

Disappeared migrants: between dis-understanding of the state and autonomous activate to public incidence

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Summary

This article is focused to migratory processes in the border between Mexico and Guatemala, including the transit of Central American, and Chiapanecan towards United States of America. Its purpose is to analyse the treatment that Mexican State has assumed against the disappearance of migrant as an increasing and of urgent solution phenomenon, as well as the searching strategies that have been driven by their relatives in contribution with civilian society associations. The put into practice these autonomous strategies, that includes both the psychosocial accompaniment and the fight for human rights, is generated, first of all, by the lack of recognition and state passivity against this problematic.

The testimonies of disappeared migrants show both the affectation and the motivations to continue the searching process of grief that can be concluded, and the necessity to consider the ethnic belonging as fundamental element to comprehend and to offer psychological accompaniment in this kind of contexts.

Key words: disappeared migrants; South border of Mexico; psychosocial accompaniment; human rights; Central American migration; Migration in Chiapas.

Resumen

Este artículo se enfoca a los procesos migratorios en la frontera entre México y Guatemala, incluyendo el tránsito de centroamericanos y de chiapanecos hacia los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica. Su propósito es analizar el trato que el Estado Mexicano ha asumido frente a la desaparición de migrantes como fenómeno creciente y de urgente resolución, así como las estrategias de búsqueda que están siendo impulsadas por sus familiares en colaboración con organizaciones de la sociedad civil. La puesta en práctica de estas estrategias autónomas, que incluye tanto el acompañamiento psicosocial como la lucha por los derechos humanos, se genera, ante todo, por la falta de reconocimiento y la pasividad estatal frente a esta problemática.

Los testimonios de los migrantes desaparecidos muestran tanto las afectaciones y sus motivaciones para continuar el proceso de búsqueda en medio de un proceso de duelo que no puede concluirse, como la necesidad de considerar la pertenencia étnica como elemento fundamental para comprender y para brindar acompañamiento psicosocial en este tipo de contextos.

Palabras clave: migrantes desaparecidos; frontera sur de México; acompañamiento psicosocial; derechos humanos de migrantes; migración centroamericana; migración en Chiapas.

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The intensification of migratory process in the Mexico- Central American border region has originated an increasing problematic of migrants that cannot be located by their relatives or that are considered disappeared. This kind of situations originates affections to mental health³ of the relatives and has been confronted throughout psychosocial accompaniment proposes⁴ that articulate collective processes of listening and re-signification of painful experiences and the losses with public denouncement, political incidence and use of judicial mechanisms. The disappearance of migrants implies a grief that cannot be closed at the time it motivates strategies of encounter and enforceability of rights.

In light of this situation, it is worthy to wonder how the societies and individuals experience and face this problematic? What is the psychosocial accompaniment to relatives of not located migrants about and how it contributes to mental health?

From the standpoint to not located migrants coming from the region of the border between Central America and Mexico, this article has as a purpose to discuss the contributions and problematics that the processes of psychosocial accompaniment and public denouncement face which are intend to propitiate mental health of relatives of migrants not located, disappeared or that have died during the migratory journey. This kind of processes is framed in a context in which the Mexican authorities have recognized the problematic of violence and people's disappearance that besiege the country.

³ While there is a broad debate on the terms *health* and *mental health* in this work we allude to health as "exercise of human capabilities" and of "enforceability processes" (Chapela y Cerda, 2011).

⁴ The debate regarding the term *psychosociological accompaniment* is included on section 4 of this text.

In the first part it is made a characterization of the problematic of not located or disappeared migrants in the Central America-Mexico-United States corridor, including its location in the international context and offering elements regard to magnitude and relevance of the phenomenon. In the second part there is located the problematic of the migrants' disappearance in the context that currently is faced in Mexico and are emphasized the vicissitudes that implies the searching of migrants disappeared or not located in such context.

In the third part, it is detailed how the psychological accompaniment to relatives of not located or disappeared migrants processes emerge and what do they consist on, having in reference a group of this kind that has been conformed in Chiapas, Mexico. Finally, in the fourth part we reflect on the challenges that in terms of cultural diversity pose this kind of experiences of psychological accompaniment and counselling for the undertaking of judicial processes

1. Towards precision of the problematic of non-located migrants

The intensification of migratory process is expression of historical structural problematics, while it shows the contradictions and conflictivities that characterizes the beginning of 21st. Century. Such as the journalist Federico Mastrogiovanni has documented (2014), in different regions of the world we witness the territorial coincidence of forms of exclusion and impoverishment derived from the dominant capitalist system with intense migratory processes characterized by an increasing problematic of disappearance of people.

In order to comprehend the problematic of disappeared migrants, as well as the characteristics and the significance of psychosocial support that their families require, it is necessary, first of all, to show the magnitude of this phenomenon and its principal

components. From 1993 to 2011 (as can be observed in chart 6.1) the annual number of Mexican migrants bound for United States has oscillated among 405,854 and 855,682 people. The periods of more affluence have been between 2002 and 2003, as well as between 205 and 208, been 2007 the one that registered the record number of 855,569 migrant people. The annual number of deportees during that same period has fluctuated among 418,000 and 786,673. There does not seem to be a direct relation between the total number of migrants and the number of deportees, nor is observed a clearly defined decrease of Mexican migrants throughout the years.

When analyzing the number of migrants in every state of Mexican Republic (see chart 2) it is observed that from the six that had greater number in 1993, only Guanajuato, Jalisco and Michoacan continue being between the highest. In contrast, Chiapas, that during the decade of 1990 was with a low amount of international migrants, comes to rank in the first place in 2006 with 118,510 people in such condition and afterwards it keeps below the three states with a larger number of individuals that decide to move to United States.

For its part, the number of Guatemalan migrants,⁵ as seen in chart 3, presents in general terms an ascending tendency to situate in more than 600,000 a year. Migrants of such nationality which have been deported by Mexican authorities, despite the incongruence of data, are in a constant number between 2009 and 2011, and starts ascending since 2014, the year when the Plan Frontera Sur (South Border Plan) was set in motion. In total, for 2011 the number of deportees of Guatemalan origin either from Mexico as from United States ascended around 125,000. In accordance to the most recent data the deportees “in 2013 were 6,700; in 2014 raised to 113,600, and 2015 will end with

⁵ The Inquiry about Migration in North Border (Encuesta de Migración en la Frontera Norte, EMIFN) did not include the migrants proceeding from other countries fo Central America and South America.

an estimate of 150,000, according to the National Institute of Migration” (Knippen, Boggs and Meyer, 2015:3).⁶

⁶ The varying of data between the National Institute of Migration and the EMIF can be explained because the Institute counts from the procedures it carries out, while the Inquiry does a direct survey in settlements through an instrument of information that does not imply an specific legal procedure.

Chart 1. Migrants proceeding from the south of Mexico bound for United States and people returned by the Border Patrol or other migratory authorities

	1993-1994	1995-1996	1996-1997	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Migrants proceeding from the south bound for United States	698,495	458,212	493,465	606,369	484,531	484,685	405,854	728,518	628,518	542,153	708,927	815,569	855,682	748,392	630,449	492,877	317,105
People returned by migratory authorities	617,444	642,248	671,465	549,562	786,673	689,369	590,733	536,336	426,026	429,442	512,975	462,444	572,514	565,657	548,868	418,018	356,976

Source: Encuesta de Migración en la Frontera Norte (EMIFN) 2000-2001, p. 83; EMIFN 2005, p. 139; EMIFN, 2011, pp. 259-260.

**Chart 2. Migrants bound for United States
(Mexican Republic and selected federative entities)**

	1993-1994	1995-1996	1996-1997	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Mexican Republic	698,495	458,212	493,465	606,369	484,531	484,685	405,854	728,518	628,518	542,153	708,927	815,569	855,682	748,392	630,449	492,877	317,105
Chiapas	5,992	2,434	1,986	4,672	3,492	4,405	4,472	36,307	53,827	33,786	60,427	118,510	105,419	83,293	47,816	32,534	23,212
Chihuahua	66,931	18,043	16,614	32,490	24,921	25,885	21,286	19,945	14,973	9,390	9,155	7,561	8,285	8,617	7,082	5,413	2,803
Guanajuato	90,293	74,973	87,467	80,008	52,415	45,034	33,783	86,977	74,985	103,156	114,799	102,705	107,202	66,512	83,649	52,228	30,925
Jalisco	55,894	35,178	36,949	40,382	34,036	43,511	39,364	41,057	35,032	34,874	42,700	34,893	53,544	56,848	49,199	49,304	37,569
Michoacan	75,306	79,576	65,395	57,911	65,947	52,324	51,854	73,219	68,928	54,059	55,008	72,019	77,785	50,335	65,481	77,499	41,695
Oaxaca	26,475	19,861	20,707	22,604	14,849	14,819	12,009	42,890	28,316	24,387	38,306	45,175	55,327	50,927	34,432	28,263	16,783
Zacatecas	49,114	27,953	26,869	18,686	25,196	10,637	12,014	18,722	17,757	17,778	19,663	24,390	20,135	22,239	16,958	15,856	13,013

Source: Encuesta de Migración en la Frontera Norte (EMIFN) 2000-2001, p. 83; EMIFN 2005, p. 139; EMIFN, 2011, pp. 259-260.

Chart 3. Migrants proceeding from Guatemala to Mexico by land and Guatemalan deportees (2004-2011)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Guatemalan migrants*	477,140	375,044	314,882	389,433	494,851	636,012	576,027	616,926
Guatemalan migrants deported from Mexico	64,318	65,162	Nd.	Nd.	Nd.	Nd.	Nd.	Nd.
Central American migrants deported from Mexico**	Nd.	Nd.	Nd.	Nd.	Nd.	60,941	60,696	55,790
Guatemalan migrants deported from United States	3,202	6,341	Nd.	Nd.	Nd.	Nd.	Nd.	Nd.
Central American migrants returned by authorities of United States**	Nd.	Nd.	Nd.	Nd.	Nd.	79,409	74,662	68,923

* Includes either migrants who declared they would stay less than 1 day in Mexico and who declared they would stay more than 1 day.

** Indicator included in the EMIFN since 2009.

Source: EMIFN, 2005, pp. 202, 225, 236; EMIFN, 2011, pp. 229 y 281.

From a global perspective, such as shown in Chart 4, the Mexico-United States border occupies the second place referring the number of migrants that have died on their attempt of crossing the dividing line linking both countries. Between 1998 and 2013, were registered 6,029 migrants' deceases, a number that is only exceeded by the number of deaths registered amongst people who tried to seep through exterior borders in the European Union. (Brian and Laczko, 2014:24).

Chart 4. Regional estimations of migrant border-related deaths* compiled from varied resources, available years 1996-2014

Region	Number of deaths	Years	Source
Sahara	1,790	1996-2013	Fortress Europe
United States-Mexico Border***	6,029	1998-2013	United States Border Patrol
Externa frontiers to the European Union	22,400	2000-2014**	OIM based on The Migrants Files
Australian waters	1,495	2000-2014**	Australia Border Deaths Database
Horn of Africa	3,104	2006-2014**	UNHCR; OIM para 2014
Bay of Bengala	1,500-2,000	2012-2014**	UNHCR; Arakan Project
Caribbean	188	2012-2014**	UNHCR; OIM para 2014.

* The definition of *border related deaths* varies among the sources. Some only consider deaths occurred in the exterior borders, while other include deaths that occurred in the country of destination or transit that can be directly attributed with the border control regimes.

** The 2014 calculations include data until September 2014 (Bay of Bangala until June 2014)
*** The data for United States – Mexico border consider until September the 30th. 2013.
Source: Brian and Laczko (2014:24).

As Jimenez has indicated (2009), there are significant problems of non-identification and sub-register that impede to know with accuracy how many Mexican or Central American migrants have died at attempting to enter undocumented to United States. Taking back the official data, the author points out that since United States implemented the Operation Gatekeeper (from 1994 through 2009) the number of dead migrants in transit can be set between 3,861 and 5,607. Coincidentally, Kovic (2013) points out that from 1998 there have been documented between 5,000 and 7,500 dead migrants at crossing the border between Mexico and United States,⁷ among which are counted a total of 271 deceases in 2012.

According to the data provided by the Pima County Forensic Science Center, historically placed as the one that registers the largest number of migrant deaths, between 2001 and 2011 there have been recovered the bodies of 1,911 people. 64% of the bodies have been identified and among them, 12% throughout DNA⁸ samples. Among the identified migrants, the Mexican nationality ones have been the most numerous (87%, 1,063 cases) followed by Guatemalan (6%, 79 cases) and Salvadoran (3%, 30 cases).

Currently there are in that county a total of 692 unidentified bodies (see chart 6.5).

The analysis of this data shows, likewise, that from 2000 there is an association statistically significant of deaths caused by sunstroke derived from the passing through

⁷ Kovic (2013) takes back and coincides with the data that Rubio-Goldsmith provides in this respect *et al.* (2006).

⁸ Deoxiribonucleic acid.

the Desert of Arizona and the significant increase of migrants from Central American and the south of Mexico.

Chart 5. Bodies or remains of migrants registered by the Pima County, Arizona, 2001-2011

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2001-2011
Bodies or remains of migrants	75	145	155	170	196	175	216	171	194	230	184	1,911
Identified	s/d	1,219 (64%)										
Identified by ADN	1	3	13	15	13	19	14	17	21	23	11	150 (12%)

Source: Pima County Forensic Science Center, Annual Report 2011. Pp. 27-31.

Through analyzing the problems from a chronological perspective, Rubio-Goldsmith *et al.* (2006) has proposed to distinguish a period of “pre-funnel effect” that goes from 1990 to 1999 in which the annual average is of 14 people death and classified as recovered bodies of *unauthorized border-crossers* (UBC);⁹ in contrast, in the other migrants that qualifies as “funnel effect” and that is set between 2000 and 2005, it is registered an annual average of 160 people classified as UBC, such as shown in chart 6.

Chart 6. Differences between “pre-funnel effect” (1990-1999) and “funnel effect” (2000-2005) by the recovery of bodies of unauthorized border-crossers by the Pima County Medical Examiner's Office

	Pre- funnel effect (1990-1999)	Funnel effect (2000-2005)
Total number of recovered bodies	125	802
Women	13.6%	22.6%*
Men	84.0%	77.2%
Not identified	37.6%	24.9%
Average age	30 years	30 years
Deaths due to exposure to elements	39.2%	61.4%
Deaths by undetermined causes	31.2%	19.6%
Deaths due to accidents by	18.4%	11.1%

⁹ Through analyzing the restrictive character and the sub-register that derives from the use of classificatory criteria of “migrants' deaths”, Rubio-Goldsmith *et al.* (2006) has proposed the use of the term “unauthorized border-crosser” (UBC) and of “*UBC recovered bodies*”.

motor vehicles		
Deaths by homicide	5.6%	3.2%

Source: Rubio-Goldsmith *et al.* (2006:45).

Even though the data of EMIF previously presented do not show a clearly defined decrease of the number of migrants, some analysts who take back other information source point out that it is observed a decrease of people in this condition during the last years (Passel, Cohn and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2012; Massey, 2012). Despite this discrepancy, there exists certain consensus in which it is observed a reduction on the number of apprehensions and a consistent increase in the number of migrants that have died during the last years while crossing the border. As Reineke and Martinez have laid out taking back the data by the Border Patrol of the United States:

During the last three fiscal years, there have been registered more than 100 migrants dead by every 100,000 apprehensions at crossing the border, compared with the almost 40 cases of migrant deaths that were registered a decade ago. Migrants have a larger risk of death today, than in the previous years [...] this can be because they have fewer options that take them to think in zones more dangerous and remote through the border or that require longer routes, aiming to avoid the detection on behalf of the authorities of United States (2014:54).

Other analysts that have focused in this problematic (Kovick, 2013) coincide in appreciating that since the hardening of migratory measures of United States in the last five years (2010-2015), it is observed an inverse relation between the decreased of the number of migrants regarding the number of deported migrants. Likewise, paradoxically, this decrease of the total of migrants during the last period (even if it is an arguable tendency) is accompanied of an increase of the number of migrants who die. A similar

situation has been denounced by activist in favor of the migrants' rights in Mexico, who affirm that the repression measures for the control of migratory flux, such as the ones that have intensified since the announcement of the South Frontier Plan¹⁰, generate a bigger difficulty to transit through this region and cause that migrants assume greater risks and are susceptible to be crime victims.

Although the greatest number of migrant deaths is registered in the Tucson, Arizona sector, a significant number of migrants die also in California and Texas, closely followed by the registered in New Mexico (Reineke and Martinez, 2014:55).

To specify the characteristics of the not located migrants imply, first off, to differentiate the terms frequently used to designate these individuals, their implications and their unavoidable links with problematics the migrants share with other social actors.

The qualifying of “not located” has been taken back from the discourse of the relatives¹¹ that search for their migrants. It is about a characterization that alludes to the condition of not knowing where their relative is or of not being able to establish a direct communication link with him or her. This way, it is implicitly assumed that the migrant person searched is alive. Even though the relatives reclaim this condition, they also understand that the reencounter possibilities are limiting over the years due to the insecurity conditions that prevail in the corridor Central America-Mexico-United States.

Unlike this notion – that implicitly assumes that there is not responsible person for the migrant to be *not able to locate* – the notion of disappeared alludes that there is someone, frequently not located certainly, who is responsible of carrying out the

¹⁰ Plan Frontera Sur.

¹¹ Son los familiares que buscan a sus migrantes quienes, dependiendo de las características de su situación y de la lectura de la problemática que ellos han construido, deciden cómo calificarlos.

disappearance. This qualifying over the migrant condition, frequently used in the human rights reports in this field and by some relatives' associations, joins the problematic of migrants with that of the disappeared people in which situation can be supposed or corroborated the participation of public forces.

In this text there are used either the terms of *not located migrants* (when it alludes to the perspective of migrant relatives) and *disappeared migrant* (when it alludes the problematic in the legal and institutional context that is required for its comprehension). In parallel to this problematic, regarding the most appropriate terminology to name and comprehend this problematic, it is faced also the difficulty to concertize and characterize the disappeared migrants.

Although it is complex to specify the amount of Central American or Mexican migrants that expect to move to United States, it results even more difficult to count on defining numbers about who many migrants can be classified as *not located* or *disappeared*, situation that leads to the development of indirect calculations – task to which we focus on the next section – of a diversity of sources that, at its time, do not count with precision or absolute certainty of the data they offer, even though they can be important indicators to comprehend the problematic.

2. The search of the migrants in the Mexican context

In spite of the more than 2.000 km that separate the border between United States and Mexico from geographical limits between this last and Central America, the notion of

the *detritorialization of borders*¹² seems to significantly operate insofar as in the border region, to which the present work focus on, there are developed processes and dynamics that could not be comprehended without considering the attraction pole of United States and the conditions that it imposes to migrants despite they are in territory distant and culturally differentiated. While it is know that, in general terms, Central American migrants enter to Mexico by three principal corridors (the historical of Tapachula, the one of La Mesilla-Comitán and the most recent of Tenosique Jungle),¹³ their routes connect and later deploy in a range that goes across different points in the Mexico-United States border in which Mexican migrant join to this march.

A more detailed approximation and with field information reveals that it is more a specie of *dynamic spider web* that, although it has a destination pole more or less clear, it redefines permanently both for the State policies (Mexican and American) to control the migratory flux and for the strategies of who in the informality or openly influencing are benefited from the “business of migrants”; also by the availability of shelters and other support nets that have generated; literally, *the way is done while migrating*.

But if the routes for migrating are unpredictable, the rise of the problematic of disappeared migrants, the economic benefits of those who make use of the “business of migrants” and the disdain to face it by part of the States and other public actors, makes

¹² Through being focused in their territorial dimension, the borders show, paradoxically, either deterritorialization and territorialization processes (Mummert, 1999). The critical revision of territoriality of borders, conceptualized from recognizing and questioning the received ideas about “space” and “place” (Gupta and Ferguson, 2008) has led to recognize how border traditionally assigned in the national States expand to definingly influence borders of other nations and, in an inverse sense, how certain countries are forced to handle their own territorial limits parting from processes or influences originated in processes own by other nations or economical regions (Fábregas, 2014; Castillo, 2003).

¹³ The internment routes are neither predictable nor immovable, situation that turns into an intense debate for the definition of their “migratory corridors”. Regarding to it and about the current situation of South Border fo Mexico, can be consulted the work of Knippen, Boggs and Meyer (2015).

the search to be probably more complex. Not counting with official data and the little response from authorities about the disappeared migrants in Mexico during the last two decades, the magnitude of the phenomenon and the characterization of who conforms it can only be done indirectly; it is, trying to delimit how many *migrant people* and how many *people* have been recognized as disappeared and then try to find the confluence of both collectivities.

Given that there are not official data about how many migrants (Central American or Mexican) have disappeared in Mexico, it is necessary to allude to the total of disappeared that exist in the country.¹⁴ The Government Secretary¹⁵ has recognized 20.810 disappeared people between 2006 and 2014, already discounting those who have been found alive or whose decease has been certified. In this context, the attack to students from the Normal Rural School of Ayotzinapa, in September 2014, that left a balance of 6 murdered people and 43 disappeared students – which still is not cleared up (GIEI, 2015) -, shows an emblematic way the problematic in respect to the disappearance of people, constant in Mexico since 2006. A risk to which are submitted either the Mexican population and the migrants in transit, the latter in a condition of greater vulnerability due to their undocumented condition (the ones that are not Mexican), the displacement through high risk regions in the country or the difficulty to use supporting nets outside their places of origin.

¹⁴ In 2010 the Foundation for justice and the Democratic State of Right (Fundación para la Justicia y el Estado Democrático de Derecho - FJEDD) made a request to the Federal Institute of Access to Information (Instituto Federal de Acceso a la Información - IFAI) and the answer was that the State ignored how many, among the disappeared, were migrant.

¹⁵ Secretaría de Gobernación.

Because the data offered until now show a total of migrant people that would be in risk of been classified as “not located” or “disappeared” and, on the other hand, a total of individuals in such condition, but that are not necessarily migrant, it is require to add from other routes to get close to the comprehension of how many and who are the disappeared migrants. The quantification of migrants that have been kidnapped or ultimate in Mexican territory, although it is not exhaustive and also results indirect can complement the global image of the problematic. A logic that takes us, again, to associate migration with the general problematic of the country, in that case, with the homicides related to some crime.

According to the reports issued by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights¹⁶ (ICHR, 2013) from December 2006 through September 2011, 45,515 homicides were registered in Mexico, situation that is unprecedented in the country and that expresses high rates of violence that appear to have become naturalized. The data provided by this same institution show that, between September 2008 and February 2009, were registered 9,758 kidnaps of migrants; April to September 2010, 11,333, which adds up to a total of 21,091 kidnaps in this two semesters.

When the problematic is analyzed in detail, there is observed a sequence that begins with the negation of an official migratory status (either by the Mexican State and the United States), situation that forces the migrants to enter to another country in a clandestine way. This way of entering the country of transit or destiny make them more susceptible to be violented by criminal bands, corrupt agents or employers that do not respect labor rights (CNDH, 2011). The position of national States of refusing to officially

¹⁶ Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos.

endorse the entry of migrants use to be associated either to interests of national economical groups, or to international pressures that are sustain in the approval or denial of State financing.

On the other hand, among the questionings and the concerns that official information generates, highlight a watchable pattern that consists on the performance of migratory revisions on behalf of the corresponding authorities which is followed by the aggression of armed groups that perform collective kidnaps of migrants.

Likewise, there appears not to be information that the National Commission on Human Rights¹⁷ (NCDH) has continued with this kind of register or has informed about the advance in the judicial processes stated from these violations to migrants' human rights; especially, because in the same reports from this institution was documented an average of 1,600 kidnapped migrants per month (CNDH, 2009; CNDH, 2011).

Although there is very little public information about the advance and the conclusion of the judicial processes started from migrants kidnap, some available data indicate they have a limited monitoring. According to the information gathered by diverse organizations that participated in the elaboration of the Report of Kidnaps to Migrant People in Transit through Mexico¹⁸ (BPM *et al.*, 2011:14) between January 2008 and April 2010 there only existed 44 prior inquiries and 2 sentences. Coincidentally, the National Commission on Human Rights documented that between June 2009 and July 2010 there were 64 prior inquiries for migrant kidnapping.¹⁹

¹⁷ Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos.

¹⁸ Informe Secuestros a Personas Migrantes en Tránsito por México.

¹⁹ This scarcity of data, either from a temporal perspective, of reliable registers, or openly divulged public information, is expressed emblematically in cases that have been motive of national and

Another form of getting close to the search for disappeared migrants, as painful for relatives as complex for the procedures that requires, has been the identification of bodies or human remains in the migratory routes. In Mexico there is not a register of the migrant people denounced as not located or disappeared (at least have not been made public); neither has been elaborated an adequate official database – including the genetic information – of the bodies or remains identified within the territory on which there exist elements to presuppose that it is about Mexican or Central American migrants.

In Mexico, the work of identifying migrants through sampling ADN of relatives, the organization of a database and the contrasting with genetic information of bodies or human remains presumably of migrants is carried out, fundamentally, through civil society organizations. Amongst these initiatives, stands out the Border Project²⁰ which reported counting 449 tests performed to relatives of not located or disappeared migrants and that, through ADN database contrasting strategies - with the support of counterpart initiatives at the south of United States -²¹ has been able to identify thirteen migrants

international journalistic demand, among them there are: the massacre of 72 migrants from San Fernando in August 2010, the discovery of 47 graves with illegally buried migrants between April and August 2011, the finding of 49 torsos in Cadereita, Nuevo Leon in 2012 and other cases of kidnapping and murder of migrants included in the appearance of Procuraduría General de la República (PGR) against CIDH during 2013 (FJEDD, 2014:5-11).

²⁰ The Border Project (Proyecto Frontera) was developed by the Foundation for Justice and Democratic State of Right, Mesoamerican Voices Action with Indigenous People, the Argentinian Team of Forensic Anthropology, the Committee of Death and Disappeared Migrants of El Salvador (COFAMIDE), Migrants' House of Saltillo-Border with Justice, A.C. and Humanity without Borders, A.C. (Fundación para la Justicia y el Estado Democrático de Derecho, Voces Mesoamericanas Acción con Pueblos Migrantes, el Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense, el Comité de Familiares de Migrantes Fallecidos y Desaparecidos de El Salvador (COFAMIDE), la Casa del Migrante de Saltillo-Frontera con Jusitica, A.C., y Humanidad sin Fronteras, A.C., OEA, 2013:92).

²¹ From the civilian society as Centro Colibrí, No more Deaths, Desert Angels, Houston Unido. From state instances: Forensic Sciences Center of Pima County.

through ten remains found in Arizona, two in Texas and one in Mexico. Among these thirteen people there were ten Salvadoran, one Mexican, one Honduran and a Costa Rican (OEA, 2013:92).

The difficulties for the identification of diseased migrants exacerbate because it has not been possible to guarantee the sampling to the bodies or the remains found and because the sub-register of cases. The analysis of this information is one more expression of racial and ethnic discrimination while the data indicate an increasing number of Latin population and people from the Mexican Republic states that has greater percentages of indigenous population (Kovic, 2013).

When it comes to inquire about the profile or specific characteristics of not located or disappeared migrants, it is faced again the necessity of resort to indirect estimations. The responses acquire different nuances if the forensic information is restored or if the denounces made by relatives are taken as a base.

Taking back this last perspective, the data from a field research performed during 2013 by the Red Cross International Committee of the (RCIC, 2014:8-10), which included 218 interviews made to relatives of migrants disappeared while they were going to United States,²² report that on average the disappeared migrants were between 18 and 29 years old, most of them men (82.1%), with at least one child (65.1%), family bosses when migrating (41.2%), and 17% of the interviewed relatives were considered indigenous. Likewise, report that 77% were contacted for the last time in Mexican territory and 21% lost contact in Tamaulipas.

²² From those, 44 were carried out in El Salvador, 62 in Guatemala, 68 in Honduras and 44 in Mexico, between February and July 2013.

Finally, it can be pointed out that in order to characterize the problematic of not located or disappeared migrants have also restored to trying to locate the repercussions of the governmental measures against migration; specifically, the correlation in temporal terms between the financing of American origin received by the Mexican government through initiatives like the Mérida's Plan²³ (in which there is included the South Border Plan) and the total number of migrants joint to the deported and to the diseased migrants (WOLA, 2015) .

3. Psychosocial support to relatives of not located or disappeared migrants

The searching of disappeared people counts, in Latin America, with the unavoidable precedent of dictatorial processes or of politic violence that characterized the region during the 1960 and 1970 decades. During those years were intensified the movements in favor of human rights that generated an accumulation of learnings reflected in diverse strategies that are used nowadays for searching not located or disappeared migrants.

As part of these decades of fighting for human rights, there were also developed strategies of psychosocial attention and accompaniment that looked to afford some kind of support, either throughout individual attention, but most of all from conformation of group and collective spaces of sorrow of relatives of the disappeared (Castillo, Díaz and Gómez, 2014).

In the same Central American region, from where it currently comes a wide contingent of migrants that transit by the south border in order to go to United States,

²³ Plan Mérida.

diverse civil associations, groups of professionals or academics, performed a pioneering and necessary labor of psychosocial accompaniment in situations of State violence, among which there stand out in Guatemala the Team of Communitarian Studies and Psychosocial Action²⁴, in El Salvador the Committee of Relatives of Disappeared or Diseased Migrants of El Salvador²⁵ and the National Fund for Migrations in Honduras²⁶.

Although there is not a consensus about what it implies a “standpoint” or “psychosocial accompaniment”, the differentiated contribution of this perspective has as precedent both the indissoluble and complex link between individual and society and the necessity of a perspective that does not “victimize”, but that recognize the condition of agency and the possibilities of resignification of those individuals who in their own person or in their families experiment the undesirable effects of the problematic shared by the Latin American societies (Martín Baró, 1984; Beristain and Riera, 1999).²⁷

The process through which the relatives are assumed as social actors is not, of course, neither mechanical nor immediate. On the contrary, it is marked by the necessity of a process of making of the own situation, but also of overcoming the fears and look for alternatives to articulate these actions with the immediate necessities of maintenance or labor commitments. As Buitrago emphasize (2007), it regards to a process that implies:

To transcend the individual in order to produce collective proposals and responses [...] The positive effect of joining to the search of clarification and

²⁴ Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial (ECAP).

²⁵ Comité de Familiares de Migrantes Fallecidos y Desaparecidos de El Salvador (COFAMIDE).

²⁶ Fondo Nacional para las Migraciones en Honduras (FONAMIH).

²⁷ Sobre la distinción entre lo psicosocial y lo psicológico, así como entre el acompañamiento y la psicoterapia pueden consultarse los planteamientos de Raffo (2007) y de Gómez, Barrios y Ledón (2014).

justice, promote the organization and contribute to the transit or relatives towards social actors [...] This form of conscience, that emerges from the pain and the personal experience, is a motivation that drives them to continue working for the cases of others, independently of whether or not it is achieve justice for the own, the collective actions come into view as the most effective way of achieving justice. The joint and organized action parting from the identification of common damage and necessities, the passing from an isolated experience to collective experience, reinforces people in front of the destructive impact (Buitrago, 2007:382-383).

This psychosocial accompaniment focused on the migratory problematic is understood as a confluence area – historically situated – between the psychological enforcement of people and the social transformation processes:

The group of actions based in the principles of social psychology that are going to allow that people and groups make personal transformation processes, familiar and social at their quotidian spaces and, through those changes achieve the transformation of other social realities [...] It has as an aim to prevent or reduce the psychosocial damage and impacts caused by human rights violations. That the ones who have seen their rights violated can experience a change or transform in actors and social actors. That to reach that they are subjects of rights with autonomy and transformation power (Gómez, Barrios and Ledón, 2014:38).

The accumulated learning of work methodologies, that included the performance of self-help groups to understand the experiences of disappearance of relatives that at all

times were articulated with the usage of legal instruments for the searching, functions these days as one of the most significant referents for the accompaniment of relatives of not located or disappeared migrants.

This accompaniment to families of disappeared incorporates the recognition of the grieving process the families are forced to carry out, including, as María Soledad Yáñez proposed (2014) from the Salvadoran context, a process of elaborating the losses that crystallizes or remains unfinished in such situations in which the lack of certainty of the whereabouts of their loved ones is prolonged over the years or decades.²⁸

Among the factor the author locates by the accompanying work to state violence victims in this country, it is the permanent impunity combined with the lack of recognition of the victims pain. People whose memory of their lost ones is not validated nor listened, but on the contrary, is silenced through state versions that imposes over their particular experience and as truths in the public sphere .

The symptoms that affect the relatives of not located or disappeared migrants are considered a “normal relationship” against an “abnormal situation” that very probably would develop any person involved in this kind of circumstances (Beristain and Riera, 1999).

The relatives search for their not located or disappeared migrants among the living ones, but face the ambivalence of asking themselves if the relative is alive or dead; they feel responsible for what happened, so they may present sadness, anger,

²⁸ Desde la perspectiva de la autora resulta conveniente referir la situación de las víctimas de violaciones a los derechos humanos a la sintomatología del Síndrome de Estrés Posttraumático (DSM-IV), perspectiva que permitido clarificar los síntomas psicosociales que se presentan en estos casos y argumentar, a través de peritajes profesionales, ante instancias judiciales (Yáñez, 2014).

desperation, guilt, shame and suffer the labeling or stigmatization in the community context (Gómez, Barrios and Ledón, 2014:115-116).

As in similar situations in which are put in play the human rights, the relatives live answers of re-experimentation of the occurrence, affective anesthetic and tendency to avoid associated stimulus (thoughts, feelings, conversations, activities. places, people); or answers of enhancement activation like irritability, ire and sleep disorders (Gómez, 2007). Other key moments in which there is used the psychosocial approach include the ones that require to support people in processes of identification of bodies of migrants found in the migratory routes or at receiving the news that their relative has died.

With great frequency, the accompaniment to relatives of disappeared is carried out through group devises that take back the learning groups between pairs. There are elaborated the experiences of losses by the listening to other people that have faced similar situations and are started collective actions that include denouncement and legal strategies are put into practice.

For Beristain and Riera, who have developed an important contribution in the accompaniment of people who have been object of human rights violations, the psychosocial accompaniment groups serve as “confidence and acceptance spaces, that allow the open expression regarding the feelings and forms of confrontation; but also, contribute to generate an proper reading of what happened and what is wanted to happen, a mechanism that construct solidarity and that throw their integrators to the re-vindictive political action” (1999:87-88). By conceiving and operating in this way, the implementation of group processes can be useful to enhance the ability to support each other, to control impulsive reactions, to recognize feelings, to get the participants

recognizing themselves through others' experiences and the groups acquire better possibilities of joint action for the implementation of their proposals or alternative (Beristain and Riera, 1999:90-91).

In accordance to the necessity to recognize and attend the psychosocial repercussions of migrant processes, the Barcelona psychiatrist Achotegui has proposed, unlike those who allude to the notion of Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome, to characterize the problematic of mental health of migrants as “Chronic and Multiple Immigrant Stress Syndrome”. Through this syndrome, also called “Ulysses” (alluding the Greek hero who suffered innumerable adversities and dangers far from his loved ones), Achotegui proposes to locate those discomforts in the sphere of mental health and not as part of the psychopathologies. For that, he identifies seven types of grief that are faced by migrants and which facing depends of the capacity of elaboration of every person; these types of grief can be set as simple, complex or extreme. The grieves identified after some decades of accompaniment to migrants are: *a)* the family and loved ones, *b)* the language, *c)* the culture, *d)* the land, *e)* the social status, *f)* the contact with the belonging group, and *g)* the risks to physical integrity.

Since the intensification of the Central American migratory process, that unfortunately has been accompanied by the loss of contact with migrants and by the increase of documented cases in which migrants are kidnapped, forced to participate in criminal acts, are object of sexual violence or murdered, have been conformed or redefined collective strategies of searching as COFAMIDE and the Mesoamerican Migrant Movement (MMM), among other, in which the relatives themselves, most of all the

mothers, who facing towards the lethargy, complicity or omission of governmental and judicial authorities, decide to implement the searching actions themselves.

In parallel and towards the passivity or mistrust that generates in the citizenship the construction of mechanisms of register of disappeared migrants and of the identification of bodies or remains found in the most critical points of the migratory routes, have been implemented instances that from the civil society fulfill such function, it is the case of the Argentinean Team of Forensic Anthropology²⁹ and of similar exercises in Peru or Mexico, among others.

Under the aforementioned Central American influence and parting from the increase of not located migrants originated in Chiapas state, principal federal entity bordering with Central America, it has been conformed a group of families called Junax Ko'tantik.³⁰ It is about a searching that dialogues with initiatives in other countries and continents in which relatives are set as the principal actors and assume denouncement, documentation and investigation labors by themselves³¹.

²⁹ Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense (EAAF).

³⁰ Other groups of relatives of disappeared migrants have been conformed in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. In Mexico there exist similar experiences in the states of Querétaro, Coahuila y Guanajuato, among others (CICR, 2014).

³¹ An example of that is the searching that has documented Moorehead from the conformation of an organization of relatives of disappeared migrants in Tunes. Six women members of the organization, whose help from the government of such country, traveled to Italy to search for their disappeared migrant sons parting from fingerprints sampling of their citizens that would be contracted with the ones collected in the id cards in Italy. The mothers sought to pressure the Italian government to perform the information interchange. Five women came back not having obtained great advances, but one of them, Mecherzia Errawafi has stayed in Italy to insist until she receives news form her disappeared son Mohamed of 19 years. Her persistence has brought great attention from Italian media and, in a context of null effects for searching disappeared migrants and identifying remains found, this group of women serves as an organizational model to be seconded and intensified (Moorehead, 2014).

Between the implementation of different initiatives in the state of Chiapas as the Migrant Associations Committee (Paz Carrasco, 2015), it stands out the facilitation of a databank that includes the genetic information of relatives who search for their migrants and that carries out the information crossing with other independent organizations in the north of Mexico and in United States, which count with genetic information of migrant bodies found in migratory routes.

The first meeting of relatives of not located in the city of San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas was held during 2011. different civil organizations on human rights and migrant support, in the face of the increasing number of chiapanecan that left their communities go to go towards United States and with whom the contact was lost, decided to convene an open meeting for the relatives to talk about their experiences and decide about the possibility to get involved in a collective searching process.³²

The beginning of this process has as antecedent the collaboration of an initiative of EAAF for the searching of women remains from the relevance that the feminicides have taken in the north border of Mexico, especially, in Ciudad Juarez, as part of this initiative, the works implied getting in contact with Pime County morgue, in Arizona state, one of the regions that has historically registered the higher amount of migrants that die while they try to cross the borderline. Among other relevant data, the forensic analysis of bodies registered in such institution indicated -either by the collateral information or by the physical characteristics described in autopsies – an increasing number of people coming from the south of Mexico and Central America.

³² One of the principal encourager of this process has been the Civil Association Meso-american Voices Action with the Migrant Populations, that was founded in 2007 and whose members count with a trajectory of civil organizations participation that since the latest 1990s have collaborated with self-managing and autonomous processes in Chiapas state. See Lopez and Paz (2002).

It was thus that began to gestate the possibility to conform a group of relatives in Chiapas State who share the experience and take back the walked path either by migrant relatives associations³³ or by other civil associations that had afforded psychosocial support to victims of armed conflicts, violence and repression in Central American countries.³⁴

The call to form a group of relatives of not located migrants in Chiapas implied a public campaign and the involvement of religious leaders, civilian organization and human right in distinct regions of the state. From that, there began to receive and register the cases of relatives that have lost contact with their migrants and it was how there were called the first meeting whose principal discussion topic was to narrate the situation of every family and to recognize through the common experiences.

In order to accompany the group process it was conformed the net called Motor Group of Psychosocial Work in Migrations,³⁵ that agglutinated professionals formed on psychology, law and social sciences, among others. Throughout periodical meetings (monthly or bimonthly) the relatives of the not located migrants have adopted an approach that re-vindicates the right to truth and justice, and self-described as follows:

The United Families Committee of Chiapas Searching for Our Migrants³⁶ are an effort of organization of relatives of migrants from Chiapas state. We have as a purpose

³³ Entre éstas sobresalen COFAMIDE, MENAMIG y COFAMIPROH.

³⁴ Específicamente se retomó y se estableció el vínculo con ECAP y con personal con experiencia de apoyo psicosocial en la Universidad Centro Americana en El Salvador, entre otros.

³⁵ Una descripción más detallada de las organizaciones que conforman este grupo y cómo ha sido su proceso organizativo puede encontrarse en GMTPM (2014). La forma como han conceptualizado su aporte y sus principios metodológicos fueron publicados en Gómez, Barrios y Ledón (2014).

³⁶ Comité de Familias Unidas de Chiapas Buscando a Nuestros Migrantes Junax ko'tantik.

to articulate social and political actions that allow finding the whereabouts of our disappeared migrants, executing the right to truth, to justice, to the integral reappearance and to the non-repetition. We are women and men, mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters who have decided to demand functional and adequate mechanisms of access and procurement of justice for our disappeared ones.³⁷

The organizational process of Junax ko'tantik has implied to assume the cultural and linguistic differences (the group has tzeltales, tzotziles, choles, tojolabales and mixed race members) and to assume an strategy that includes spaces of psychosocial accompany, of public incidence strategies development and use of juridical denounce. As part of their process, the members of the group maintain solidarity and learning relationships with similar experiences in Central America, other states of Mexican Republic Mexican and international solidarity instances.

By mid-2015, the Junax ko'tantik had held more than ten encounters of families and counted with the participation of around 30 families. As might be expected in such a process, not always the relatives have the possibility to participate in every meeting and it is required an intense work of discussion and formation in order to make the decision – not exempted of fear and skepticism – of publicly denouncing or place a denouncement against the judicial power.

As it might be expected, the relatives of not located or disappeared search for them alive, so they insistently talk about keeping hope during the searching:

³⁷ Declaración con motivo de la presentación de denuncias judiciales ante el Ministerio Público en San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, el 24 de julio de 2015.

She started to dream that there was her son and began to talk to her. That he just as had gone in the field, and didn't arrive in the field, came back only because just as it was going to rain a lot. Here he was her son present and had told her that one of his brothers was going to the protest... there her dreamed finished. She woke up because she felt her son was present there (translation from chol of the granddaughter of Josefa Jimenez Perez, member of the group Junax ko'tantik, 2015).

When the relatives “dream” on their migrants, they evoke quotidian situations and also joy moments as religious festivities. As part of chol culture (in the case of the previous and next interview fragment) and probably in some other Mayan cultures, dream on the migrants acting or speaking in quotidian situations is a motive of joy and causes to feel their presence. The dream feeds the possibility that migrants remain alive and are carrying out their labor projects.

He was in a party in Tila, Chiapas. In there always celebrate to Señor of Tila. And among those parties he met my uncle present there. He went to greet him and gave him a big hug and a kiss because he has a lot he does not see him. And he started to talk what he does. He said that he was working. That he was sat with two men already old. That just as him he was caring them. He is helping them to sell things. Then he woke up happy because he feels that he is alive, that he is working, but we do not know where. That is the dream of my grandfather. (Translation from chol of the granddaughter of Josefa Jimenez Perez, member of the group Junax ko'tantik, 2015).

When there are traces that the migrant is alive, he is thought from a place where he is asked to get in touch with the ones who have more necessity to keep the link with him:

To my brother I would say that do not forget his sons. If about us as brothers does not want to know, does not matter. That he does not call us. That he does not communicate with anybody. But, of his mother? Inferring he had a problem with his wife and due to it he decided not to communicate. But, his sons? (Interview to Eleazar Velazco Alfaro, member of Junax ko'tantik Group, 2015).

While the condition of not location or disappearance causes an uncertainty which, in turn, generates a continuous grief whose cycle cannot be closed, in those cases in which it is confirmed the finding of the body of migrants is, as one supposes, an also painful process. As written by Teresa, who has experienced this situation:

Since then [at receiving the news of her husband death by dehydration at Desert of Arizona] we began to suffer. To live like a torment, because we did not know if it was him, where he was, where they had him or where they took him, a lot of things passed through our mind. I stayed a little quiet when they told me that yes he was the one who was in Tacuba [his origin community]. (Interview to Teresa de Jesus Jimenez Hernandez, member of Junax ko'tantik Group, 2015).

Teresa describes in this way the psychosocial and corporal repercussions of the loss of her partner in these circumstances:

I it hurts me a lot, because I felt very lonely. Because I saw myself all that. Six years we suffer a lot, without desire to live. I got sick a year after he left. I got sick. I did not want to live neither, when he was not anymore. I did not think on my daughter, but I did not want to live. I said: What for? If he is not any more. I

felt very bad, like I could not sleep at night... I heard steps at night, looked at the road, like I imagined that I saw the truck coming, and that he came to stand in front of my house and it was him. And I suffered like that. But life goes on. I have got who to live for. My daughters need for me. I cannot let myself die, because also one dies of sadness (interview to Teresa de Jesus Jimenez Hernandez, member of Junax ko'tantik Group, 2015).

The group space serves as an environment of encounter to recreate the spirit to find alive our relatives and to not to stop to strive in the searching:

What I could say to people [to people in a similar situation] that do not lose hope, hope is what dies last. And that most not lose until knowing if is alive or not. I have not taken my finger from the line. Hopefully I come to know he is alive, although he is forgotten of us. But to be alive would be profit (interview to Eleazar Velazco Alfaro, member of Junax ko'tantik Group, 2015).

Sharing experiences provides them hope and fortress, that allow them to comprehend that there are other people in similar conditions or, even, more complicated, therefore they also stop participating in meetings and searching actions:

There have been useful, at least for me, the meetings we have had. It gives fortress. One feels more animated, to know I am not alone with this problem. That there are more people who are, not in the problem I am, but a little harder, because there are ones that are their wives or children, are there. Wanting to locate their father or husband (interview to Eleazar Velazco Alfaro, member of Junax ko'tantik Group, 2015).

The group provides a contention for taking back the quotidian life. It cannot be faced in normal way due to there are an absence that has left an unavoidable mark, but can be taken back through giving it another sense and through focus into the other members of the family and challenges this entails:

When we have the monthly sessions, to me that have been very helpful because if a family is missing, well, we have to fight, I got a daughter that is studying. I want to still see for her interview to Teresa de Jesus Jimenez Hernandez, member of Junax ko'tantik Group, 2015).

The solidarity is woken up and that is shown through the meeting with other people who also have “that same pain”. An environment in which it can be shared what happens to each one and what is felt, in such a way that the force for keeping moving is shared to “keep walking”:

I was invited to the meetings and helped me a lot. When I saw people, not just me, that was bearing the same. Many people with that same pain. Many people what is happening to them also for are passing just for going there [United States]. The sadness goes by, the pain goes by little by little. And there comes the tranquility, after all that. When we go there to the meetings I feel good because we all talk, we say what we feel, that happens not only to me, happens to the rest and that we need to keep walking (interview to Teresa de Jesus Jimenez Hernandez, member of Junax ko'tantik Group, 2015).

According to what has been observed in Junax ko'tantik organizational process, most of the not located or disappeared migrants are men, at reproductive age and who have family and children. Who look for them are, mostly, women that facing the new

situation receive not only the emotional burden, but also take charge of the education and maintenance of the children:

I got to fight for myself to see my daughter. Because I cannot ask her to work. Because if she works, she neglects her study. I got to find what she asks me. That way, I see it hard. Because I am alone, alone with her. (Interview to Teresa de Jesus Jimenez Hernandez, member of Junax ko'tantik Group, 2015).

However, from what these people share, the disappearance of their migrant relatives implies them to double their workload and become, many times, in the only family psychosocial supporter of their family; they show their disposition and capacity to assume the new conditions of life in which they have been involved:

If one can get ahead. Like this, being a woman, I have provided for my daughters. My two daughters grew up. They are already big. One is studying and I plan to help my daughter to finish a career (interview to Teresa de Jesus Jimenez Hernandez, member of Junax ko'tantik Group, 2015).

Testimonies of relatives of not located or disappeared migrants that are shown here are only a little sample of subjective repercussions and processes they experiment. They show the heterogeneity of experiences that this situation can mean for them. Although the incommunication with their migrant relatives unchains a series of not desired effects, sufferings and new difficulties that have to be overcome, it is also true that the relatives who decide to participate in this kind of groups show their availability to fight collectively and their capability of solidarity with other people in similar conditions; but also their capacity to go from the private to the public, to consider – many times without experience or abilities previously acquired - the possibility to transform the

pain of the absence in motive to have an impact in the public opinion and, most of all, to get involved in processes of enforceability of the observance of humans rights for their families and themselves. Thus, they offer a message of courage, of fight for rights and of solidarity. With their actions they show and emphasize that the contribution to social transformation is possible, and even more vigorous, when being in greater pain and affectation conditions.

Without being the central purpose of this work, it should be noted that recent works have emphasized the necessity to recognize and visualize the growing participation of lesbian-gay population in migratory processes (Parrini, 2015), besides they document the exclusion and stigmatization of this population that exacerbate during migratory journeys, these approximations have also shown the capacity of agency and collective action and of enforceability of rights that this population have reached (Ojeda, 2015; Cerda, 2011).

4. Ethnic diversity in the searching and identification of migrants

Although migration in different states has already take some decades of trajectory, the disappearance of migrants appears as a problematic associated to violence and disappearance of people that have been intensified in Mexico since the six-year that begun in 2006 and goes up till the day. Chiapas, as an entity that has been added more recently to international migration, is associated with the disappearance of migrants almost immediately.

The exacerbation of this problematic, has given rise to the confluence of relatives groups who look for their migrants. Even though the Central American associations as the Team of Communitarian Studies and Psychosocial Action, the Committee Relatives of Not Located and Disappeared Migrants of El Salvador and the Committee of Relatives of Disappeared Migrants of the Progress, have already a longer temporal trajectory, in Mexico the conformation of collective groups or searching strategies has been more recent and it is located in states like Coahuila, Querétaro and Chiapas. Among the particularities of this last state we find that indigenous population have a significant participation on international migration without documents, facing besides to a migratory journey of more than 2,000 km to arrive to the north border of Mexico. Moreover, their antecedents and international nets to migrate are more limited regarding other states that have had an international migration during decades.

Such as emphasized by Maria Sol Yañez (2014), the psychosocial accompaniment experiences need to take back the culture of the population that need and inspire it; even, the own and traditional forms in which the affectations are described and confronted. In this case, the ethnic belonging of migrants and relatives becomes a central factor when it regards on carrying out searching and denouncing actions of disappearance.

The counseling to migrants' relatives, as well as the conformation of families in order to locate or search not located migrants require, at counting with an important participation of tzeltales, tzotziles or choles, a translating or discussing work in original tongues, principally when it is about sharing experiences, re-signifying pain and the uncertainty of the whereabouts of their relative or discussing in regard of the definition of a collective searching strategy.

But beyond the immediate challenge, the necessity to understand the instances that by law are obligated to look for the disappeared, the possibility to interpose a juridical denouncement entails fundamental problematics that need to be discussed. From the perspective of juridical pluralism it faces the problematic of even if the ones who participate of an ethnic identity have their own juridical system that defines crimes like kidnap, disappearance or murder, the searching of a migrant relative implies to denounce throughout the Mexican or United States' juridical system. This means that it is required to conduct themselves in an environment that has another juridical order, other procedures and penalties different from those that are proper of their cultures and which they learn day by day along their lives. To this juridical diversity on which indigenous right is systematically excluded and subordinated, is added the particularities of the legal dominant language that only recognize rights and obligations to individuals and not to collectivities and that only consider valid the evidences and verifiable facts, this juridical system ends up hegemonizing the discourse insofar as to present a denouncement implies to use an structure, a logic and a language previously defined by such official juridical apparatus, and, otherwise there is the risk that the denouncement do not be considered valid.

In Mexican law have been made reforms which dictate that indigenous members have right to a translator or interpreter during juridical processes; however, it is about a right that is seldom obeyed, or, that with difficulty is reserved for who are criminally accused (Hernández Castillo, 2013). In contrast, the possibility to carry on a judgment in which relatives of disappeared migrant could express and argue in their own tongue as

they plan it in the family groups, is glimpsed as something essential and that offers them better possibilities to find their relatives.

While searching for indigenous migrants by their relatives, the co-terranean lawyers of migrants play a central role due to their knowledge of the problematics and the original languages.

The process of searching and formulating a judicial denouncement serves as an intercultural praxis in which there participate members of indigenous people that have trained in law, education, and anthropology, among other. Likewise, in this category contribute professionals that without being native or having as mother tongue any Mayan language, have got closed to the problematic long-lastingly and have learned some of the indigenous tongues of the zone.

In this context, the official discourse, by not recognizing the diversity in the juridical field, can contribute to the “re-victimizing” in the sense that those who are suffering the disappearance of their relatives, when they try to search them, face a judicial system that exclude or undervalue their own juridical system.

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Consulted Sources

Institutions where interviews were applied

Instituciones de salud visitadas para la investigación:

Hospital General de Palenque

Hospital General de Comitán

Hospital General de Tapachula

Hospital General de Huixtla

Hospital General de Arriaga

Hospital Básico Comunitario de Frontera Comalapa

Hospital Básico Comunitario de Pijijiapan

Hospital Básico Comunitario de Tenosique

Centro de Salud de Ciudad Cuauhtémoc

Centro de Salud de Frontera Comalapa

Centro de Salud Urbano de Huixtla

Centro de Salud Urbano de Pijijiapan

Clínica del IMSS-Prospera de Benemérito de las Américas

Clínica del IMSS -Prospera de Motozintla

Módulo de atención a migrantes del IMSS de Palenque

Módulo de atención a migrantes del IMSS de Arriaga

Grupo Beta de Palenque

Cruz Roja Mexicana en Palenque

Módulo de la Cruz Roja Internacional de Arriaga

Módulo de la Cruz Roja Internacional de Tenosique

Migrant Shelters visited:

Albergue Jesús el Buen Pastor para el Pobre y el Migrante, Tapachula

Albergue Belén, Tapachula

Casa del Caminante Samuel Ruiz, Palenque

Casa del Migrante Hogar de la Misericordia, Arriaga

La 72 Hogar Refugio para personas migrantes, Tenosique (Tabasco)