

**THE IMPACT OF THE 'REMAIN IN MEXICO' POLICY ON CORPORATE CULTURE AND LABOUR TRENDS**

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article History:</b></p> <p>Received 29.09.2025 Accepted 10.11.2025 Published 10.03.2026</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p>Corporate culture, migration, companies, social support, salary</p>	<p><i>Mexico is a country that stands out due to its geographical location, which in the labour environment has provided us with opportunities for important negotiations with other countries such as the United States, Canada and China, as well as the countries to the south. This has allowed our nation to be viewed by other countries as a base for establishing companies at a low cost, as the labour force in Mexico is much cheaper than in other countries. For this reason, nearshoring is an opportunity that has expanded the labour market for Mexican citizens. However, in recent years, there have been several changes in various aspects of the country, which have led to modifications in the corporate culture of companies. First, the immigration conditions that have been established; second, the changes in the country's salary policies; and lastly, the economic support to the population that has been in place since 2018 with the arrival of Morena to power. After the agreement signed in June 2019, known as the Migrant Protection Protocols, more than 70,000 people applied for asylum in Mexico that same year, entering through Chiapas from countries such as Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Honduras, Haiti, among others, marking an increase of more than double compared to the previous year. This program, popularly called "Stay in Mexico," has led to an increase in the number of migrants in the country to over 6 million people. As a result, many companies have made changes to their hiring practices, which leads us to pose our research questions: What are the current labour culture conditions in companies in Mexico? What types of techniques or strategies should be implemented now in Mexican companies to strengthen corporate culture? This study is a mixed-method approach: qualitatively, through observation and a focus group, seven companies have been selected to identify the factors that directly impact their culture; and quantitatively, a survey has been conducted with migrants working in some companies in Mexico, acknowledging the working conditions that some of them face. We begin with the following general objective: To identify the new labour trends in Mexico that directly impact corporate culture, in order to generate innovative implementation techniques or strategies. In the end, the biggest difference we found between nationals and migrants is the need to move forward outside their home countries, topic that will be addressed in detail in this study.</i></p>

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**1. Introduction**

The history of humanity has been marked by migration, which is defined by ECLAC (2024) as "the change of residence that involves crossing a geographically or administratively defined boundary."

The living conditions in many Latin American countries in recent times have triggered mass migration. In this context, Mexico has played a key role as its geographical location allows it to serve as a bridge between the United States and migrants.

The belief that they will have a better quality of life in the United States has led people to seek the so-called "American Dream" for decades, and the number of people wishing to reach a wealthier and fuller land has become increasingly common.

On October 28, 2020, the U.S. government launched an app called CBP One in order to save time for land travelers through a form called I-94. CBP stands for Customs and Border Protection, which is where the name of the app originates from. (CBP Customer Service, 2025)

However, during the administrations of Joe Biden (USA) and Andrés Manuel López Obrador (Mexico), in 2023, the possibility of providing humanitarian assistance to Latin American migrants through this app was introduced. Through this platform, all migrants located in central Mexico and heading north could apply through a questionnaire to be accepted into the United States.

Figure 1. Map of Mexico



The Map of Mexico. Dominguez, A. (2024) <https://oem.com.mx/lavozdelafrontera/local/cbp-one-amplia-su-operacion-a-2-estados-del-sur-de-mexico-13133409>

## 2. Southern Border

In his research for the newspaper El País, journalist Ávila (2025) notes that Following the agreement signed in June 2019 known as the Migrant Protection Protocol, more than 70,000 people applied for asylum in Mexico that same year, entering through Chiapas from Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Honduras, Haiti, among others, representing an increase of more than double compared to the previous year. This program, popularly named “*Remain in Mexico*”, has generated cases of violence, sexual abuse, torture, kidnapping, and assaults. In addition, it has increased drug trafficking, both of people and harmful substances, which, although not the subject of this study, are nevertheless a wake-up call regarding the global conditions we are currently living in.

There is no certainty about how many undocumented migrants have entered through Mexico's southern border; the reality is that during the government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador there was a significant increase, with millions of migrants arriving through caravans organized to enter the country. In just the first half of 2024, the entry of 712,226 migrants was reported, but this figure does not include all the people who entered clandestinely. (Staff, 2024)

All these people, who were seeking to reach the United States, remain in Mexico, trying to survive with the help of authorities and by working in any business that allows them to earn enough to at least have food and shelter.

A large percentage of these migrants have a high level of education, especially those coming from a country like Cuba, which has a literacy rate of 99.67%. (Cuba, 2021) However, even when their level of education is high, they have no problem working in places such as taco shops, chicken shops, wholesale markets, ice cream parlors, etc.—any space that can provide the resources they need to survive. This is mainly because, with Trump's return to power in January 2025, the assistance programs to reach the United States through CBP One have been canceled. (Guillen & Barragan, 2025)

### **3. Labour Culture in Mexico**

Culture has a direct impact on an organization's productivity and is the element through which balance can be maintained. The creation of strategies that continuously redefine culture is proof of an organization's adaptability.

Several internal factors shape culture: strategy, leadership, teamwork, environment, motivation, and processes. However, the essential elements that must be defined around these factors are the company's mission, vision, and values.

An employee who clearly understands the company's direction and is constantly reminded of it has little room to identify other factors that might alter the natural course of the organization.

The social culture of a region has a strong influence on its corporate culture. Mexico is distinguished by its cultural richness: its customs and traditions are present throughout the country. We can mention important dates such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Day of the Dead, Candlemas Day, Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the celebrations of Mexico's struggle for independence, Children's Day, among many others. Each of these days has a different ritual that is also adopted in companies, without altering regular operations.

However, decision-making that generates changes in national laws also leads to cultural changes, as does the entry of foreign industries, nearshoring, and the opening to new forms of coexistence. All of this significantly impacts work teams.

In recent years, there have been several changes in different areas of Mexico: first, the migration conditions that have been established, as already mentioned; second, the changes in the country's wage policies; and lastly, the economic support programs for the population that were implemented since 2018 with the arrival of Morena to power.

With the arrival of Andrés Manuel López Obrador to the presidency of Mexico, adjustments to the country's economic conditions began. On one hand, the minimum wage increased, which at the beginning of his term was 88.36 pesos and today stands at 278.80 pesos, modifying inflation rates and living conditions in general (National Minimum Wage

Commission, 2024). For businesses, this has created some challenges, as companies must cover mandatory contributions such as Infonavit and Social Security, in addition to tax payments.

Table 1. Analysis of Mandatory Employee Benefits Payments by Companies Before and After 2018

Concept	Before 2018 (1 worker)	2025 (1 worker)	Before 2018 (10 workers)	2025 (10 workers)	Before 2018 (60 workers)	2025 (60 workers)
Minimum Daily Wage	\$ 88.36	\$ 278.80	\$ 883.60	\$ 2,788.00	\$ 5,301.60	\$ 16,728.00
Salary for 30 Days	\$ 2,650.80	\$ 8,364.00	\$ 26,508.00	\$ 83,640.00	\$ 159,048.00	\$ 501,840.00
Employer IMSS Contribution	\$ 830.95	\$ 1,131.24	\$ 8,309.50	\$ 11,312.40	\$ 49,857.00	\$ 67,874.40
Employee IMSS Contribution	\$ 34.63	\$ 109.71				
Employer Infonavit Contribution	\$ 285.90	\$ 905.66	\$ 2,859.00	\$ 9,056.60	\$ 17,154.00	\$ 54,339.60
Employee Infonavit Contribution	\$ 31.69	\$ 100.38				
Tax	\$ 259.59	\$ 122.04				
Total	\$ 2,844.07	\$ 8,031.87	\$ 37,676.50	\$ 104,009.00	\$ 226,059.00	\$ 624,054.00

With the arrival of López Obrador, there was also a restructuring of social assistance programs, granting a significant part of the population financial support as part of a humanitarian initiative by the president, which also led to changes in work culture.

An example of this is the program “*Young People Building the Future*”, which provides support to young people between 18 and 29 years old who are neither studying nor working, so they can receive training and enter the workforce. The support granted is 8,480 Mexican pesos, the equivalent of 462 US dollars per month, for one year. While it is true that this program benefits companies financially, employers also express concerns about the lack of commitment from these workers, since they see the Federal Government as their employer rather than the company’s CEO. (Young People Building the Future, 2025)

#### 4. Method

Once the most important elements that have affected labour conditions in the country and the cultural characteristics within organizations were analyzed, the methodology used in this study is described below.

We started from the following research questions: What are the current conditions of work culture in Mexican companies? What type of techniques or strategies should be implemented in Mexican companies today to strengthen corporate culture?

This study has a mixed-method approach:

- **Qualitative:** Through observation and a focus group, 7 companies were selected to identify the factors that directly impact their culture. In addition, documentary research was carried out.
- **Quantitative:** A survey was conducted with migrants working in some Mexican companies, recognizing their working conditions.

The general objective was: To identify new labour trends in Mexico that directly impact corporate culture in order to generate innovative implementation techniques or strategies.

#### 5. Results and Discussion

To better understand the results presented below, it is important to know the classification of companies by size according to the National Chamber of the Transformation Industry (2022):

- **Micro:** 1 to 10 workers
- **Small:** 11 to 50 workers
- **Medium:** 51 to 250 workers
- **Large:** 251 or more workers

From the surveys conducted with migrants, the following results were obtained:

- A total of 102 migrants located in the central region of the country were surveyed, of whom 67.6% were Cuban and the rest from Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela.
- 41.2% did not have legal documents to be in Mexico, yet they still work.
- 55.9% receive more than the minimum wage as payment but do not have legal benefits.
- Only 11.8% of undocumented migrants work seven days a week; the rest enjoy legally mandated days off.
- 50% rated the work environment as good, while the rest complained of some form of discriminatory treatment by coworkers.

From the focus group conducted with 7 companies (57.1% classified as micro, 28.6% as small, and 14.3% as large), the variables used to carry out the analysis in the Focus Group were: leadership, productivity level, sense of belonging, turnover, and work environment. The following results were obtained:

- The main challenge companies face is the lack of sense of belonging and commitment among workers, especially those benefiting from social programs.
- The entry of migrants into the workforce does not alter organizational culture. However, the work environment is sometimes strained due to the discrimination migrants experience.
- The productivity level of migrants is variable: some perform efficiently because they send money back to their home countries. However, the majority complain that in Mexico work is excessive, and they do not perform well.
- Medium and large companies must legally hire migrants.
- Micro and small companies often hire migrants illegally, thus saving on mandatory benefits.
- Most migrants who enter the workforce are within the productive age range of 18 to 40 years old.

## 6. Challenges

The primary challenge encountered in conducting this research was that the undocumented migrants selected to respond to the survey were fearful of the situation, as they were afraid of being deported.

Furthermore, it was decided to conduct a Focus Group with companies, given that it is likewise illegal for them to hire migrants without documentation. Article 7 of the Federal Labor Law (2025) stipulates that companies must hire at least 90% Mexican workers. If they hire foreigners, these individuals must be legally regulated, and their participation cannot exceed

10% in technical or specialized categories. That is, these companies must possess an Employer Registration Certificate issued by the National Institute of Migration.

## **7. Conclusions**

The analysis of organizational culture remains of vital importance. Many business owners do not understand that strengthening culture results in healthier companies, and we must remain open to changes occurring in all spheres: political, cultural, religious, social, and economic, as all of these determine the trends that shape a country's social and corporate culture.

Culture in an organization is intangible and develops even if it is not intentionally directed. Therefore, the participation of employees is crucial, as they are the ones who shape its implementation.

In essence, micro and small businesses have been the most affected by the laws implemented by the government, leading them to hire people illegally in order to save on mandatory benefits. However, this has also negatively impacted workplace environments.

This research project suggests working toward a new model of Corporate Culture: a **Culture of Change and Tolerance**. Highlighting universal values that promote this will be essential for maintaining strong and healthy companies.

Taking advantage of globalization, nearshoring, and the benefits of instant communication should serve as tools for strengthening both social and corporate culture. Aligning toward a common goal will surely give entrepreneurs greater advantages. It is vital to guarantee the human rights of people in transit and to establish new forms of coexistence among human beings.

## **8 Recommendations for Further Research**

It is suggested that a longitudinal study on socio-organizational integration be conducted in the future, as it would allow for an understanding of migration not as a static phenomenon, but as a process of evolution over time.

This involves delving into three key elements: first, tracking migrant individuals over an extended period, such as 3 to 5 years, would help identify their stress levels regarding deportation, as well as their adaptation to both social and organizational cultures. Second, it involves studying the companies that experience collateral damage from political and economic changes in the country and how they adapt to the presence of foreign workers. In this regard, it would be highly valuable to measure organizational climate and productivity levels to provide a more comprehensive description of these changes over time.

Ultimately, having precise data can assist in developing better legislative initiatives that support national and corporate growth, while also having a positive individual impact on both migrants and Mexicans alike.

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