

## **Guatemalans', Salvadorians' and Hondurans' movement to and through the Soconusco region of Chiapas, Mexico.**

Carmen Fernández Casanueva

University of Essex

Within the context of the migratory phenomenon at the Southern Mexican border, this paper is based on a research that explores in particular, the migratory trajectories of people that cross the border between Chiapas and Guatemala – the more dynamic point of the southern border in terms of the number and heterogeneity of people moving back and forth. I explore in particular the movement from the three main sources of labour migration<sup>1</sup> through this border: Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. I take into account female and male migrants aiming to migrate to the United States as their final destination or crossing with the intention of working in the border area and the Soconusco region of Chiapas in sectors of commerce, domestic, agriculture, sex service and bars, construction and other services (caring, restaurant, hostels).

The article looks at the diversity of *migratory trajectories* (migration process from the moment the migrants leave their communities to the moment they find themselves in Chiapas) driven by flows of migrants who behave distinctly from each other and have a variety of objectives, strategies and motivations, according to the possibilities their context offers to them in combination with their own particular dreams and goals.

---

<sup>1</sup> As will be shown, even when these migrants are labelled as labour migrants, that is, migrants aiming to work outside their country, this does not necessarily mean that their reasons for migration have been exclusively economical.

I aim to show how migrants interact with each other, their environment and the circumstances they have to face along their migratory trajectories: from the moment the decision to migrate is taken, to the moment they find themselves in the Soconusco region in Chiapas. The paper intends to put into context and to understand the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’ of the trajectories of those labour migrants of working age (between 18 and 45 years old) crossing the Guatemalan-Chiapán border. It asks how and why some migratory trajectories are local and others trans-Mexican; why some can be reproduced in a fairly similar way over time while some are more uncertain and can take different shapes. In general terms I present here a study of how migrants interact with and adjust to the circumstances on the macro and micro level found along their trajectory and why; how, under which circumstances, and to what extent, agents are able and/or need to make choices during the migratory process.

### *Relevance*

A research such as this contributes to the knowledge of a very important aspect of migration in Mexican territory, namely the diversity and behaviour of migratory flows from Central America, crossing the southern Mexican border. Mexican migration to the United States has been documented extensively, but there is still a gap in the study of population movements through the Chiapan-Guatemalan border as the main transit point and destination for Central American migrants.

In this way, this paper is based on a research that intends to be a contribution to the study of the migration phenomenon within North and Central America, particularly in Mexico as the country of receipt and transit. Specifically, the study expands the knowledge and analysis of a less explored aspect; the labour migrants crossing the

Guatemalan-Chiapán border. Based on an ethnographic research (using the methods of participant observation and semi-structured interviews), it presents a comparative analysis of such flows during 2002-2003.

### **Theoretical framework of the study**

I agree with Morawska's (2001) argument that migration as a structuration process brings the debate into the terms of a dynamic relationship between structures and agency in a way that makes possible the understanding of it from the beginning and throughout the entire process, considering macro and micro structures; global, middle and local level always interacting with the agent's motivations and actions in a dynamic process:

Structuration provides a more complete theoretical framework for the analysis of migration, and therefore I believe that it is an appropriate theoretical platform for my research. I also incorporate the concepts of social networks, social capital and migration systems into the all-encompassing structuration model. Social networks are the micro structures in the structuration model in which social capital is embedded.

As Stones (2005) argues, the structuration model requires aid from other perspectives in order to offer a more complete understanding of a social phenomenon. Therefore, this emphasises the role of social networks and social capital (and from them, the notion of cumulative causation). Stones has highlighted the importance of social networks, but does not consider them as part of the structuration process. I argue that social networks can be fitted into the structuration model and should be considered as an important element thereof.

Migration systems, the third complementary element of my theoretical framework, can also be accommodated into the structuration model, considering Sewell's (1992) elaboration of structures as a complex multilayered system: multi-levelled structures operate and exist at different levels, and are in constant evolution by interaction with the actions of agents.

The concept of a migration system is important also in the sense that in any migratory phenomenon, historical, political, economical, and social links are present between receiving, transit and sending areas. The Central American migration through the Guatemalan-Chiapán border is a phenomenon within the North American system<sup>2</sup>. I take the concept of migration system and understand it as a “network of countries linked by migration interactions whose dynamics are largely shaped by the functioning of a variety of networks linking migration actors at different levels of aggregation” (Kritz & Zlotnik, in Kirtz, Lim & Zlotnic, 1992:15)<sup>3</sup>. The phenomenon of the migratory movements from Central America through the Guatemalan-Chiapán border is a subsystem of the North American system which presents specific push (in sending areas) and pull (in receiving areas) structures, with agents embedded in such structures.

For the analysis, I will also take into consideration Schutz' (1967; 1967b) distinction of people's motives: ‘because of’ motives, which are multi-levelled structures and

---

<sup>2</sup> The North American System is constituted by the United States and Canada in the core of the system and on the periphery, “seventeen sub areas located in six world regions: East Asia (Korea, Japan, and China), South Asia (Indo-China, the Philippines, and India), Latin America (Mexico, Colombia, and Central America), The Caribbean (Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Haiti), the Middle East (Iran), and Europe (Britain, Poland, and the former countries of the Soviet Union)” (Massey, Arango, 1998:66-67).

<sup>3</sup> Emigration of Chiapan agricultural workers generates the movement of Guatemalan agricultural workers to Chiapas. Another example of this is the case of the Colombian labour force that migrated to Venezuela after the Venezuelan entry into the global market (Sassen, 1979).

resources, and 'in order to' motives, representing peoples' dreams and motivations: "...the in-order-to motive, the intention of bringing about a project state of affairs, of attaining a preconceived goal....The genuine because motive, however, involves, as we have seen, the time perspective of the past and refers to the genesis of the projecting itself" (1967b:71).

## **Elements of analysis**

### *Structures*

Macro structures set unequal political, social and economic push and pull conditions within regions, generating movement of people from the less favoured countries to the more favoured ones. These perpetuate global inequalities, together with structural macro links, generate systems and also the movement of people from the periphery to the core within such a system. This is the case in the North American system where peripheral countries such as Mexico or those of Central America, generate movement of people to the core countries in the system; that is to say, Canada or the United States.

Looking at the particular case of Central American migration, it could be said that the *push structures* have been the economic crises in those countries, as well as the political conflicts during the 1980s that have generated the necessity for people to leave their communities. These conditions, together with the culture of collectivism that guides the sense of responsibility towards others, lead people to migrate with the hope of bringing a better standard of living to their families. At the same time the need for a migrant labour force in the United States constitutes one of the *pull structures* for migration to this country.

Between these deeply imbalanced areas we find Mexico, which within the North American system is a sending, transit and also a receiving country. This position also constitutes a *pull structure* of migration from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. Mexico is the biggest sending country to the United States as well as being the main terrestrial transit route used by Central Americans willing to migrate to the United States (the Guatemalan-Chiapan border being the main entrance). Mexico is also a receiving area because its transit and sending position generates in the border area, a structure that relies highly on migrants: a structure able to supply services to transmigrants and able to 'cover the gaps' that Chiapan emigrants have left, thus generating a 'domino effect'.

This process connecting both sides of the border flows naturally also because of linking structures. There are historical, cultural and ethnic ties between Chiapas and Central American countries, particularly with Guatemala. In this way, structural links, the geographical proximity, and the historical commerce exchange between the border area together with structures generated by political and economical agreements between countries (such as the Puebla-Panama plan, free trade agreements between Mexico and Central America) all constitute *pull structures* of migration.

These pull structures at the national and regional level set the basis for the creation of a subsystem of the North American system. This subsystem composed of Central America and Chiapas originated and reproduced through the exchange of information, goods, services, and people mainly within the border region and Soconusco areas.

Pull and push structures set the basis for this exchange but do not provide the same conditions to all migrants, diverting trajectories of migration. For instance, ethnic, historical and commercial links with Guatemalans are stronger than those with either El Salvador or Honduras and legal conditions and/or regulations are not established equally for Guatemalans than for the other Central Americans. Additionally, the demand for migrants' labour force is not homogeneous; the different sectors do not provide the same legal conditions and opportunities to all migrants.

In this way, pull structures divert migratory experiences among the ones crossing the Guatemalan-Chiapas border. For instance, in terms of regulations and legality, Guatemalan agriculture workers are able to migrate and work within a regulated program, domestic workers can cross legally but their residence and work in Chiapas is normally unregulated, and as opposed to Guatemalans, Hondurans or Salvadorians do not have access to legal documents enabling them to cross. In terms of gender, female labour work is in demand in the domestic and bar/sex sectors, and male labour force in construction.

Push structures also influence differences in migratory experiences. For instance, poor rural communities that have strong links with Chiapas will aim to work in the Soconusco in the agriculture, domestic or commerce sectors, while urban communities with more economical resources will aim to make a longer and more expensive trip to migrate to the United States.

Within these pulling and pushing structures, actors create *microstructures* in order to initiate and reproduce their migratory process. Microstructures embodied as social

networks are a crucial element of analysis and of the structuration model as it was previously explained. Social networks are able to provide the necessary resources to migrants, through support, information and know-how.

Microstructures reproduce the migratory process over time. They are created in sending communities and households, as well as in transit and receiving areas leading migration flows to specific directions and under specific circumstances. In this way, microstructures not only sustain the migration process, but also have a role in the shaping and diversion of trajectories.

### *Agents*

The movement of people from Central America to Chiapas has been a constant throughout history. Indeed, the border between Guatemala and Chiapas was not even demarcated until 1882. This movement drastically increased in the 1980s, when many Guatemalans (and to a lesser extent other Central Americans) crossed the border to escape from the armed conflicts. These movements reinforced links between both countries since many Guatemalans chose to settle in Chiapas even after the resolution of the conflicts. Nowadays there can be found a heterogeneous group of migrants crossing the border: child street vendors from Guatemala, women and men from Central America, South America and less often from other continents such as Africa or Asia; all aiming to work in the region, to migrate to the United States or even to claim asylum in Mexico.

However, in order to have a clearer starting point, I narrowed my study to cover the group of adult labour migrants of both sexes from the main sending countries:

Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, who are of working age. Within this group, I consider different marriage statuses, presence or lack of children, different legal statuses, and differences in ultimate aims: whether the aim is to migrate to the United States (trans-Mexican migration) or to the Soconusco region in Chiapas (local migration), where the migrants are employed in the commerce, domestic, agriculture, construction, sex/bar or service sectors. I also consider those who are not engaged in any sector: those with no paid employment.

### **Methodology**

As it was pointed out, Stones also recognises that structuration is unable to look at very large historical periods if it really aims to look at structures and hermeneutics in-situ. Then, a social phenomenon must be analysed in a specific time and space.

Therefore, I narrowed the analysis to look only at the process of migrating itself; from the moment the migrants decide to leave their communities to the moment they find themselves in the Soconusco region in Chiapas. The study was carried out between 2002 and 2003 and therefore, the multilayered structures considered are the ones operating during this particular time.

Taking into account the above requirements, together with the resources I had available in terms of time and funding, I applied the qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews and also the participant observation method.

### **The Soconusco: place for heterogeneous migratory trajectories**

The following scale presents this contradictory condition in which structures are tolerant to local migration (influencing stable migratory trajectories) while restrictive

to trans-Mexican migration (influencing unstable trajectories). It shows how the level of stability of a migratory trajectory is directly related to the aimed destination: how in the local trajectories where structures are tolerant, migrants do not need to mobilise an important amount of agentic resources to fulfil their aim – structures are set for their success; different from trans-Mexican trajectories where migrants need a greater mobilisation of agentic resources to be able to cope with structural obstacles. In other words, while in local trajectories the movement of the migrant (the agent) is predictable and stable, in trans-Mexican trajectories the migrant's movement is unpredictable and unstable since he/she needs to respond to restrictive structures – migrants will require enough motivation, expertise and support from their social network to succeed in their migratory aim.

At the same time, the scale shows the intersection between local and trans-Mexican trajectories with occupational groups (with sectors where migrants are employed). That is to say, it shows how whilst some of these migratory groups are embedded in a structure allowing only local or trans-Mexican trajectories, other groups are set in sectors with structures welcoming local, as well as trans-Mexican migrants.

Occupational groups / trajectoires' destination intersections					
Commerce sector		Tolerant structure + Lower mobilisation of agentic resources	= predictable / stable movement	Local trajectories	<b>Destination: Soconusco region</b>
Domestic sector		Mainly local trajectories			
Agriculture sector		Mainly local trajectories			
Construction sector		Local and trans-Mexican trajectories			
Sex/bar sector		Local and trans-Mexican trajectories			
Service sector		Mainly trans-Mexican trajectories			
Not engaged in any sector – no paid employment	Restrictive structure + Greater mobilisation of agentic resources	= unpredictable / unstable movement	Trans-Mexican trajectories	<b>Destination: United States</b>	

Occupation is by no means the only factor shaping the trajectories, but it does give a clear idea about the characteristics of the movements and the migrants' aims and experiences during their migratory trajectory (from the moment the decision to migrate is taken, to the moment the migrant finds her/himself in the Soconusco region). In this way, at one end of the scale is the commerce sector, which requires local movements and holds the most stable and predictable trajectories (the majority of commerce workers can commute to sell their products with no barriers to such

movement). At the other end of the scale can be found trans-Mexican trajectories, with migrants whose only aim is to migrate to the United States and who will not engage in any paid work in the region (in any sector). Here the structure is highly adverse to the success of migrants' movement and is therefore the most unpredictable migratory trajectory. Between these two extremes, the cases of the domestic, agricultural, construction, sex/bar and service sectors go from mainly predictable and local structures, to structures which are mainly trans-Mexican, with for the most part unpredictable movement. At the middle point of the scale is the construction sector which presents a structure that allows the presence of local trajectories with reasonably predictable movements but which at the same time is flexible enough to allow the presence of transmigrants working in this sector as a survival strategy in their continued journey to the United States.

### **Shaping migratory trajectories in the Soconusco**

As a result of the structure-agency dynamic interaction, migratory trajectories divert in different directions. Disparity of opportunities, barriers, and in relation to these, decisions, motivations and needs, are elements drawing a wide range of migratory trajectories from the moment a decision to migrate is taken, to the moment the migrant is in the Soconusco region in Chiapas having to attend to urgent present circumstances and to project a plan to continue.

In the following chart, I identify the main factors shaping migratory trajectories. The different variables shown in each box represent the different set of options that migrants have within their migratory history according to opportunities and barriers that structures present to them ('because of' motives) and according to the

motivations and dreams ('in order to' motives) they have and as a consequence, the decisions they take. Through the understanding of these factors, it will be easier to understand the characteristics of migratory trajectories in terms of destination, level of stability, structures involved and agency:

<b>Set of factors shaping migratory trajectories</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Permanent - settled</li> <li>b. Temporal – unsettled</li> <li>c. Not sure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Planned – clear outcome</li> <li>b. Semi planned</li> <li>c. Not planned –unclear outcome</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Direct trajectory</li> <li>b. Interrupted trajectory               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stopped- change original plans</li> <li>Continue- keep original plans</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Aborted trajectory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Experience of migratory journey and destination</li> <li>b. New migrant: Never have migrated before</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Recurrent trajectory</li> <li>b. Periodic trajectory               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determined period</li> <li>Undetermined period</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Commuting - daily crossing trajectory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Gender specific employment</li> <li>b. Non gender specific employment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Same aim always</li> <li>b. Not same always</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Documented activity</li> <li>b. Undocumented activity</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Predictable success</li> <li>b. Less predictable success</li> <li>c. Unpredictable success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Documented presence</li> <li>b. Undocumented presence</li> </ul>

As was shown before, structures create a demand for migrant labour force in specific sectors. Based on this demand, a migrant could engage in one of the sectors such as commerce, domestic, agriculture, construction, sex/bar or service, or could be

engaged in no paid employment during her/his time in the region. Each sector provides different conditions according for example to legal status, gender or nationality. Based on this, there can be found *gender specific* sectors (domestic), or sectors demanding *both genders* (agriculture); a demand *for documented migrants* (again, the agriculture sector), but also a *demand for undocumented migrants* (the sex/bar sector).

Migratory trajectories can also be different according to destination and stability: Some migrants may see Chiapas as their final destination (*local trajectories*), while others are there as part of their journey to another place (*trans-Mexican trajectories*). Some are established – *permanently-settled* – in Chiapas, while others are staying there on a *temporary* basis – *unsettled*. There are even cases when the migrants are *not sure* whether their stay in the region will be temporary or will become permanent.

Migratory trajectories can be *direct*, *interrupted* or *aborted*. It can be a *direct* trajectory when the migrant is able to fulfil an original plan with no interruptions. It can also be *interrupted* when those crossing the border are not able to reach a specific destination at once; in this case he/she would probably need to modify the original plans, staying in the region temporarily, to continue after a certain period of time to fulfil his/her original plan or to stay in the region permanently, thus changing the original plan. The migrant may also decide to go back and leave the idea of migration behind. In this case it is an *aborted* trajectory.

It may be a *recurrent*, periodic or *commuting* movement. When a migrant is unable to fulfil his/her plan of migration the first time she/he leaves hometown and need

to undertake further attempts – in this case the trajectory can be called *recurrent*. Additionally, it is possible that this back and forth movement is not recurrent with the intention to reach a specific aim, but it is instead *periodic*: This periodic movement may be for *specific lengths* of time, for a relatively long period (a month and a half or so) in the case of agricultural work or may also be a daily crossing, as with commerce work (*commuting*). There are also trajectories with *unequal periods* of movements, the cases of domestic or sex work being prime examples.

Migrants may always retain the *same aim* and have the same destination in mind every time they cross the border, but this is not always the case. Even on a periodic or a daily crossing movement, it would be impossible to affirm that the migrants' aims and the shape of the migratory trajectory would never vary. The circumstances within the migratory path may change objectives over time, which brings into account a trajectory which *does not always have the same aim*.

In relation to this, it is important to take into account the *clarity of outcomes* or *planning* factor. When the migrant is certain about his/her destination and the outcome of his/her migration project, the trajectory can be considered as *planned* (e.g. the case of agriculture workers). It is *semi-planned* when the journey has some preparation involved but uncertainty is still present – indeed, even when they have probably sketched their trajectory, unexpected elements (structural barriers) on the way might still play a role. The trajectory is *not planned – unclear outcome* – when a migrant crossing the border does not have a clear idea and knowledge of what his/her journey will entail and what the outcome will be. In relation to the degree of planning, another factor comes into play: the migrant's experience. A migrant may or may not

have *experience of the destination and the migratory journey* and this will also shape his/her trajectory. The longer his/her migratory experiences, the more experience he/she has, which is also related to the accumulation of social capital and therefore, the possibility of agents to overcome barriers and to take advantage of loopholes left within structures.

*Legal status* is also a factor to take into account. The first option is *documented activity and presence*. This appears mainly in local trajectories and means that the migrant holds a local FMVA pass - (Forma Migratoria de Visitantes Agrícolas/ Agriculture Visitors Migratory Form) or an FM3<sup>4</sup> enabling him/her to live and work in the region. This is the case with agricultural workers with an official contract, commerce workers with established stalls in a market or any other migrant from Guatemala, Honduras or El Salvador, who has acquired an FM3: a migrant with one of these statuses is *fully documented* in Chiapas. The second option would be a *documented activity with an undocumented presence*, but this could prove difficult to find since in order to engage in a regulated activity it is necessary to obtain a specific document, which enables a legal presence at the same time. However, the third option - *an undocumented activity with a documented presence* is possible and can be understood through the cases of those Guatemalans crossing with a local pass but engaging in unregulated activities such as commerce workers on the streets, service, domestic and even sex workers. It is also understood through the cases of agricultural workers holding an FMVA but working as ‘volunteers’ on a plantation (that is,

---

<sup>4</sup> A local pass is a document that enables Guatemalans to cross the border legally with a limit of time and space: no more than 72 hours in communities close to the border (Castillo in CONAPO, 2000). The FM3 entitles them to legal status and to work in Mexican territory and is not for Guatemalans exclusively. The FMVA is a one-year work permit institutionalised in 1998. Through it Guatemalans are able to work officially in Soconusco’s plantations (Ángeles in CONAPO, 2000d; Castillo in CONAPO, 2000; Rojas and Robledo, 2001).

without using the FMVA and dealing directly with the plantation's owner). The last possibility is when both *presence and activity are undocumented*: this is the case with Hondurans or Salvadorians with no documents to stay and work in the region and with no FM3 (local passes and FMVA are only for Guatemalans), or with transmigrants (including Guatemalans who have stayed beyond the allowed period) who *engage in no paid activity with undocumented presence*<sup>5</sup>.

Finally, sending and receiving structures are favourable to some trajectories leading to *predictable success* on the migration aim, whereas they are unfavourable to others, leading to *less predictable or unpredictable* success on fulfilling the original goal.

### **Mapping migratory trajectories according to occupation in the Soconusco region**

As I have argued previously, grouping according to occupation is a useful device in exploring the variations in migratory experiences and an easier and more organised way in which to understand the origin, gender and legal status of migrants. The occupational status of a migrant in the southern region of Chiapas is a guide to understanding his/her migratory experience and suggests his/her relation with the region itself. Occupation in the Soconusco and border area is directly related with the shape of the migratory trajectory and migration strategies (whether a certain occupation is seen as a survival strategy in itself or a strategy to prepare for further migration to the United States).

---

<sup>5</sup> During 2000 and 2001 the INM implemented a regularisation programme to promote the acquisition of FM3. However, it was not fully successful because of a lack of information about procedures from the migrants' side and even from the civil servants, complicated and unclear procedures, high costs, discretionary decisions to accept applications for FM3, lack of knowledge about the value of having documents (many migrants did not see any value in acquiring it), and also lack of confidence to approach the INM, fear of deportation in the event that their cases are denied (CDHFMC, 2002).

In this section, I will present a brief background for migrants engaged in different occupational groups and also, it will be possible to explore in context and in a more detailed way, the variables involved in shaping the different migratory trajectories: from the purely local, to those of a purely trans-Mexican nature.

### Commerce workers

#### *Background; origin, gender, legal status*

The incapacity of formal local and mezzos structures and the long tradition of commerce-exchange between both sides of the border, form the basis for informal commerce in Tapachula (the main city in the Soconusco) and border towns, a sector predominantly worked by Guatemalans (Arriola, 1995). Commerce exchange between people in the border towns is part of the economic life of the region (Hernández & Sandoval, 1989). This commercial and cultural exchange within the border area is mainly between the Guatemalan counties ('departamentos' - departments) of San Marcos and Huehuetengango (Castillo, 1996). It could be said that because of their geographical proximity, and the historical, ethnic, and family links between people from both sides of the border, the commerce between these towns and the Guatemalan agricultural work in Soconusco's plantations are the longest lasting migratory movements from Guatemala to the Soconusco (Castillo, 1994; Casillas in Bovin, 1997; Casillas in CONAPO, 1992; CDHFMC, 2001).

It is normal to commute from Guatemalan border towns to sell products in southern Chiapas on a daily basis. Because of this day by day commuting, people with the ability to engage in this activity come only from border towns and not from other areas of San Marcos Department in Guatemala as is the case with domestic and

agricultural workers – three typical economic activities for Guatemalan migrants. Indeed, this migration or daily commuting and its continuation over time, relies heavily on the geographical proximity of place of work and homeland. The majority of commerce workers sell their products on the streets, but there is also a small number able to sell on established stalls in the ‘Tianguis de Tapachula’ (Tapachula Market), in the San Sebastian Escobar market or in the San Juan Market; both also located in Tapachula<sup>6</sup> (Arriola 1995).

Commerce workers can be women and men, travelling by themselves, in families or in groups of neighbours or relatives. For instance, groups of women can be found commuting together from their hometown to a Chiapan town (Tapachula, Ciudad Hidalgo, Unión Juárez) and once there, trading their products on their own, joining the group at the end of the day to return to Guatemala. It is also common for couples or the whole family to travel together, in which case, on many occasions the men take on a subordinate role in the business, carrying the products and taking care of the women, who are the ones in charge, taking the lead in any business dealings.

The presence of commerce workers in the region is officially allowed with the use of a local pass, but their activity itself is not always regulated (Castillo, 1994; Nolasco, 1995). Every Guatemalan is entitled to an official local pass, which allows them to stay in Chiapas, but does not regulate their activity. It is officially permitted for people with established stalls in markets to sell, but for those who sell their products on the streets it is not. Indeed, it is common for them to suffer harassment from local police asking for money as a ‘fee’ to obtain the right to sell, putting them off the

---

<sup>6</sup> Those working in markets or close to the markets are known as ‘canasteras’ because of their peculiar practice of using large baskets (canastas), which they carry on top of their heads.

streets, or even taking their products away. Nevertheless, the daily commuting practice of selling products with no legal regulation is a non-official permitted practice and it has been so for decades. Both regions have become accustomed to this and it would be unlikely for them (Guatemalan commerce workers and Chiapan consumers) to modify the basis on which the system operates: it is an integral part of the economic dynamic of the region.

#### *Migratory trajectories' shape*

Migratory trajectories related to this sector are in general terms a daily crossing – temporary movement, on a direct journey. The journey is repeated and learnt from family members, relatives and members of their community. The movement is a stable and predictable local trajectory, which means that its permissible structure allows the stability of going to a specific destination with a specific objective: to travel to border towns or to Tapachula to sell their products.

The proximity to their final destination and the permissibility of their crossing with the use of a local pass facilitates the viability of keeping to an original plan: to go to Chiapas to sell products and return the same day to Guatemala. The only foreseeable barriers they may encounter are potential confrontation with local police, inability to sell sufficient products to cover travelling expenses or the eventuality of enforced modification of the original plan (probably a decision to stay in Chiapas or on the contrary, to stay in Guatemala and cease to commute).

In the majority of cases, this group does not wish to establish itself in Tapachula or any other town in the region. Their life – family, friends, house, and land – is in

Guatemala, and Chiapas serves only as their place of work. However, it is also important to point out that there are some migrants who have decided to settle in a border town or in Tapachula and are engaged in the commerce sector, but these migrants usually began working in another sector (such as the domestic one) deciding afterwards to change to commerce, thereby allowing them more flexibility and independence.

### Domestic workers

#### *Background: origin, gender, legal status*

Domestic workers, as in the cases of agriculture and commerce, are predominantly Guatemalans from rural or semi-rural communities in the north of Guatemala.

According to a survey conducted by the CDHFMC in 1998 and 1999, the majority of domestic workers are women from Guatemala who started working in this sector at an early age – more than half of the 60 participants of this survey, started close to the age of 15. The majority come from the department of San Marcos while others originate from the border boroughs of Malacatán and San José Ojetenam (CDHFMC, 2002; Vázquez, 2001; Ángeles, 2000b).

Domestic workers are closely related to agricultural workers. They have members of their family who work or have worked in Chiapan plantations and also, they have themselves migrated with their families to work in plantations during childhood. However, unlike agricultural work, the domestic sector has no regulation or legal protection. Even with the long tradition of Guatemalans working as domestics in the urban areas of Chiapas, and the necessity of this kind of work, authorities have not created a specific program suitable for their kind of work and migratory movement.

Even when they can cross the border with a local pass (as any other Guatemalan), they must work and live without any legal protection or regulations unless they apply for an FM3 (to work and live documented in Mexico). On the one hand, the local pass is valid for an extremely limited period of time, which is not suitable for domestic work, while on the other hand, an FM3 document does not meet their needs: work in the domestic sector is not static because domestics usually change work from one household to another, and in the midterm, they return for irregular periods of time to Guatemala. The FM3 is a document that must be renewed annually, requiring one permanent job during this period of time; a difficult condition for the domestic workers to fulfil. This, together with the high cost in terms of time and money, are the reasons why most domestic workers do not find it relevant to apply for an FM3 document (CDHFMC, 2002).

#### *Intention and trajectories*

A migratory trajectory related to the domestic sector is developed within a permissible structure, which allows predictability and stability. This is because in the majority of these cases Chiapas is their destination. Their original plan is normally to work there as domestics because of the proximity to their hometowns in the north of Guatemala. However, the original planned destination can be different in some cases: another location in Mexico (normally in Mexico City) or even the United States of America. This means that a trajectory of this kind could become slightly unstable and unpredictable, with a local destination (and it also would require a greater mobilization of agentic resources; the migrant would need a greater use of his/her resources available).

Domestic workers' permanence in Mexico is not as fixed in terms of time and space, as having a specific contract as in the case of many agricultural workers. Their period of time in a specific employment and in Chiapas itself, varies and responds to different personal circumstances. It could be possible that they decide to return for holidays; at the request of the head of their household; because the employment did not fulfil their expectations; or simply because they succumb to the effects of homesickness. After a period at home, they may move to Chiapas again, trying to find a new job or going back to what they did previously.

The migratory trajectory of a domestic worker is normally temporary and periodic, with the possibility of assuming permanency. The longer a Guatemalan woman has been working in Chiapas, the more likely she is to be integrated therein, and to desire to stay permanently –only returning to her hometown for a very brief period. The less experienced she is in the field, the stronger the idea is of an eventual return.

Additionally, in general terms, trajectories here are normally a planned or a semi-planned migration in the sense that domestic workers leave their hometown with a clear idea of their objective and how they will achieve it. But it is also true that the level of success in finding satisfactory employment is also related to their personal experience and the social capital their social networks possess.

Finally, it could be said that it is a direct trajectory in the sense that their journey to (primarily) Tapachula has no important interruptions or difficulties: it is essentially a permissible structure. Their trip – which may only last a few hours – does not represent a substantial risk or degree of uncertainty: in this sense, they would not need

a great mobilisation of agentic resources. Therefore, most of the time it is viable to fulfil their original plans: to work as domestics in Chiapas. Only in those cases when they are unable to find a satisfactory job, can the trajectory be considered as interrupted.

### Agricultural workers

#### *Background: origin, gender, legal status*

The Guatemalan agricultural labour force is an aged phenomenon and considering its characteristics in terms of low wages and specialisation, is highly sought after in the Soconusco. At the same time, considering that the Guatemalan agricultural crisis does not appear to have a prompt solution, movement of Guatemalan agricultural workers to Chiapas shows no sign of a cessation (Castillo, 1992; 1993; 1994; Ordóñez, 1993; Hernández & Sandoval, 1989). Indeed, as the Guatemalan Minister of Labour and Social and Welfare and the International Organisation for Migration pointed out (Ministerio del Trabajo y Previsión Social de Guatemala & OIM, 2002), during the years of 2001 and 2002, Guatemalan coffee plantations reduced their production by more than 60%, causing the redundancy of around 300,000 workers in the agriculture sector.

Guatemalans from indigenous communities constitute the majority working in plantations with or without a contract (CDHFMC, 2002). It is also possible to find migrants from other countries working in the Soconusco region in Chiapas, but out of the programme for Guatemalan agricultural workers, with no regulation, official contract or legal status. The principal Guatemalan regions sending to Chiapas are those bordering Chiapas: the departments of San Marcos –60.9%–, the department of

Quetzaltenango –13.7%– and the department of Retalhuleu –6.3%– (Ángeles, in CONAPO, 2000:14). These are the more populated areas and contain a proportionately larger rural population; agricultural workers from these areas are experienced in the coffee plantation's work because they have worked here since childhood. They are also highly sought after by plantations because they are considered a cheap, obedient labour force. This substantial and inexpensive labour force fits into the export agriculture sector in Chiapas (Ordóñez, in CONAPO, 1992; 1993).

Guatemalan agricultural workers migrate in groups. These groups can be of mixed gender or can be all-male groups of neighbours, friends, relatives or families (families are usually couples with children who help their parents and have learnt the skill at an early age). Agriculture is an activity suitable for men and women alike. Both are hired by plantations and ranches in the Soconusco region in Chiapas, but even when women and men are hired, there are some differences in the way they migrate: Male Guatemalan workers can travel with friends, relatives or their families, or they can travel alone; but female workers are always to be found in groups. Women migrate either accompanied by their husbands or by relatives but never by themselves. There are also differences once in the plantation in terms of types of activity undertaken: apart from agricultural work itself, it is possible for women to engage in duties such as packing, cooking and serving food, all of which are considered female activities.

The majority of migrants in this group are documented, their status is legally recognised in Mexico and their activity is regulated by the FMVA. This one-year work permit was institutionalised in 1998 and through it Guatemalans are able to

work officially in Soconusco's plantations (Ángeles in CONAPO, 2000; Castillo in CONAPO, 2000; Rojas & Robledo, 2001). Agricultural workers are contracted in specific places, times and days in the Guatemalan border towns of Tecún Umán (bordering Ciudad Hidalgo, Chiapas) and El Carmen (bordering Talismán, Chiapas)<sup>7</sup>.

Entitlement to these contracts presupposes that the applicant is Guatemalan and is in possession of an FMVA. These are the cases when their migration and activity is regulated. However, there are also cases when the migrant decides to cross the border through the Suchiate River without any regulation; arriving unaccompanied at plantations. It is also possible to find cases when agriculture workers who had obtained an official contract, have changed location or have simply decided to stay longer in the same place, in which case they lose the protection a contract brings and the documented status of their stay in Mexico is compromised. Even though in doing so migrants may face the prospect of losing their FMVA, it is not a rare practice. This status of informal contracts is known in the region as 'working as a volunteer' ('voluntarios').

### *Intention and trajectories*

The structure for this movement of agricultural workers is permissible. Their migratory trajectory could be considered as a slightly predictable and stable structure, mainly local – with a lesser need to mobilise agentic resources. It is primarily local because the majority of migrants that engaged in agricultural work in Chiapas intended to work in plantations in Chiapas: the Soconusco is their final destination. Nevertheless, it could be considered slightly unstable and unpredictable in the sense

---

<sup>7</sup> [www.sre.gob.mx/cilasur/guatcruces.htm](http://www.sre.gob.mx/cilasur/guatcruces.htm)

that there are also some cases (more than with the commerce or domestic sectors) when their final destination is not Chiapas. Therefore, even when this movement is within a permissible structure, I did not place the agricultural sector in the upper pole of the scale previously shown in this chapter.

Most of the migrants in this sector migrate periodically: they can either stay according to the contract – one month, 45 days– or when they work as ‘volunteers’, they may stay longer. Most of the time, they are able to fulfil their original plan, which is to work in a plantation and to return home after the work is finished. Regulated or not, this movement from Guatemala (mainly from San Marcos Department) does not represent many risks or barriers to the eventual completion of their original plan of migration: therefore it is a ‘direct’ trajectory. But when work on a Chiapan plantation is used as a bridge or a first step to go further, the migratory trajectory is an interrupted one because their stop to work on a plantation represents only part of their journey to the United States. In this case, the trajectory could become recurrent rather than periodic. When a migrant decides to stop working on plantations in Chiapas or can no longer obtain contracts, the migratory trajectory may become aborted.

As can be seen, migrants who have at some point been engaged in agriculture work in the Soconusco region normally possess a highly predictable and stable movement, which is normally planned. But it could also be considered as semi-planned as in the cases of working with no contract on a plantation or, when work on a plantation is a step on the journey. Moreover, it may at first be planned but could turn into a semi-planned trajectory when after being hired through an official contract; the migrant changes to another plantation by their own free will – this time with no contract.

### Construction workers

*Background: origin, gender, legal status*

Different from the agriculture, domestic or bar sectors, the construction sector is not dominated by migrants; work in this sector is shared by Mexicans and immigrants – normally from Guatemala, but also from Honduras or El Salvador (Arriola, 1995).

Construction workers can be divided into two different groups. Constituting the first division are the Guatemalans who decide to work in the construction sector in Chiapas after being unable to acquire a contract in Guatemala in either the agriculture or construction sectors. It is also possible to find cases of those who had previously worked on plantations in the Soconusco: they had probably been agricultural workers in the past, either in Chiapas or in Guatemala, and had subsequently learnt this new occupation, allowing them more freedom of movement and better salaries than a contract in agriculture would permit. This group of construction workers usually has families and friends working in the domestic, agriculture or commerce sector (who are also local migration or ‘border residents’ as Castillo suggested (1994)).

The second group are the migrants intending to go further, working in construction as a temporary survival strategy. It may be Guatemalans, Salvadorians or Hondurans staying in the region to save money and probably to apply for an FM3 form. They had more than likely migrated knowing about the possibility of working in construction for a certain period in order to facilitate the future continuation of the migratory process, or after facing difficulties and meeting people in the sector, they had decided to work for a while.

The employment in this sector is normally not regulated. The contracts are informal in the sense that they are based on a 'spoken agreement' between the one in charge of the construction (normally a Mexican) and the worker. Terms and conditions in the contract (salary, whether it includes accommodation and meals) are agreed verbally. This informality of the contract allows undocumented migrants to have employment (flexibility in the structure), but at the same time, this condition exposes them to unfair agreements which represents a disadvantage in comparison to Mexican workers.

Construction work can be defined as a male activity. As opposed to commerce, service and agriculture where both genders are involved, or from the sex and domestic sectors which are considered predominantly female domains, construction is an employment opportunity for male workers.

### *Intention and trajectories*

The case of construction workers is exactly in the middle of the scale: there is one group of Guatemalans with a local trajectory and another one with an intended trans-Mexican trajectory. The first group presents a trajectory that moves within a permissible structure with a fairly predictable migratory trajectory. It is usually a direct and periodic trajectory because workers travel to Chiapas and stay there until the end of the contract, repeating the process periodically. Nevertheless, it could also be possible that those Guatemalan construction workers with a planned, direct and periodic trajectory decide to try another destination or simply face the situation of not finding a contract. Then, the trajectories of those changing an original plan and trying

to go further, and even intending to cross the border with the United States, are still temporary but could become semi-planned and interrupted trajectories. In the cases of failure (when they can't find a contract), an aborted trajectory could be the result or the trajectory may remain temporary and periodic – attempting to obtain a contract at another point in time. It is nothing extraordinary that those who were periodic construction workers but at some point intended to go further, return to their periodic habit of migrating as construction workers.

The second group, represented by those who were originally transmigrants (trans-Mexican trajectories), has to face a restrictive structure blocking its movement northwards. This condition will require from them a higher mobilisation of agentic resources in order to achieve their intend destination (the United States). It is an unpredictable movement because even when it is originally a temporary migration, it could become permanent after facing the impossibility of moving further, having to stay longer until eventually they 'get used to' the Soconusco, finding in construction work a way to survive. They could even become periodic construction workers or acquire an FM3 – hence, from being a temporary migration could turn into permanent. Furthermore, there may be the case of maintaining the idea of a temporary stay, but extending this stay more and more, or simply the case of going back, moving from an interrupted journey to an aborted one.

### Sex and bar workers

*Background: origin, gender, legal status*

Migrants working in this sector are mainly women from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador who started working in bars at an early age; in some cases since the age of 14 (Vázquez, 2001). They work mainly in bars located in the border towns.

As it is in the domestic sector, employment in a bar as a sex worker is normally an option for female migrants. However, it could be said that both groups of women come from a different family situation. While women in the domestic sector come mostly from rural families, women engaged in sex work may also be very young, but come from more urbanised environments, many of them having faced intra-family violence – usually with a former partner – and also having children.

The status of sex workers is normally undocumented: they live and work with no official authorisation. They are not under any formal contract; this provides them with a certain freedom to move from one bar to another (only in those cases where they are not in debt to the owner) but at the same time, being outside of any official regulations places them in a vulnerable position: they have to cope with bad work conditions, and abuse from authorities and their employers. Additionally, even in those cases in which they decide to stay in the region, the possibility of applying for an FM3 would be unlikely and in any case, in the hypothetical possibility of acquiring one, their marginalised condition would not change.

However, ironically, even when their job lacks any legal protection, they have no documented residence and their contract is informal and unregulated, it is compulsory for them to have an HIV blood test every Saturday in the local health centre. These health centres have a list of women working in each bar, lists which the owner is

obliged to present. If for any reason they are unable to attend, the workers are fined – which also means that local authorities are aware of their presence and where they work.

### *Intention and trajectories*

This migratory movement is within a tolerant structure when it comes to local trajectories, that is, when migrants remain in the region to work. But when the migrants' intention is to cross Mexico to migrate to the United States, the trajectory is built within restrictive structures and becomes unpredictable. Some are certain of what their migration will look like, while others have no clear idea of what will really happen to them after crossing the border. Their migratory trajectory then, may be planned – in the first case – or semi-planned or completely unplanned as in the second case.

Their permanence in the region may be temporary, permanent or hold a degree of uncertainty over whether they should stay permanently or temporarily. But it is common to find women involved in this sector who would never consider their permanence in the region working in that sector as a permanent activity. Most of them wish to go further or to eventually return to their countries. Those willing to move further could probably work for a while and continue the journey after a certain time. Those willing only to work there and then to return could migrate periodically, going back and forth to visit their family (often, children left back home) and then return to Chiapas. They may also decide to return to their countries permanently, or to stay in Chiapas on a permanent basis. It is also possible to find those who join a partner,

staying in the region permanently (or for a longer period) but not working in bars during this time.

### Service workers

*Background: origin, gender, legal status*

As with the construction sector, both local people and migrants are usually employed in this sector. The activity in the service sector could also be considered as domestic in the sense that caring, cleaning, and cooking are more than likely to be involved. But it is different in the sense that domestic work is a very well-rooted migratory dynamic between Guatemala and Chiapas, which is not the case in the service sector. Workers in the service sector can also be Salvadorians and Hondurans whose original plans were not to stay and work in the region. Their migratory experience responds and operates differently and the activity they are engaged in is not restricted to the household boundaries as it is with the domestic sector.

Service workers were probably transmigrants who were neither well-oriented nor well-supported, who find themselves with no other option other than finding employment there. The service sector is also different from the domestic sector because it is not genderised, and is not dominated by one single nationality. In this ‘miscellaneous’ type of work, it is possible to find women and men who hail from Honduras, El Salvador or Guatemala (and from other countries, but on a smaller scale).

The status of service workers is normally undocumented; they do not have legal residence and employment. However, their peculiarity perhaps lies in their aim to

obtain an FM3 through employment. They commonly try to find a place with an employer pleased to help in an FM3 application process, giving them the necessary documents and recommendation letters. Indeed, it is not difficult to see that for them, the FM3 document is a way in which to move freely through Mexico up to the Northern border – an official document able to validate their permanence in Mexico. Whatever the reasons for applying for an FM3, with this document, an informal employment gains the possibility of becoming formal, once the FM3 is approved.

### *Intention and trajectories*

The service sector is similar to the bar/sex and construction sectors in that many transmigrants could use this kind of employment as a survival strategy. That is to say, migrants who want or wanted to get into the United States may work in the region in this sector – for example, as waitresses, babysitters or kitchen staff – as some others do in bars or in the construction sector. It can be affirmed that most migrants working in this sector wanted or still want to achieve another destination but have had to interrupt their journey northwards, staying in the region to work. Since trans-Mexican trajectories are built within restrictive structures, the migrants had to modify their plans and stay in the Soconusco where structures are more tolerant to work and live without documents.

A trajectory in this case is primarily trans-Mexican because migrants' motivations and original plans are to traverse Mexico and the northern border. However, it is unpredictable and flexible because these migrants could not really calculate whether they would be able to reach their original destination, stay in the region or return to their community. Perhaps they may need to stay, permanently or not as the case may

be. This is why trajectories related to the service sector are normally interrupted and sometimes even aborted. It could be that this is a temporary survival strategy for transmigrants, a new option for former transmigrants willing to establish themselves in the region or, simply a temporary survival strategy for those who intended to continue but decided to return to their home town after a while – and perhaps have decided to migrate periodically. Then it could result in a recurrent, a periodic or a failed trajectory.

Finally, it can be seen that their journey is normally not planned and since it is unpredictable and flexible, it requires a greater mobilisation of agentic resources. They could have a sketch of how their migration will be – probably knowing the necessity of staying for a period in the region, and what they will be required to face along the journey – but it is difficult to find migrants in this sector with a very well-defined plan, with the necessary knowledge and support from their social networks; and this is actually the reason why they must change their original plans.

### Transmigrants

*Background: origin, gender, legal status*

As it has been pointed out, migration from peripheral countries in Central America – using Mexico as transitory territory on the way to the core of the system (mainly the United States) – is known as transmigration: trans-Mexican migration. The main sources of trans-Mexican migration are the Central American countries of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. Because of their proximity to the Guatemalan-Chiapán border, nationals from these countries normally use this specific point of the border on their journey to the United States (Castillo, 1994; 1997).

This movement from Central America to the United States is indeed the primary aim of many of those crossing the southern border, whether or not they are working in the different sectors in the Soconusco region. This migration acquires many shapes which makes it impossible to put all transmigrants into one neat bundle as it were: after leaving their homeland their plans may change in different ways, taking them on different paths, resulting in different shapes for their migratory trajectories. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, I consider as pure transmigrants those who are willing to enter the United States to live and work, but who are never engaged in any paid activity in Mexico in the interim.

Trans-Mexican migration, as opposed to local migration, is highly persecuted and restricted. Indeed, it is almost impossible for a poor migrant from Central America to acquire a visa to enter the United States, which forces him/her to migrate undocumented using informal resources like social networks of friends and relatives and access to migrants' smuggling business (micro structures). However, being undocumented puts them in a highly vulnerable position, where they have to face risks along the way and abuse from coyotes (migrants' smugglers), authorities, gangs and sometimes even the local people (Soto, Vázquez, Esparcia, 2001). Moving through Central America and crossing the Mexican border is relatively simple but there are many obstacles to be overcome after the crossing, while in Mexican territory.

Additionally, transmigration is normally thought of as being a typically male process, but there is also an important number of women leaving their country and trying to

gain access to the United States. As will be shown in chapter 5, macro structures are equally restrictive to both genders, but structures in lower levels can divert their fates putting in place dissimilar barriers and opportunities for male and female migrants.

### *Intention and trajectories*

It is true that transmigrants can gradually travel northwards – working temporarily at several points en route –, they can stay indefinitely in the region, or even after working for a period, decide to go back to their hometowns. A transmigrant may be transitory but become permanent or temporary whilst retaining the idea of migrating to the United States or simply aborting the motion. Here, many other migrants working in different sectors should be included.

However, following the criteria of pure transmigration as ‘not being engaged in any paid employment’ in Mexico, the migratory trajectory of this group moves in a restrictive structure and therefore it requires a greater mobilisation of agentic resources and its movement is unpredictable and flexible. Nevertheless, with those crossing with the aim of going to the United States, it is possible to find a range of possibilities: Those who manage to travel in a direct journey, crossing the northern border the first time, those being deported several times but who continue to try different routes and means of transportation, or those on an interrupted and recurrent trajectory (this recurrent process could actually turn into a lifestyle without the migrant really engaging in any paid employment and without moving further), and those who abort the project returning to their place of origin.

## Concluding

Whether a migrant transits through the Chiapas to migrate to the United States or to work in the border and Soconusco area ultimately, whether he/she is able to keep her/his original plan and whether he/she decides to do it, it is not an action divorced from the macro and micro context in which he/she is embedded. In other words, how, when, where and who migrates and the outcomes of such an action, will be influenced by the context where such migration takes place. And at the same time I argue that migration trajectories will be influenced by the way the migrant (agent) reacts to the circumstances he/she has to face during the process.

## References

- Ángeles, H. (2000). Características sociodemográficas de los trabajadores agrícolas guatemaltecos en el Soconusco, en CONAPO (ed.) *Migración internacional en la frontera sur de México*. Consejo Nacional de Población. México, año 4, no. 12.
- Ángeles, H. (2000b). *Las trabajadoras domésticas en la Ciudad de Tapachula. Análisis de los datos del cuestionario aplicado en los talleres de Santa Zita durante 1998 y 1999*. ECOSUR. Tapachula, Chiapas. Preliminar version.
- Arriola, A.(1995). *Tapachula, "la perla del Soconusco": ciudad estratégica para la redefinición de las fronteras*. FLACSO Guatemala.
- Casillas, R. (1992). La migración centroamericana de un desafío a la política exterior de Mexico, en CONAPO *Migración internacional en las fronteras Norte y Sur de México*. Consejo Nacional de Población. México.
- Castillo, M. (1992). Migraciones laborales en la Frontera Sur: ¿Un fenómeno en proceso de cambio? en Muñoz, H. (ed.) *Población y Sociedad en México*.

Mexico.

- Castillo, M. (1993). Contexto regional y migraciones a la frontera sur de México. *Secuencia, revista de historia y ciencias sociales*. Instituto Mora. México, no. 5, enero-abril,
- Castillo, M. (1994). A preliminary analysis of emigration determinants in Mexico, Central America, Northern South America and the Caribbean. *International Migration*, vol. XXXII, no. 2,
- Castillo, M. (1994). *Las migraciones en la frontera sur de México. Enfoques sobre población y desarrollo*. Gobierno del Estado de Tabasco. México.
- Castillo, M. (1996). Población y migración internacional en la frontera sur de México: evaluación y cambios. *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*. enero/marzo, México.
- Casillas, R. (1997). Redes sociales y migraciones centroamericanas en México, en Bovin, P. (ed.) *Las fronteras del istmo: fronteras y sociedades entre el sur de México y América Central*. CIESAS y Centro Francés de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos, México.
- Castillo, M. (1997). Las políticas migratorias de México y Guatemala en el contexto de la integración regional, en Bovin, P. (ed.) *Las fronteras del istmo: fronteras y sociedades entre el sur de México y América Central*. CIESAS y Centro Francés de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos, México.
- Castillo, M. (2000). Naturaleza histórica y operativa de la definición de frontera, en CONAPO (ed.) *Migración internacional en la frontera sur de México*. México, año 4, no. 12.
- CDHFMC (2001). *Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matias de Cordova A.C.* Tapachula, Chiapas. Mexico. Unpublished report.
- CDHFMC (2002). *Derechos Humanos de los Migrantes*. Documento presentado a Gabriela Rodríguez, relatora especial de la ONU, feb, 28. Unpublished report.
- Comisión Internacional de Límites y Aguas:  
<http://www.sre.gob.mx/cilasur/guatcrucos.htm>
- Hernández P. & Sandoval J. (1989). *El redescubrimiento de la Frontera Sur*. Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas & Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana. México.
- Massey, D., Arango, J., Hugo, G. (1998). *Worlds in Motion. Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*. Clarendon Press,

Oxford.

- Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social Guatemala C.A & Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (2002). *Estudio sobre la crisis de la caficultura y su efecto en el empleo en Guatemala*. Cuadernos de trabajo sobre migración. OIM. Guatemala.
- Morawska, E. (1989). *Labor Migrations of poles in the Atlantic world Economy, 1880-1914*. Comparative Studies in Society and History. Cambridge University Press.
- Nolasco, M. (1995). *Migración indígena a las fronteras*. Centro de Ecología y desarrollo. México.
- Ordóñez, C. (1992). Migraciones de trabajadores guatemaltecos y crecimiento económico en el Soconusco, Chiapas, en CONAPO (ed.) *Migración internacional en las fronteras Norte y Sur de México*. Consejo Nacional de Población. México.
- Ordóñez, C. (1993). *Eslabones de la Frontera*. UACH. México.
- Rojas, M. & Robledo, C. (2001). *Mujeres en la migración laboral internacional en la frontera sur de México. El caso de las trabajadoras agrícolas guatemaltecas*. Presentación para el Foro Internacional de Análisis sobre la Frontera Sur: Integración regional y migraciones. San Cristobal, Chiapas.
- Sassen S. (1979) Economic Growth and immigration in Venezuela. *International Migration Review*, vol. 13. no. 3: 455-474.
- Schutz, A. (1967) *The phenomenology of the social world*. Northwestern University Press. USA
- Schutz, A. (1967b). *Collected Papers I: The problem of social Reality*. M. Nijhoff. The Hague.
- Sewell, W. (1992). A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation. *The American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 98:1-29.
- Soto, A., Vázquez, I., Esparcia, M. (2001). *Libertad de tránsito*. Reporte del CDHFMC. Tapachula, Chiapas, México. Unpublished document
- Stones, R. (2005). *Structuration Theory*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vázquez, I. (2001). *Violaciones a los derechos humanos y laborales de los migrantes*

*en la región del Soconusco frontera sur.* Reporte del CDHFMC. Chiapas,  
Mexico. Unpublished document