These gangs use Tijuana as a business hub to conduct illicit activities such as human smuggling and drug trafficking. There are many conflicts with the police and law enforcement as a result.
- Tijuana also has one of the highest homicide rates in the entire world. This is because in recent years Tijuana has been a battleground for various cartel wars, where fight over territory and business. The violence associated with the cartel has decreased since its peak around twelve years ago, but the issue is still present.

Is it possible to ensure the safety of migrants in Tijuana?

- Although it is possible to ensure the safety of migrants, it has become increasingly difficult. Migrants have always been accepted in Tijuana and will continue to welcomed. However, like the rest of the world in recent years, we has seen an increase in anti-immigrant sentiment. This has primarily manifested itself in the form of protests.

There have been many reports of rock throwings by the natives into the camp. Luckily, the police has been effective and no migrants have been injured.

- In addition, the various cartel groups often exploit migrants as there are little protective rights for them. The cartel groups in Tijuana also have connections with other cartels in Central and South America – the same ones who the migrants are fleeing. This puts migrants in Tijuana a dangerous position as the cartels in Tijuana will often look to punish those that have wronged their associated cartels. Even petty criminals look to target migrants as they are vulnerable and can be easily preyed upon.
- Finally the camps that the migrants have been staying in have become unsafe. Trash and human waste is piling up around the camps. A small number of migrants are even sleeping under tarps. Our workers have warned us that if these conditions remain, the chance for an outbreak of disease is high.
- This situation must be fixed quickly or the safety of migrants will slip out of our control.

How does Tijuana work with the Mexican government to follow international humanitarian laws?

- In regards to Humanitarian Law, Tijuana is obligated to enforce policies and agreements signed by the federal government.
- Mexico as a whole is a signee of the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention which means it recognizes refugees based on its definition. Mexico is also a signee of the Cartagena Declaration which expands the definition of refugees to those “threatened by general violence.” Alongside this definition and Mexico's Law on Refugees, Complementary Protection, and Political Asylum, many other asylum seekers who would not be considered refugees are accepted into the country and given residence.
- The responsibility of accepting refugees is a federal responsibility, but we have found that they are not performing their jobs properly leaving us to deal with the migrant crisis ourselves. However, we lack the resources to do so which led us to declare a humanitarian crisis. We believe that we have an obligation to help the migrants but unfortunately we are unable to do so with our meager resources.

How technologically advanced is Tijuana? How can Tijuana become more innovative in responding to migrant emergencies?

- For much of the 21st century Tijuana has been developing technologically. The city has been a hub for start-ups and other technological companies. This is due to the American interest for new technologies as well as the cheap operating costs for production. As a whole, the city benefits from the technology and wealth these companies create. Many economists speculate that the Tijuana region is poised to become a Silicon Valley of its own.
- Another way of tracking the technological development is through internet usage. As of 2015, almost 60% of Mexican citizens have access to internet. This percentage is even higher in Tijuana as internet is essential for business and day to day life. This internet is also comparable countries such as the U.S. and Canada in speed and reliability.
- However this rise in technology has not helped nearly enough with the migration crisis that we are experiencing so we must push onwards with solutions. One such solution could be implementing biometrics into the integration process of migrants. This would allow us to have access to all the person's medical, financial, and historical data in the cloud, allowing us to manage each individual migrant more efficiently.
- Another solution that could be effective in handling the migration crisis is through AI demonstrations. If we can simulate how and where migrants will enter/exit the city, our government can be locate and respond to these events much more quickly and systematically.