

Organizing the mobility of migrants from Mexico to US: The rise from individual car services to bus companies

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Abstract - *This article analyzes the bus transportation companies located in Monterrey, Mexico. This city is a node for the transportation of Mexican migrants to the United States. One of the questions that is addressed in this article is: How can the history of these companies be understood within the context of both, Mexican migration to the U.S., and the consolidation of the Monterrey-Houston migratory circuit? I draw from theoretical insights from economic geography and utilize the concepts of mobility infrastructure and the migration industry. I argue that Monterrey's importance as a major center for the transportation of Mexicans to the U.S. is not only due to its geographical location, but also to how migrants have used their agency to build up social infrastructures, routes, itineraries and a migratory circuit. In this scenario, some of the larger transportation companies benefited from two related issues: migrant's networks, knowledge and agency, and Monterrey's economic transformation in a global context. This article contributes to the study of land transportation and international migration by considering that migrant's networks (social infrastructures) and ethnic niches constitute the basis for further formal transnational economic industries (migration industry).*

Keywords: *Mobility infrastructure, migration industry, migrant's transportation, bus transportation companies.*

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the process by which Monterrey, the third largest city in Mexico and the largest in the north, has become a hub for the transportation of Mexicans to the United States. I analyze the bus transportation companies located in Monterrey as an example of *infrastructures of mobility* [1], defined as a set of material and social networks that allow the movement of people, and the circulation of objects across the border. We can find the origins of these infrastructures in migrants' knowledge and skills [2]-[4]. This is to say that the migrant's agency along with the historical background of the city served as the motor that allowed the consolidation of these infrastructures.

The case of the Monterrey as a node is the result of a process of institutionalization [5] where bus transportation companies benefited from both the migrant's networks (based on reciprocity and not in pursuit of profit), and the economic transformation of the city during the last decades. The articulation between migrant's networks and general economic

factors is an aspect rarely addressed in the study of international hubs [6] and not often considered neither by the current theories about migration [5] nor about ethnic economies [7], [8].

Castells [9] uses the term hub to denote the spatial and economical connection between distant geographic territories. Martern [6] adds that hubs operate as "concentration and distribution centers for the flux of merchandise, capital, information, and people". As a node for the transportation of labor migrants, Monterrey can be considered a hub for international migration because of the great number of bus companies located in the city that transport migrants to the United States. This article shows the process of consolidation of Monterrey as such by considering geographic, historical and economic factors; therefore, the article falls within the body of ethnic economics literature [10]. More specifically, the case of Monterrey is about powerful companies buying others that originally were owned by immigrants and, thus, is a case of a migration industry consolidated on the basis of a social infrastructure. This demonstration is the main contribution of this paper.

This article addresses several sets of research questions. First, what is the history of these bus companies? How can the history of these companies be understood within the context of Mexican migration to the U.S., and specifically, the consolidation of the Monterrey-Houston migratory circuit? Second, why is Monterrey, in particular, currently an important node for the transportation of Mexican labor migrants to the United States? I draw from theoretical insights in economic geography and utilize the concept of *mobility infrastructure* [1] and the migration industry [11]. Using these analytical tools, I argue that Monterrey is currently a center for the transportation of Mexicans to the U.S. not only because of its geographical location, but also because of its place as a historical departure city for migrants during the early 20th century; and the economic transformation of Monterrey and consolidation of the Monterrey-Houston migratory circuit.

The organization of the article is as follows: first, it addresses the methods of data collection and analysis. It then elucidates which aspects of economic geography provide important insights into the process of international labor migration and transportation. After that there is a brief profile of the various companies and bus lines that operate from or pass through Monterrey. Later, there is a discussion about the evolution of Monterrey into a primary distribution city of Mexican labor migrants to the United States. Then, the article highlights the interaction between different companies, and finally, it discusses how my insights make a contribution to the relevant frameworks in economic geography.

METHODS

The empirical data for this article consists of in-depth interviews with ten business partners, managers, and employees of different bus companies operating in Monterrey. All the people interviewed had experience and knowledge about the history and transformation of the companies; in some cases, they were the founding partners or were among the first employees. Before undertaking an interview, the interviewer explained to the informants that he was conducting an academic study, and that the name of the company will be published but confidential information (such as financial situation) will be considered just as cross-information, and that the name of the interviewed will be omitted.

Interview questions addressed four main themes: 1) The trajectory of the firm, including the history of the

founders and the circumstances in which the company was first established; 2) Company services; 3) Inter-firm relations; 4) The current situation of the company. In most cases, I conducted two sets of interviews to make sure that I collected data on all four of these themes.

The included companies were Autobuses Flores, Autobuses El Mexicano, Autobuses El Conejo, Autobuses El Faisan, Omnibus Mexicanos, Turimex Internacional, Autobuses Hotel, Greyhound de Mexico, and Autobuses Adame.

The researcher developed two original databases of information. The first database was organized by company, the second database was organized diachronically, which allowed me to develop a timeline to understand the evolution of the larger Mexican transportation industry in Monterrey. Here I utilize my data to illustrate how the special features of the Mexican transportation industry play a role as part of the larger, complex phenomenon of international migration.

Monterrey Bus Lines

Located in northeast Mexico, approximately 150 miles from the Texas border, the city of Monterrey has emerged as a center for international mobility due to changes in the postindustrial local economy of the sending city, shifts in the patterns of Mexican migration to the U.S., and the consolidation of a Monterrey-Houston migratory circuit.

Currently, there are eleven bus firms operating in Monterrey, which provide daily transportation to the U.S. These companies are organized in diverse ways, but all have an affiliate firm operating on the U.S. side. These businesses constitute part of [11] the “migration industry”.

Bus lines are brands that belong to larger passenger transportation companies. Each line connects a specific set of departure and destination cities. In this section, I discuss the companies that start or pass through Monterrey and have offices and employees in this city, paying special attention to the number of lines and routes, as well as associations between different bus lines.

Some of the smaller bus companies only have one line and focus on one route. Two companies, *Autobuses Pegasso* and *Autobuses Flores* travel only between Monterrey and Houston. *Autobuses El Mexicano* and *Autobuses El Conejo* have routes that originate from other Mexican cities but pass through Monterrey. Although the bus traveling through Mexico and the

United States is the same, the bus line is officially a Mexican company when it operates south of the border but becomes part of a parallel American company upon entering U.S. territory—both of which have the same owner.

In some cases, the same bus line may be owned by a separate company in Mexico and the United States. This is the case with the bus lines of Grupo Estrella Blanca, the largest Mexican transportation company. Grupo Estrella Blanca, together with Greyhound, respectively operate *Autobuses Americanos* and *Autobuses Americanos USA*, which technically utilize the same fleet of buses. The ownership of the buses (and consequently the profits) changes hands upon crossing the border. In other words, an *Autobuses Americanos* bus line is part of Grupo Estrella Blanca when traveling through Mexico, but upon crossing the U.S. border, becomes *Autobuses Americanos USA*, and thus part of Greyhound.

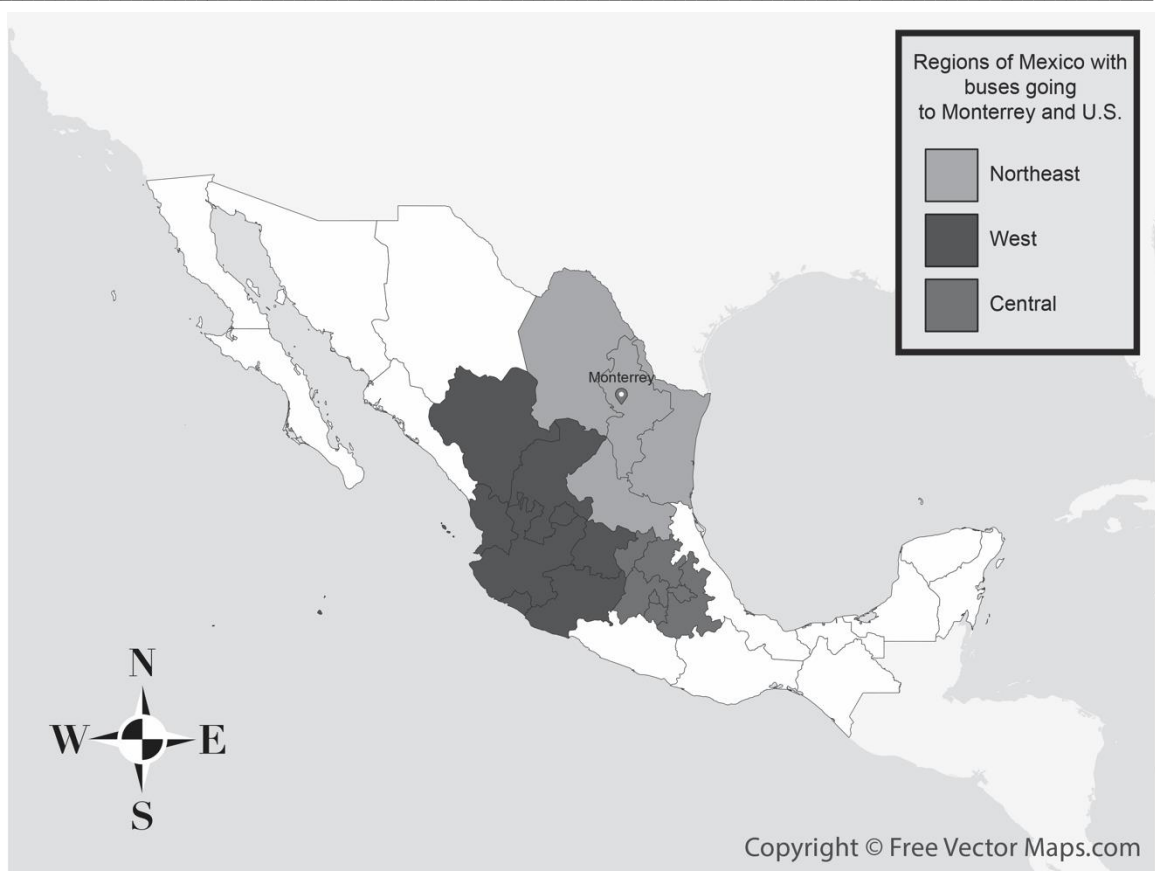
The resources of Grupo Estrella Blanca and Greyhound allow these companies to operate more bus

lines than the smaller companies. *Autobuses Americanos* employs 250 people, and *Autobuses Americanos USA* employs 150 people. These companies have 30 buses in operation. *Autobuses Americanos/Autobuses Americanos USA* has several departure terminals throughout Mexico and several arrival cities in the United States. They connect 27 cities in Mexico (covering 26 of Mexico's 32 states) and at least 19 cities in the U.S. In this respect, their clients are able to connect to 2800 cities throughout the U.S. and Canada via other Greyhound bus lines.

Another company, *Omnibus de Mexico*, operates four bus lines in Mexico. *Omnibus de Mexico* is an interesting case because its bus lines include those acquired from the company *Autobuses Adame*. Utilizing the pre-established operations of *Autobuses Adame*, *Omnibus de Mexico's* bus lines now cover six routes between West, Central and Northeast Mexico and several cities in Texas (Houston, Dallas, and Brownsville).



Map 1. Lines Bus Destinations from Monterrey. Designed by: Miguel García



Map 2. Regions of Mexico with buses going to Monterrey and U.S. Designed by: Miguel García

Omnibus de Mexico also owns the bus line Autobuses Ejecutivos, which transports migrants from Dallas and Houston to other U.S. destinations, such as Atlanta, Charlotte, Tallahassee, and Detroit, as well as various cities in Indiana, Kentucky, and Florida.

Grupo Senda is another company that owns several bus lines. Its primary bus line, Turimex Internacional, covers routes throughout Mexico, including West and North Mexico. These lines all pass-through Monterrey into various destinations in Texas, including Houston, Garland, and San Antonio.

Conceptualizing Infrastructures in the Study of International Mobility

Literature about migration networks has addressed the impact of those networks in the economics of destination sites [7] [8]. The creation of ethnic niches is one of the visible economic impacts [12] [10] [13] of migration networks at destination places and has received much more attention than the creation of economic niches in the place of origin. Although the

formation of ethnic niches is related to both, destination and place of origin economies, [14] it is more frequently analyzed how niche economy at the destiny site is shaped by migrants connections with their place of origin [15] [16]. The case showed here is one of a migration networks encouraging non-immigrant entrepreneurs at their origin place (Monterrey) to shift capital in to an economic niche, in other words, is the formation of a migration industry emanated from a migrant social infrastructure. This function is much less studied on the literature about networks. As it will be showed, the most important bus companies of North America are involved in Mexico–U.S.-Mexico migrant’s transportation now. This is not good news for the little companies founded by Mexican immigrants who are are being coopted by bigger companies or are being financially pressed by larger business competition. As a result, migrant owned businesses are losing some control, and there is a mix of ethnic economy with general economy [12]. The migration industry (or entrepreneur infrastructure)

subsists thanks to the migrant social infrastructure (the migrant networks) and not a social infrastructure in itself. This article attempts to understand the organization, operations, and relationships between the Monterrey bus companies that travel between Mexico and the United States. To further examine this, I explore: 1) The configuration of the Monterrey-Houston migratory circuit; 2) The creation of infrastructures that facilitate the migratory fluxes; 3) The geo-economic logic behind the configuration of these structures that allow for mobility.

The ongoing mobility of people between Mexico and the United States is largely facilitated by physical, institutional, and social devices that I metaphorically call *infrastructures* [1]. The metaphor of infrastructure is originated from objects such as roads, bridges, and other mechanisms that transport people from one place to another. Infrastructures denote the organic relationship between different sets of places, institutions, and people. With respect to international migration, infrastructures are created, organized, and developed by social actors that interact in a same social space—migratory circuits—but live in geographically distant territories. In the case of mobility between Mexico and the United States, the concept of infrastructure is useful for explaining how the mobility of objects and people across the Mexico-U.S. border is established, facilitated, and perpetuated.

Infrastructures can function on three different levels: government, business, and social. On a state level, *government infrastructures* regulate the movement of products and human labor across international borders. Government infrastructures include governmental entities that establish inter- and intra-state arrangements, agreements, and treaties, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Some business infrastructures focus on the mobility of merchandise, whereas others specialize in the mobility of people. The business infrastructures need not be concentrated on one primary objective, such as the transportation of labor migrants, but may also extend to other transportation needs involved with tourism, consumerism, and religion [1]. It should be noted not all infrastructures that facilitate the movement of products and people are entrepreneurial in nature. For example, *associative infrastructures*, such as student exchange programs between universities in two different countries, facilitate the international movement of people, but are not entrepreneurial or profit-driven in nature.

Finally, *social infrastructures* are the interpersonal relations that facilitate the movement of particular objects and people. Social infrastructures include the trust, reciprocity, and exchanges of ideas occurring within migrant networks. In the context of Mexican migration to the U.S., ties between the sending and destination communities help establish and maintain social infrastructures.

Although I conceptualize government, business, and social infrastructures distinctly, my research on bus lines highlights the interdependence of the places, institutions, and social actors involved in these larger networks, albeit not necessarily in an even fashion. For example, the modification of transportation regulations in and between countries (government infrastructure) shapes the configuration, organization, and operations of the institutions designed for the transportation of people (business infrastructure).

In turn, the respective configurations of business and socially infrastructures are mutually dependent. For example, the development of a social infrastructure for the transportation and exchange of people, gifts, documents, and remittances between a community in Mexico to one in the U.S. occurs more efficiently because of the presence of vans that make weekly trips between these communities (business infrastructure). Business infrastructures that involve *coyotes*, who assist migrants with crossing the border, or *chiveras*, who transfer specific goods to Mexico at the request of Mexican consumers [1], also serve to strengthen social infrastructures. These activities involve a certain level of trust and reciprocity among different social actors, and they function to facilitate contact between people separated by international borders. The latter activities also illustrate how business infrastructures can function rather informally, wherein agreements are made orally without receipts, tickets, or contracts.

The concept of infrastructure differs somewhat from [11] concept of “migration industry,” as it allows for the inclusion of the diverse activities of bus companies and is not limited to entrepreneurial institutions whose *primary* function is to “grease the wheels” of international migration. I classify infrastructures separately from the migration industry because of the importance of trust in the support of these activities. In this sense, bus companies take on characteristics of social infrastructures, not only business infrastructures. In short, the enterprise logic of business infrastructures works in conjunction with the interactional logic of social infrastructures as part of the larger infrastructures of international mobility.

To further understand the bus companies that transport migrants from Mexico to the U.S., one specific infrastructure of mobility, this article closely examines the relationship between business and social infrastructures. In the next sections, I present the main characteristics of the different bus companies operating out of Monterrey. My intention is not to illustrate the process of institutionalization or formalization, nor the expansion or growth of particular companies. Rather, I focus on the diversification of the phenomenon, which allows for informal, smaller transportation companies to coexist and survive despite ongoing competition from formal, bigger organizations. Herein lies the most sociologically interesting part of this study.

The Emergence of the Monterrey-Houston Migratory Circuit

The migration of Mexicans to the United States has a long history [18]. Migration from Monterrey to Texas is not an entirely new phenomenon but during the 1970s, Monterrey became an important sending context in the Mexican-U.S. migration stream. It was then that the Monterrey-Houston migratory circuit began to crystallize. Hernandez-Leon [17] attributes the establishment of this circuit on two primary factors: 1) The decline of industrialization in Monterrey led to a local economic crisis; 2) The emergence of Houston as a major distribution center of oil and gas to a global market created booming demands for industrial workers. Businesses in Houston looked to Monterrey, the industrial capital of Mexico, to find workers with industrial skills. Amidst the economic crisis in Monterrey, migration became a viable option for qualified Monterrey workers, who were able to migrate legally to Houston for employment opportunities. This migration of industrial workers established the Monterrey-Houston migratory circuit, which in the following decades, was sustained by their strong social networks [17].

The consolidation of this migratory flux is a very important precedent for the conformation of infrastructures for mobility during the 1980s and 1990s. In the 1980s, van drivers (*camioneteros*)¹ began transporting people, money, and merchandise between Monterrey and Houston. This was partly a result of the fact that IRCA (Immigration Reform and Control Act - 1986) allowed more migrants to move freely across the border between Mexico and the U.S. Due to regulatory

changes, some *camioneteros* established bus lines to formalize the activity of transporting people, companies that still exist today. By the end of the 1990s, larger bus companies in both Mexico and the United States capitalized on new migratory circuits of migrants moving to new immigrant destinations, such as the East Coast. These companies benefited from social infrastructures (i.e., migratory nets, smaller transportation and packaging companies) already in place and institutional infrastructures such as NAFTA, as well as the new, more firmly established migratory circuit between Monterrey and Houston.

Prior to IRCA, the collective transportation of people between Mexico and the United States was a generalized activity, not a niche industry. The newly consolidated Monterrey-Houston migratory circuit made the activity of transportation more complex. At first, transportation was facilitated by the pioneering migrants who made sporadic journeys between Mexico and the U.S. As time passed, both small-scale and large-scale transportation companies were established in both countries. In this section, I explain the evolution of these infrastructures for mobility.

From Station Wagons to Buses

The consolidation of the Monterrey-Houston migratory connection served to formalize the transportation industry between the two communities. Initially during the 1970s, travel between Monterrey and Texas was restricted to the transportation of merchandise and remittances. Because these transnational journeys were primarily for the transportation of goods, only a few people traveled back and forth between Monterrey and Texas. Over the next ten years, as the Monterrey-Houston circuit become more firmly established, station wagons gave their place to vans, which more regularly transported not only goods, but also people across the Mexico-U.S. border. As other authors have suggested [17] – [19], some migrants took advantage of their migrant networks and specialized knowledge to open businesses that concentrated primarily on international transportation.

A well-known example is the company started by Mr. Esteban Adame, a native of Northeast Mexico that migrated to Houston. When he first migrated to the U.S. in 1977, Adame worked in the Houston docks. He made frequent trips to Monterrey in his station wagon,

¹ In Mexican Spanish, *camioneta* is the Spanish word to pick-up.

and each time he traveled, he asked his co-workers whether they wanted to send package or accompany him on the trip [21]. Adame's first trips started with a station wagon.

In 1984, Adame left his job to focus full-time on providing transportation services, as it proved more lucrative than the working at the docks. Two years later, Adame upgraded from station wagons to vans, which carried up to fifteen passengers at a time. By the completion of IRCA in 1991 [21], Adame owned fifteen vans and had just purchased his first two buses. Only six years later, Adame doubled his fleet to thirty buses in operation. Autobuses Adame created specific bus lines, such as El Faisan, to transport migrants from Central Mexico to Monterrey, upon which they would be able to go to Houston and other destinations in the U.S. However, as I discuss later, the arrival of big companies led the absorption of Autobuses Adame and its lines, such as El Faisan, under the name of the larger organization.

Autobuses El Mexicano is another Monterrey-based bus company with humble beginnings. Autobuses El Mexicano was founded by a Mexican immigrant living in Houston. He began making trips between Houston, Monterrey, and Linares (100 kilometers south of Monterrey) using a small truck, which he used to transport various types of merchandise. Because of the high demand for his services, he opened up offices in both Monterrey and Houston. Over the next decade, he expanded his operations into nearby cities, setting up additional offices in Dallas, Texas, in the U.S. and other small cities around Linares, in Mexico. Autobuses El Mexicano boasted a fleet of fifteen buses, but as big companies began to compete for their clientele since the year 2000, El Mexicano's operations have downsized substantially. Today, El Mexicano operates five buses and employs only twelve employees—seven in Monterrey and five in Houston.

Similarly to Autobuses Adame and Autobuses El Mexicano, other Mexican-owned bus companies were established during the late 1980s to facilitate transportation between Monterrey and Houston, such as Los Primos, Expresso, and Tornado. Other companies from central Mexico, such as El Conejo, opened operations in Monterrey.

The evolution of the Mexican bus line companies led to the establishment of designated routes, more complex business infrastructures, more diversified services, and inter-firm competition. During the 1980s, dozens of vans would depart from Houston and follow specified routes. Companies built larger clientele,

which in turn, required that more employees be hired. International travel became more frequent and involved special services, and overall, travel became increasingly efficient. The expansion of the transportation also gave rise to competition between van drivers and company owners.

Van drivers were particularly attentive to two aspects related to their services—efficiency and trust. One van driver noted the importance of mutual trust between himself and his passengers, noting the importance of displaying that personal touch when providing his service: “Thank God I have lots of people who see how I treat them. Most of the clients are very old people. Many are ladies. Sometimes the van seems like an ambulance. I have brought people who are blind, who cannot walk, and I assist them when getting on and off. I hold their hand and walk them to the restrooms, and they have noticed that I take care of them”.

The modification of the organization of these infrastructures of mobility—everything from the frequency of travel to the type of vehicle utilized—are a direct outgrowth of the conditions set forth by amnesty. The modification of the transportation regulation laws, which in part were a result of the lobbying of large transportation companies, further facilitated the growth of the bus transportation industry. I explore the emergence of the larger companies in the following section.

The Arrival of Big Companies

Big transportation companies hoped to capitalize on the ongoing migration circuit between Mexico and the United States by establishing their own transportation routes. One of the San Antonio directors of Autobuses Americanos USA said that between 1987 and 1988, Greyhound protested to United States authorities about the “informal” services being provided by Mexican van companies. During that time, Ellis [22] notes that both “the van services were exempt from complying with Federal Motor Carrier Regulations” and the regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Years later, the U.S. Department of Transportation implemented regulations to these transportation activities and began issuing printed permits to “formalize” van companies. They also opened the routes to free competition. Permits in hand, van drivers used the opportunity to establish bus companies based around their preexisting routes. They capitalized on their knowledge of which routes, services, and

itineraries were in highest demand among Mexican labor migrants.

Even in 1997, Greyhound, one of the largest bus companies in North America, could not compete with the Mexican owned firms, who dominated the industry of labor migrant transportation. In this scenario, Greyhound appealed to Mexico to enforce tougher laws on the legally questionable business activities of Mexican bus companies on both sides of the border [20]. Greyhound and Mexican bus companies followed different trajectories.

As mentioned, many Mexican bus companies were established during amidst the consolidation of the Monterrey-Houston migratory circuit. One such company is Autobuses El Mexicano. Autobuses El Mexicano's was first founded by a Mexican immigrant based in Houston. In 1988, he would make trips from Houston to Monterrey and Linares using a small truck, which he used to transport merchandise for other migrants. The founder refined his business operations to provide services of most interest to migrants. Over time, he also developed a more accurate understanding of which routes and itineraries to follow based on where there was high demand among migrants. In 1993, he purchased five buses, and as his clientele expanded, doubled his fleet over the next five years. Once his business became more lucrative, he established offices in Monterrey and Houston. Over the next decade, he also opened offices in Dallas in the U.S. and Linares, Allende, and Montemorelos (all them are small cities not very far to Monterrey). Although business peaked in the late 1990s, his client base began to diminish significantly, due to the entry of big companies into the migrant bus industry. Currently, Autobuses El Mexicano is back to five buses and employs twelve people, seven of whom work in Monterrey and five who work in Houston.

To viably compete within the migration transportation industry, Greyhound acquired several of the Mexican-owned bus companies in 1995. Greyhound targeted many bus companies that already operated preexisting routes throughout Texas. Two such companies included Turismos Rápidos, which transported labor migrants primarily to San Antonio, and Valley Transit, which managed routes throughout Brownsville, Corpus, McAllen, and the international border region of Texas. These respective organizations were placed under the umbrella of one larger company owned by Greyhound named Autobuses Americanos USA.

The creation of Autobuses Americanos USA must be understood beyond the migration phenomenon and within the larger government infrastructure frame. Prior to NAFTA, smaller companies had a major advantage over Greyhound because they could travel more liberally than the large U.S.-owned company. In contrast, Greyhound could not travel far into Mexico, needing to stay within 25 miles of the international border. As such, it was necessary for Greyhound sister companies in Mexico, and eventually they came to utilize the Mexican original buses companies [23]. In addition to Autobuses Americanos USA, other companies such as Autobuses Americanos was born out of Grupo Estrella Blanca

Big companies in Mexico have also been interested in participating in the migration transportation industry. These included Grupo Senda, a Nuevo Leon-based company; Omnibus Mexicanos, currently one of the largest Mexican companies; and Turimex Internacional, which I discuss below. To enter to this already booming market, these companies had to negotiate with existing companies, and they were keenly aware of the relations between companies and the growing importance of transporting Mexican migrants to the U.S. These companies ended up following a similar strategy as Greyhound by acquiring bus lines already in operation.

Some bus companies concentrate solely on domestic transportation of Mexican labor migrants, connecting more than 14 cities throughout central and northern Mexico. Turimex Internacional entered the market in 2003 with only three buses, which covered two main routes. By the year's end, its fleet grew to eight buses. As of 2008, Turimex Internacional was operating 54 buses, which managed twelve routes throughout Mexico. Similarly, Omnibus Mexicanos was able to expand its operations by acquiring Transportes del Norte, connecting with west Mexico region. Other bus lines connect with different cities of northeast Mexico.

Unlike Turimex Internacional, Omnibus Mexicanos also operated routes bound to the United States. By acquiring Autobuses Adame, Omnibus Mexicanos gained access to the clientele of labor migrants traveling within the Monterrey-Houston migratory circuit. In this respect, they were able to capitalize from the network of clients that Autobuses Adame had throughout different U.S. states. The purchase of the Autobuses Adame buses resulted in the creation of a company called Autobuses Ejecutivos. However, Omnibus Mexicanos strategically kept the name

“Adame,” because they knew that this company had developed the rapport necessary to maintain customer loyalty among Mexican communities in both Monterrey and Houston.

CONCLUSION

The symbiotic relationship between government and business infrastructures discussed in this chapter helps explain why large transportation organizations, such as Greyhound and Grupo Senda have become some of the most profitable companies in the country. The current context of Monterrey, namely its communication infrastructure, labor market, and the existence of an international migration circuit explain this trend. In sum, the emergence of this hub in Monterrey can be explained by the interplay of historical, demographic (migration) and economic general and “from below” (ethnic economies) factors, as well as the interaction of different government, business, and social infrastructures. Political features play an important role in this scenario. For example, scholars have identified Monterrey as the premiere city to establish transnational businesses, as opposed to Mexico City [24], given the strength of its communication, education, and service infrastructures. Recognizing the economic potential of Monterrey, the local government has pushed the city into the international spotlight, establishing agreements with Texas and developing projects that attract foreign investments, tourism, and activities [1]. Studying with greater depth the articulation between ethnic and general economy, political trends, history and geographic aspects, as part of future investigations would further explain the relationship between migration industry and social infrastructures.

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