

The Migration Process focused on the Child Sector in the State of Guanajuato, Mexico

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Abstract

The objective of this article is to analyze the socialization process of migration among the Mexican child population. We reflect on the context (social and economic) which circumscribes this sector of the population, and present statistics that show the number of boys and girls in the country, the number of children that have a role in migration between Mexico and the United States, the number of repatriates and their goals, issues, and participation in the workforce. We focus special attention on the child population in the state of Guanajuato, and we underline the need for social scientists to undertake studies, with an interdisciplinary approach, focusing on this vulnerable sector that participates in migration.

Keywords: Migration, socialization, boys, girls, Mexico

Socialization in the Migration Phenomenon

Berger and Luckman (1999) describe socialization “as the wide and coherent induction of an individual in the objective world of society or a sector of it” (p. 166). For this reason, socialization is considered to be an important component in the manifestations of lifestyles. Also, it refers to the time and space that people use in their interaction with others. It is important to emphasize that the analysis of the socialization of the child population in the migratory phenomenon implies visualizing sociocultural elements as structures that strengthen and give meaning to the action of displacement to other geographic latitudes. The macro-analytical determinisms do not necessarily respond to the complexity of assimilating and growing with volatile and unblemished values, which are subjective and intangible in migrant communities. According to Marc Bloch (2003), the description of the interdependencies of the components of human societies submerged in history is fundamental. He states that everything is mutually linked and dictated in any society, for example, “the political and social structure, economy, beliefs, and more elemental manifestations such as the more subtle of mentality” (Bloch, 2003, p.29-30). Therefore, life and history are multiple in their structures and in their causes. With this Bloch (2003) rejects a history that mutilates men and women as history is interested in the person as a whole, considering their body, their feelings, their mentality, and not only their ideas and actions. History is an effort to capture people in a society and at their time.

Similarly, human migrations, understood as a process and not as a chain of isolated facts, have been recognized as the essential analytical center in their study. Indeed, as Herrera (2006) suggests studying each factor involved in the migratory process individually is very useful because it provides an important database. However, this procedure is not enough as there is the risk that conclusions are accepted as definitive. In addition, they might derive from the examination of only some parts of the process rather than from all of it. The social reality in which migration takes place demands that academicians who study this phenomenon not only take isolated pieces into account, but also the entire contradictory complexity and its constant evolution. By doing so, it would be possible to undertake a plausible analysis of the peculiar heterogeneities of migrations, that is, its generalities. It is essential to underline that beyond economic conditions (lack of employment and lack of resources), there are strong cultural factors that are significant in the migratory phenomenon. Paredes (2007) observes that economic causes and needs determine, to a large extent, that Mexicans leave their homecountry. However, the labor market and employment opportunities are not the only reasons for migration to the United States.

Likewise, Arizpe (2007) points out that economic conditions of contemporary international migrations are insufficient to explain the ways in which migrants interact economically, socially, psychological, and culturally, in societies of reception and origin. For these and other reasons, today's culture is a key theme in development and international geopolitics agendas. In other words, there is a heterogeneity of circumstances that drives people to leave their home country to move to another one. This motivates us to think of the symbiosis phenomenon, that is, feedback between structural motivations of character (economic-political) and those which are based on the meso and micro planes (socio-cultural). Massey *et al.* (1993) underlines the importance of taking into account the expectations of more economically developed countries, in terms of quality of life as this is a possible factor that stimulates the structure of motivations to migrate within certain sectors. This encompasses a significant number of people due to the great influence of mass media, marketing, movies, and one's own experiences and expectations of migrants that reside in destination and work locations.

The positive feedback of "the migration culture", meaning when migration prevails in a community (that has forged a tradition), the probability of the decision to migrate increases basically because it awakens values, perceptions, and tastes that are not satisfied in the places of origin. According to Massey (1993), this is called "structural inflation" and occurs when salaries do not only reflect offer conditions and demand, but also psychological appreciation related to status and prestige. On the other hand, López Castro (2007) describes socialization as the mechanism that all societies have given to normalize behavior with the purpose of instilling values, imposing norms and assimilating what may be acceptable to reject the unacceptable in any arena of community and personal life. Migration, present in the daily life of families, cannot escape this process. In the case of migrant communities, the entire process of socialization, cultural and social life, is imbued by migration. Both girls and boys are immersed in processes through which they are guaranteed, to a certain extent, the acceptance of their social, material, ideological, and cultural environments, in which they are identity holders. In transnational communities, boys and girls are socialized in trans-nationality which means that tradition, culture, migratory agency, and structural inflation are crucial cultural components to understand the phenomenon of the socialization of the child population in migration. Adults' decisions to leave are based on this imaginary child's world that is fed with experiences, narratives and contact with cyclical migrants. Such an imaginary child's world has been constructed out of the glamor of coming and going of ostentatious goods that others "that have gone to the United States" boast.

The statements above allow to explain the construction of the social representation that boys, girls, and young people continue to build on the migratory phenomenon and continue to transmit to others. As a result, the desire to achieve the famous "American Dream" gets reinforced. For this reason, we believe it is necessary to pay attention to the child sector as it is an important population that can be described as an actor in the Mexican migratory phenomenon.

Methodological Notes

The reflections shared here are a result of the qualitative use of research techniques, such as the consult and review of documents such as censuses, scientific publications (books, chapters, and articles) and electronic sources that allow us to analyze the context in which the child population is embedded in Mexico and to apply statistics regarding the number of boys and girls in Mexico, the number of child migrants, repatriates, and boys and girls that work to support the home economy.

Results and Discussion

The analysis that we present herein has been organized into four different rubrics, which are: boys and girls in Mexico, child labor, child migration, and migrant childhood in the state of Guanajuato. We will now analyze the first of the list.

Boys and Girls in Mexico

When we refer to the child population we should point out that we agree with the reflections of authors such as Szulc (2008), whose analysis secures an analysis on a conceptualization of the boys and girls as social subjects and competent interlocutors. Szulc recognizes the capacity of the social agency of this sector of the population. Childhood, this author tells us, is a historic product, resulting from dynamic and conflicting processes, in which different actors and different knowledge dispute the definition of what is childhood that we share, distinctions or characteristics considered as belonging to this group, and whose practices are legitimate by the adult population.

The population in Mexico between 0 and 19 years old was 43.5 million in 2010, of this group there were 10.5 million children between the ages 0 and 4 years, of which 5.3 million were boys and 5.2 million were girls. Of these, 55% were found to be in conditions of poverty and 28.8% presented some kind of vulnerability, due to income or for presenting some kind of social need. Only 15.4% of this sector of the population in Mexico was not poor, nor did they present any kind of vulnerability. In the central-western region, where the state of Guanajuato is found (a state whose child population is of special interest to this study), 53.5% of the population between 0 and 17 years old in 2010 were poor, and only 15.7% were not in poverty nor did they show any social need, the rest of the population at this age are considered vulnerable to some social need and do not have sufficient income to pass the poverty line (CONEVAL-UNICEF, 2013: 61). Guanajuato is second only to the south-eastern region which presented 69.3% of poor people in this segment of the population.

In the face of this panorama, poverty among adolescents and the child population, the intensity of the phenomenon should be taken into account and is much more pronounced among boys and girls. This is due to the distribution of resources and opportunities in the home, children tend to be those that receive less, which is even more aggravated among girls and teenage women. Before such conditions, we understand the immersion of boys and girls in the world of work, to obtain income, and nourish, at least a bit, the home economy (Leyra, 2012). Various texts may be consulted regarding child labor and about the historic time of childhood (Del Carpio, 2005). Multiple ethnographies consider the role that the child population plays in contributing to the economic income of the family. However, the presence of girls in the world of work has been little studied, it has been made invisible, and it has remained in silence and anonymity. This is why Leyra (2012) asserts “that the work, the same as other events that implicate women and children, have been contemplated in scientific studies as a part of a whole, without making an impact on the specificities that these have as a differentiated collective from men and boys” (p. 13).

In the case of indigenous communities in the country, we observe the participation of boys and girls in the division of rural and agricultural labor, and especially, in the case of girls, in the production of crafts and caring for younger brothers and sisters. Studies by authors such as Greenfield (2004), from the anthro-psychosocial perspective undertaken in Tsotsiles communities in Chiapas, show that there are multiple opportunities to observe, in adult life activities, the participation of girls and boys, especially in the area of community work. We should also mention that in practically all ethnographies of countryside communities and the urban poor, authors write about childhood and the family. For example, Novelo (1976) takes note of this when reflecting on crafts and capitalism. This author mentions the child sector when explaining how pottery is divided, by gender and age. The work of authors such as Zapata-Martelo *et al.* (2012) and Suárez-San Román *et al.* (2012), this is illustrative, as it reflects the unseen work that children carry out in Central America in the coffee plantations of Soconusco, Chiapas. Boys and girls, also all migrants.

Figure 1: Allusive Mural of Families in Coffee Plantations in Tsotsiles Communities in which Children Play an Important Role in the Division of Family Work. Simojovel, Chiapas, México



Source: From the archive of the investigation team.

Figure 1 is illustrative, as it corresponds to a mural that tries to share the vision of community work. We do not need to observe this painting in detail to realize that in this social representation of work, girls – as in other spaces – are not seen nor recognized. At most they appear in the background, in a secondary plane (see the image background in Figure 2).

Figure 2: Pulping the Aromatic (of coffee beans). Tsotsil Girl Taking Part in Community Work. Simojovel, Chiapas México



Source: From the photographic archive of the research team.

Child Labor

The work of authors such as Estrada (1999) place special attention on the relationship between childhood and work. Azaola (2003, 2000, 1995) has written about childhood, especially the experiences of street children in conditions of poverty, abuse, and exploitation (Del Carpio, 2012). In this regard, we should point out that according to the United Nations Fund for Children (UNICEF), the concept of child labor may be considered at two different levels, which are:

- The first level considers child labor as an activity that boys and girls undertake in the area of production, merchandizing, and services including all those occupations in the informal sector, formal companies, in the field, besides domestic chores, and prostitution.
- The second level has a more restrictive character and defines child labor as all those illicit activities realized by boys and girls that have the following characteristics: a) Direct participation in production, merchandising, or service provision processes; b) Said goods or services were principally consumed outside the home of the boy or girl (Alarcón, 1994; 135, in Leyra, 2012:15).

Realizing these activities may or may not result in economic remuneration. UNICEF (1997) asserts that there are many modalities of child labor around the world, but they may be grouped into seven principle types: 1) Domestic labor; 2) Forced work or slavery; 3) Sexual exploitation with commercial ends; 4) Work in industry and on plantations; 5) Work on the street; 6) Work for the family, and 7) Work of girls “(contemplated as a specific case due to being a sector of the population with the added issues of sexual harassment to exclusion from education)” (UNICEF, 1997: 32-45 in Leyra, 2012: 15). In the case of Mexico, UNICEF indicates that 3.6 million, boys, girls, and teenagers between 5 and 17 years of age are working, according to the Módulo sobre Trabajo Infantil (the Module on Child Labor) from the Encuesta Nacional de Ocupación y Empleo in (the National Survey of Occupation and Employment) (ENOE, 2007). The above is equivalent to 12.5% of the child population in this age group. Of these, 1.1 million are under 14 years of age, meaning that they have not met the minimum age to work as indicated by the Federal Law of Work.

Approximately 7 of every 10 workers between 5 and 17 years of age live in rural zones in Mexico, the rest in cities, which equates to 1,114,991 boys and girls residing in the capitals of the States or in towns with at least 100,000 residents, and 2,532,076 boys and girls in areas with smaller populations. Therefore, boys and girls that work are mainly found in the countryside, as the incidence of rural child labor is higher than urban: 15.6% and 8.6% of the population between 5 and 17 years old, respectively. In Mexico as a whole, 66% of the population between 5 and 17 years old take part in household chores. The incidence of the participation in domestic work (understood as chores in one’s own home) is notably different from boys and girls, independently of the age range considered: almost 60% of all the boys participate in housework (8,811,697) and more than 72% of girls do (10,496,179), which is equivalent to a difference close to 13 points between one group and the other. To a large extent, boys and girls in Mexico that work do so for reasons associated with the need to contribute resources (goods or services) to the home, to the family (which is also linked, in some way, to migration towards the neighboring country). Approximately 24% of the working population between 5 and 17 years old is concentrated in three states: the State of Mexico, Jalisco, and Puebla.

In a quarter of the states: in addition to the above, Michoacán, Veracruz, Guerrero, Chiapas, and Guanajuato reside 52.8% of this segment of the population. The minors in Mexico between 5 and 13 years of age that work reside in Puebla, Jalisco or Guerrero, and 52.6% are found in the states of Michoacán, Oaxaca, the State of Mexico, Guanajuato, and Veracruz (UNICEF, 2014). In the face of material poverty in the contexts in which many of the boys and girls included in the above statistics find themselves in, it is understandable that they take a leading role in the migratory phenomenon of Mexico towards the United States.

Child Migration

The crossing of migrants towards the United States from Mexico is a growing phenomenon, the most recent data from the Unidad de Política Migratoria (Unit of Migration Policy) from the Secretaría de Gobernación (The Secretary of Governance), point out that at least 79 thousand people from different nationalities were presented before the Instituto Nacional de Migración (National Institute of Migration, INM) from January to August in 2014, due to the lack of necessary documentation to transit through Mexican territory. This represents an increase from the previous year when 60 thousand cases were presented. This means that the detention of migrants increased by 30% from one year to the next (Unidad de Política Migratoria, 2013, 2014). This may be a symptom of intense migration through Mexico increasing drastically.

We highlight the fact that more than 75 thousand of those detained originate from a Central American country. In other words, 95.1% of the migrant population in detention originate from Central America. Among those, the case of Hondurans stands out, who represent 42.3% of the total migrants detained, followed by the Guatemalan population at 33.4%, and those from El Salvador with 18.5% (Unidad de Política Migratoria, 2013: 102). Minors represent 20% of the total foreigners brought before INM between January and August 2014, or around 15 thousand minors. Of those, there were more than 6 thousand between the ages of 0 and 11, which represents 8% of the total, and 39.9% of minors. From this segment, unaccompanied travelers totaled 1,393 boys and girls, meaning 8.8% of the minors traveled alone. This gives an idea of the scale of the issue and the vulnerability which boys and girls are exposing them to by traveling unaccompanied in their eagerness to reach the United States. Once more, Central America is the region that has the highest proportion of minors who are also migrants detained in Mexico, representing 98.4% of minors from this region, meaning 15,538 minors. Honduras again has the highest percentage of total minors with 48.5%, followed by Guatemala with 28.1% and El Salvador with 21.1% (Unidad de Política Migratoria, 2013: 107). The situation of the child population that crosses Mexican territory appears to not have reduced over time. According to the data of the Secretary of Governance, the evolution of the detention of foreign undocumented minors in Mexico, has varied over the years. For example, in 2007 the authorities detained 10,893 minors, in comparison with the 15,795 counted in the first 18 months of this year. This represents an increase of 45%, and there are still four months left to be counted in 2014, which promises to increase this percentage even further.

As we may observe in Figure 3 the trend is not uniform, in the years 2009, 2010, and 2011 a considerable decrease in the detention of child migrants in Mexico was observed, and increased again in 2013, since then the number has continued to increase. Mexico is not a stranger to the growing intensity of child migration. According to the analysis of the data provided by the Secretary of Governance, during the first eight months of 2014 the number of nationals reported as repatriated by the United States exceeded 173 thousand people. Of this total, there were 10,175 cases involving minors. Meaning, 6% of all repatriates are minors. Of which, boys between 0 and 11 years old represent 7% of minors and boys and girls between 12 and 17 years old are 93% of minors. We are evidently witnessing a different characteristics of child migration regarding the Central American population, where the proportions reveal the different social and economic processes that underlie the trip towards the United States. Table 1 shows us this comparison.

Table 1: Comparison of Indicators of the Intensity of Migration between Mexicans and Foreigners, January-August, 2014

MEXICANS		FOREIGNERS	
Repatriated from the United States	173,762	Detained in Mexico	79,001
Minors	10,175	Minors	15,795
Between 0 and 11 years	711	Between 0 and 11 years	6,304
Accompanied	544	Accompanied	4,911
Unaccompanied	167	Unaccompanied	1,393
Between 12 and 17 years	9,464	Between 12 and 17 years	9,491
Accompanied	1,093	Accompanied	s/d
Unaccompanied	8,371	Unaccompanied	s/d
MEXICANS		FOREIGNERS	
Minors	100%	Minors	100%
Between 0 and 11 years	7%	Between 0 and 11 years	40%
Accompanied	5%	Accompanied	31%
Unaccompanied	2%	Unaccompanied	9%
Between 12 and 17 years	93%	Between 12 and 17 years	60%
Accompanied	11%	Accompanied	s/d
Unaccompanied	82%	Unaccompanied	s/d

Source: Unit of Migratory Policy, 2014.

As we may observe, migration of the Mexican and foreign population (fundamentally from Central America) towards the United States it is fundamentally integrated by adults, but the child contingent (minors) is much greater among foreigners given that they represent 20% of the total detainees in Mexico, while for boys and girls in Mexico they barely represent 6% of the total repatriates from the United States. Certainly, the processes are different, but it gives us an idea of the magnitude, comparatively speaking of child migration from a place of origin. Other sources such as UNICEF give much larger figures on the phenomenon. In the case of Mexico, when considered as the country of origin, transit, and destination of migrants, the National Institute of Migration (INM) indicates that each year around 40 thousand boys and girls that migrate are repatriated from the United States to Mexico, and of those 18 thousand travel alone. At the same time, they indicate that in 2007, for example, 5,771 boys and girls from Central America were repatriated from Mexico to their countries of origin. The Sistema de Información Estadística Sobre las Migraciones en Mesoamérica (The Statistical Information System on Migrants in Meso-America) and the Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (International Organization for Migrations, OIM), report that the Latin American population represents 52% of the foreign population in the United States, of which more than 30 million are originally from Mexico (57%) and Central America (13%). In 2007, on the southern border, more than 5,700 boys, girls, and adolescents from Central America were repatriated to their countries of origin (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua) from Mexico (see the following table).

In their attempt to cross the border, the migrant child population is vulnerable to exploitation, human trafficking, and victims of crime, which is why protecting their rights is a priority for the UNICEF mandate in Mexico. Underlining the need to respect the rights of this population and that family reunification be guaranteed (we do not refer her to biological parents, but to those who fulfil the function of caring for this sector, they do not necessarily need to be a blood relative of the boy or girl), this is for the physical integrity and psychological wellbeing of the child. Therefore, and to confront the challenges that child and adolescent migration bring with them when unaccompanied, judicial bodies have been created whose intention is the protection of human rights and of people found in migratory processes, especially the child and adolescent population. The overriding concern for the fact that this population travels alone remains. Boys, girls, and teenagers decide to travel (generally unaccompanied) to cross the border of the United States, in the first place for the desire to reunite with their family members. Secondly, for the desire to improve their quality of life through performing a job, and finally, the desire to escape domestic violence or sexual exploitation.

Boys and girls who decide to cross the border are migrants who are frequently in situations of risk: they may suffer accidents (asphyxia, dehydration, injury); they may be pulled into criminal organizations, be subject to exploitation, either sexual or child labor; suffer institutional mistreatment at the time of repatriation, or lose their lives when in transit or crossing, among many other impacts on their physical and emotional health. These boys and girls are found in a permanent state of rights violation, as besides the risks they face, they interrupt their regular studies, which slows their possibilities of development, and of course, they do not enjoy basic rights such as the right to food, health, living in affectionate environments, and many other quality experiences which they deserve to experience. Regarding the different themes to consider in the child sector and migration in Mexico, for example, it is a priority to analyze the process of child migration in southeast Mexico. The migratory flow between Chiapas and Guatemala has historic characteristics. Men, women, boy and girl migrants are originating from Guatemala, principally form part of the panorama of diverse labor camps in this region of Mexico (Zapata-Martelo *et al.*, 2012). Be warned, then, that currently migration on the Mexican border is complex and also presents many nuances among which we may highlight the place of origin, destination, and transit of migrants. The child population, on the border or in the north or south, is constituted as the most vulnerable population throughout the history of migration. López Castro (2007), regarded children and adolescents as social actors that are also immersed in migration, but has unfortunately been little studied and documented.

Child Migrants from the State of Guanajuato

The state of Guanajuato has a large migratory tradition, repatriations from the United States of persons originating from Guanajuato has been synthesized in Table 2, showing the first eight months of 2014.

Table 2: Repatriation of Mexicans from the United States, Originating from the state of Guanajuato, January-August 2014

	Men	Women	Total
Repatriates	11354	808	12162
Minors	445	80	525
Between 12 and 17 years	429	66	495
Accompanied	44	14	58
Unaccompanied	385	52	437
Up to 11 years	16	14	30
Accompanied	13	12	25
Unaccompanied	3	2	5
% of repatriates by sex			
	Men	Women	Total
Total Repatriates	93.4%	6.6%	100%
% by sex and age			
Minors	84.8%	15.2%	100%
Between 12 and 17 years	81.7%	12.6%	94.3%
Accompanied	8.4%	2.7%	11.0%
Unaccompanied	73.3%	9.9%	83.2%
Up to 11 years	3.0%	2.7%	5.7%
Accompanied	2.5%	2.3%	4.8%
Unaccompanied	0.6%	0.4%	1.0%

Source: Unit of Migratory Policy, 2014.

As shown in Table 2, the total number of Mexicans repatriated to Guanajuato was 7% of the total in Mexico in 2014, with little more than 12 thousand people. Of these, 93.4% are men and 6.6% are women. We see a predominantly masculine population. We should underline that of all Mexican repatriates, only 0.3% are minors originating from the state of Guanajuato. This presents a large difference if we attend the case of foreign minors detained in Mexico, who represent 20% of the total of said segment. We make this comparison with the aim to highlight that migration from Guanajuato continues to be characterized (at least from the indicator that we analyzed, as an adult (96%).

In addition, 525 Mexican minors were repatriated, and we observe that 94.3% have between 12 and 17 years of age, and only 5.7% are younger than 12 years of age. Something completely opposed to the trend shown in the case of foreigners, where 60% of minors are between 12 and 17 years old, and 40% are younger than 12. In other words, in Guanajuato, child migration is a dimensionless phenomenon, reduced in comparison with what happens with foreigners, principally Central Americans who migrate towards the United States; reduced but not less important. For example, for the case of a region of Guanajuato, in Salvatierra (in the south of the State), we observe communities such as “La Esquina”, in which the population is constituted, especially by women, grandmothers, boys, and girls. The Men of the community are not present, they are either in other neighboring countries or they died on the “other side”. As Zapata-Martelo, Suárez-San Román and Flores Hernández (2011) point out, the new century is characterized by the globalization of the economy, the international job market, the precariousness of employment, the deceleration of the economy, processes that help drive under-developed countries, enormous numbers of men and women are seeking better job opportunities. Peasants of today are among the most geographically mobile in Mexican society. Workers in the field embody the richest, most varied, and sophisticated experiences as possible between the constrained subaltern classes. Migration is difficult to explain from only one perspective or discipline. For example feminist theory has been incorporated, the discussion about transnational migratory processes, in which the category of gender is also included as a central axis of the debate incorporates new elements of reflection such as mental health related to sexual and reproductive health (presence of sexually transmitted diseases), problems with domestic violence, depression, drug use, anxiety, low self-esteem, and others that coincide with the decrease in the migrant’s mental health (Villegas García, 2008). Thinking about the child population and migration we consider that it is a vital sector to study, as there are many challenges related to the study of the participation of boys and girls as actors in migration between Mexico and the United States.

Discussion and Conclusions

Based on the aforementioned points in previous sections we make the following reflections. First, we should point out that there is a significant number of boys and girls that are displaced daily to the United States in search of better opportunities, and for survival. We observe that Mexico is the main exporting country of human resources in the world, where 98% of its migrants reside in the United States. These figures place Mexico as the country with the greatest immigration to the United States, with more migrants than other large regions of the world such as Asia, Europe, and the rest of Latin America. Migration is reconfiguring family, social, cultural, economic, psychological, and power relationships and local policy. We concur with other authors referred to in the text who indicate that if economic conditions are the qualifying conditions for contemporary international migrations, they are insufficient to explain how the economy, society, psychology, and culture of migrants interact in societies of reception and origin. The tradition, culture, and migrant agency, and structural inflation are essential cultural components to understand the socialization of the child population in migration. It should also be stated that the child population, as pointed out in figures and numbers presented, are not strangers to economic poverty and present, in many cases, some kind of social need. In this panorama it is then understandable that boys and girls participate in work, a labor dimension in which they may also face difficulties, such as little recognition and value of work realized, poor pay, undignified working conditions, insecurity, exploitation, among many others.

As shown by the statistics presented and the literature review summarized here, boys and girls that work are mainly concentrated in the field rather than in the city, the incidence of rural child labor is elevated over urban labor. In our analyses, we also find that the working population between 5 and 17 years are concentrated into three entities: the State of Mexico, Jalisco, and Puebla. The other 52.8% are distributed in a quarter of the states: in addition to the above, Michoacán, Veracruz, Guerrero, Chiapas, and Guanajuato. The study of migrants crossing to the United States from Mexico remains a priority and is a growing occurrence, and the proportion of child migrants also has an important role. In addition, the number of unaccompanied minors crossing the border continues to increase. This gives an idea of the scope of the phenomenon and the situation of vulnerability to which boys and girls that travel unaccompanied are exposed to, in their desire to reach the United States. In their attempt to cross the border migrant children are vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking, and may be victims of crime, which is why protecting their rights is necessary. It is, therefore, a priority that social scientists also direct their gaze towards the other border: the southeast of Mexico. Certainly the processes are different, but both (Mexican child population and Central Americans that pass through Mexico) deserve protection, care, and to live in conditions in which they may appeal for the free exercise of their rights, independently of their place of origin.

Without doubt, the study and analysis of migration should consider a transdisciplinary perspectives in which the participation of boy and girl actors in this phenomenon has much to share with their history of challenges, pains, and illusions in the migratory environment. We must not remain indifferent.

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