

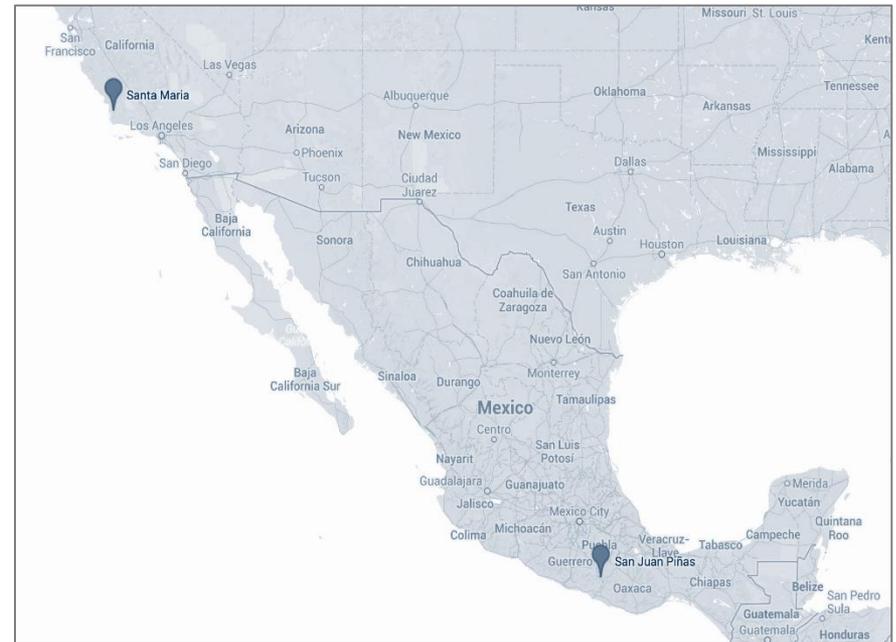
**‘The Roots are Here,
but the Work is There’ –
Indigenous Migration in an Era of
Neoliberal Globalisation.**

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- › Initial findings of PhD fieldwork.
- › Indigenous [Mixteco] migrants.
- › Part of ‘Social Transformation and International Migration’ (STIM) Project.
- › Qualitative focus.
- › Primary research in San Juan Piñas (Oaxaca) and Santa Maria (California).
- › Collaboration with the Binational Front of Indigenous Organisations (FIOB).



› STIM Project:

- Migration is one part of the process of transformation of structures and institutions, which arises through major changes in global political, economic and social relationships.

› PhD project:

- Situate Indigenous migration as part of a wider process of social transformation.
- Uncover the developmental potential of migration for Indigenous migrants given the conditions under which it currently takes place.



> Who is 'Indigenous'?

- Descend from the populations which inhabited the country before the [Spanish] colonization + maintain social, economic and political institutions + self-awareness.

> Mixteco migrants:

- National -> international (newcomers).
- Social, demographic and economic characteristics vs. 'mestizo' Mexicans.



› Transformations in socioeconomic system.

- Growth of cash economy:

'We need money. Without it we cannot buy the things we need... things like a stove or a fridge.'

- Liberalisation of agriculture:

'[A big problem is that] the price of coffee has gone down a lot. Before, you would get paid MX\$40 [per kg], now they pay only MX\$4.'

- Structural lack of employment:

'There is no money, nor jobs for anybody. And the jobs available are very badly paid!'

› Social reproduction – inherently linked to emigration.

'It is very complicated. The roots are here, but the work is there.'



Religious Change And Community Conflict

› Migration and religious change are intrinsically link in Indigenous communities.

- System of customary law requires fulfilment of religious [Catholic] tasks.
- Conversion led to community conflict and to eventual expulsion of converts.

‘A lot of [Evangelical Christian] families were expelled from Piñas. I think that they expelled 23 families at first, then 9 more, then 4 more. That is one of the reasons why many people no longer go back.’

› Social, political and economic impacts.



- › Increased restrictiveness of US policies.

'The first time [in 1994] it took us 6 hours to cross the line. We walked without a 'coyote'... The last time I went back [to Piñas] was on 2002. On my way back I had to walk for 3 nights and I had to pay US\$800 to a 'coyote'... But now it is different. One has to walk 5 nights or more and pay around US\$3,500 to cross.'

- › Transition towards permanent migration.
- › Vulnerability to deportations.
- › Lack of avenues for regularization.
 - E.g. DACA.
 - 'In the fields, you have no time to do anything. No time to study.'



- › Factors shape not only volume, but quality and developmental impact of migration.
- › Development impact of : contested and controversial.
- › ‘I do not have papers’.
 - Vulnerable to poor working conditions.
‘Without papers one cannot get any of the good jobs, without papers you cannot achieve anything.’
 - Fear of ‘la migra’ and deportations.
‘People have been detained and deported, and their families are left here... Sometimes one cannot go out because of ‘la migra’. You cannot go out freely.’
 - Emotional/economic cost of separation:
‘Even if they ask us to go back, we cannot do it. You are forced to choose between your children and your parents.’



Value (and Hopes) Placed in Children

- › ‘The hopes are in the children’,
 - Education and US citizenship as tools for social and economic mobility.
‘I am only here [in the US] for my children, so they can have an education and a good job. Maybe in an office, or as teachers. Not in the fields...’
‘They have papers. They are free to come and go. . When they are older, they could get a [driving] license or even have a pension. They will be able to support us too.’
- › Conundrum: ‘legacy’ of disadvantage.
‘Graduating from high school is a big achievement, attending college is a dream.’



› Factors shaping international migration:

- State policies (immigration, trade and agriculture) have an impact on the volume and shape of international migration -> low-skilled + irregular migration from Mexico's poorest regions.
- Other factors (religions conversions) have a significant impact too.
- Interconnection between changes at different geographical scales and the relationship between social, economic and political processes.
- Global change is experienced at the national and local levels.

› Role of development in migration processes:

- Developmental impact of migration is affected by variety of inter-related factors: gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background and immigration status.
- Need to look beyond the 'economic': complex, contextual and multi-dimensional.
- Richness of knowledge and experience of migrants and migrants relatives.

THE END

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STIM website:
http://sydney.edu.au/arts/transformation_migration/index.shtml

