LIFE AND AGENCY AT THE BORDERS

ADVOCACY FOR THE RIGHT OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES TO HAVE RIGHTS

Roberto Marinucci
Editor

Série Migration – 26

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CSEM

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SUMARY

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PREFACE

We currently live in a world full of complexities; this is not different from what has been experienced in other periods of our history. The challenges that we, as a human society, face have been, are and will be part of our existence. However, the migratory phenomenon, although it has been part of the entire historical development of humanity, today presents us with a particular complexity of unprecedented dimensions and characteristics.

This book is the result of reflection and dialogue on this enormous challenge, with a special component: the leading voice is that of civil society organizations involved in the service and defense of the human rights of migrant populations, as well as of the people in mobility themselves. We celebrate the initiative of the Centro Scalabriniano de Estudos Migratórios (CSEM), as the people and organizations that participated in the II International Conference "PROMOTING LIFE AT THE BORDERS" – which was held at the Universidad Iberoamericana of Tijuana – to promote this meeting from which today we harvest this extraordinary book.

As a university entrusted to the Society of Jesus, Ibero Tijuana feels twinned with those who seek to provide solutions to social problems from a humanistic position that involves the community itself as an agent of change. However, it is not only this shared mission that unites us, but also the methodological approach that assumes as a starting point for reflection, not the ether of abstractions, but the encounter with reality and, more specifically, the encounter with the experience of those who undertake the path in search of life and with the experience of those who, from their identity as organized civil society, build life on the borders.

The *Sitz im Leben* of the Conference - the emblematic border region between Mexico and the United States of America

– reminded us, with its imposing wall, of the obstacles and difficulties faced by people on the move around the world. But it also reminded us that the promotion of life at the borders does not only refer to geographical borders, but above all to the borders of humanity, where the conditions of life cease to be humane and become inhuman, where they cease to be conditions of life and become conditions of death. In this sense, Tijuana, like so many other regions that expel and receive migrants, is a pond in which the face of the world is reflected, the face of our Common Home, with its lights and shadows, with its signs of violence and solidarity, of death and the promotion of life.

This book is undoubtedly a glimpse into that pond. In it, we find, above all, the voice of refugee and asylum seekers, of people in mobility and of organizations whose raison d'être is to serve these women and men, girls, and boys. We also find the committed voice of academics who contribute their knowledge to the promotion of life. It is a source of pride for the Universidad Iberoamericana Tijuana to have been able to offer a space conducive to the encounter and expression of all these voices. What sense would it make to call itself a university if it were not open to reality, if it were not a space for the promotion of dignified life, if it were not willing to embrace the universality of all peoples and cultures, of all human experience?

We congratulate the CSEM, the Madre Assunta Institute of Tijuana, the Misión con Migrantes y Refugiados Scalabrinianas (SMR) of Mexico City, the Scalabrinian Foundation of Rome, and the Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados of Mexico for this publication, which is not presented as a closed dialogue but as a word open to a return to reality that enriches reflection and allows for an ever more determined commitment to the promotion of the human rights of refugees and migrants. This book is, without a doubt, a fruit loaded with seeds that will produce life a hundredfold.

Florentino Badial Hernández
General Director
Universidad Iberoamericana Tijuana

INTRODUCTION

Between the 21st and 23rd of 2023, in the city of Tijuana, Mexico, the II International Conference "PROMOTING LIFE ON THE BORDERS: Civil Society's Impact on the Empowerment of Migrants and Refugees and Their Right to Have Rights" was held by the Centro Scalabriniano de Estudos Migratórios (CSEM) in partnership with the Ibero-American University of Tijuana, Instituto Madre Assunta of Tijuana, SMR, (Scalabrinianas Misión con Migrantes y Refugiados) of Mexico City, Scalabrinian Foundation of Rome and the Jesuit Service to Refugees, Mexico, with the support of Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart – Germany, MISEREOR, and ADVENIAT.

One of the main objectives of this event was to strengthen the capacity of civil society at the regional, national, and international levels in promoting the protagonism of migrants and refugees in defense of their rights, which is the guiding principle of CSEM's activities established by the institution's Core Guideline. In this sense, more than just providing ready-made answers, the II International Conference of CSEM sought to stimulate debate regarding the management of the challenges posed by the migratory phenomenon, especially in the South-South, Latin American, and Caribbean contexts.

The II International Conference took place simultaneously in two languages, English and Spanish, with a total of 222 registrations, 187 in Spanish and 35 in English. In-person participation averaged 95 people over the three days, in addition to those who followed the online broadcast. The majority of participants were from Mexico and Central America, South America, the Caribbean, Southern

Africa, and Western Europe.

Throughout the three days of intense immersion and reflection on migrations, a total of nine activities were carried out, including an initial panel with the event's organizers, an opening lecture, six roundtable discussions on regional migration trends in Africa, Latin America, Advocacy, migration policies, and the empowerment of migrant groups. Additionally, there was an afternoon of working groups, concluding with the placement of observers and the reading of the Open Letter constructed during the event.

The methodological proposal brought together academics, civil society, represented by agents working directly with people in mobility situations, and migrants, thus enriching the debate between theoretical production, practical action, and experiences. By disseminating studies and promoting reflections and institutional partnerships to deepen knowledge on the migration issue, practical contributions were made to defend the empowerment of migrants in the pursuit of their rights.

This book celebrates the encounters, debates, and exchanges held at the II International Conference of CSEM. In this introduction, we would like to highlight some of these aspects.

The primary focus, although not exclusive, of the event was on South-South migrations. These are not solely motivated by restrictions in Northern Global migration policies. They are mobilities that also occur due to geographical proximity, historical ties, and sometimes cultural bonds that unite countries and diasporas, as well as through migratory networks that play a determining role in destination choices. In many cases, these South-South migrations are also transit migrations, such as in the case of Mexico and other countries in Central America, or Mozambique in Southern Africa. The proliferation of transit countries is partly a result of border externalization policies, which force numerous migrants to seek alternative maritime or land routes to reach their destination. These South-South migrations, as well as the proliferation of transit countries, expose migrants to numerous risks, with serious impacts in terms of human rights protection.

Within the scope of South-South migrations, the reflection

during the event was centered on the Americas and Southern Africa. It would have been interesting to also focus on other geographical areas, including because there is evident interconnection between migratory movements at the international level. Nevertheless, to allow for adequate depth and also due to logistical considerations, the decision was made to mainly concentrate the reflection on these two areas, without neglecting, clearly, global connections. In the Americas, the emphasis was undoubtedly on the so-called North-Mesoamerican corridor, one of the most intense and complex worldwide, which also directly involves South America, as well as routes of migrants from African and Asian continents. There was also a specific concern to value and deepen the characteristics of indigenous peoples' mobility. Regarding Southern Africa, the spotlight was on the southern part of the continent, especially Mozambique and South Africa.

The central focus of the reflections and debates was on the action of Organized Civil Society (OCS). If in the I Conference, which took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2018, the theme of "assistance" and "hospitality" practices by the OCS was deepened, in this II Conference, the advocacy or influence action was highlighted. By advocacy, we understand the processes and strategies through which the OCS can interfere and influence the stance of governmental actors –and not only– in favor of legislations and policies that defend and promote the human rights of migrants. In other words, beyond emergency actions and possibly assistance, the OCS also has the duty to act systemically and structurally to ensure the right to have rights of people who are often considered non-persons (Dal Lago) or human refuse (Bauman). Throughout the event, various advocacy strategies were highlighted, such as the development of partnerships to address migration issues, both in the political sphere and in society at large; the formation of partnerships and networks of OCS actors; support for and strengthening of migrant collectives and their advocacy actions; denunciation of violations of human dignity of people in mobility; tackling xenophobia and other forms of discrimination; and even the dissemination of more in-depth information and analysis of the migration reality, aiming to multiply solidarity and strengthen societal pressure as a whole, towards the formulation of policies aimed at promoting the rights of migrants and refugees.

In all of this, I would like to highlight the formation of partnerships and the strengthening of the agency of migrant individuals.

Regarding the first theme, I want to underline how the formation of networks and solidarity partnerships presupposes the establishment of a common project, in the broad sense, a shared horizon, a convergence of objectives that allows for collaboration and sharing of expertise. The potential of a cohesive Civil Society Organization (CSO) is so evident that often disguised strategies are employed to generate conflicts and divisions among civil society actors.

Concerning the action of empowering migrant collectives and, in any case, the agency of people in mobility, it is worth emphasizing that it is not easy to demand from migrants and refugees, often in vulnerable situations, the formulation and execution of effective strategies to bring about political or systemic changes. In this sense, the subsidiary action of "support" and "assistance" from CSOs can be decisive in enabling the demands of the involved parties to influence and impact the formulation of legislation and public policies.

Beyond the specific theme of advocacy, the II Conference debated, in general terms, the solidarity action of CSOs. These were not self-referential reflections but focused on action and the challenges faced, including regarding difficulties and shortcomings. I would dare to say that, in recent years, CSOs have been caught in a crossfire: on one hand, constant and continuous defamation actions by xenophobic and nationalist groups, as well as populist governments, leading to what has been called the "criminalization of solidarity"; but on the other hand, criticisms also from supportive segments, questioning the type of assistance and services offered, sometimes too aligned with the priorities of local governments, which makes CSOs a link in the restrictive control and management process of migrations; or questioning overly assistance-oriented approaches, to the detriment of the agency of migrant individuals. These are questions that cannot be generalized but deserve to be evaluated in order to ensure the best path for solidarity action.

As we have seen earlier, the creation of legislation and public policies focused on promoting human rights presupposes a deep and contextual understanding of the migration reality. The question arises: who is the social subject capable of offering this knowledge? The II Conference, like the first one, was precisely designed with the aim of intertwining different perspectives on the migration reality. Firstly, the perspective of migrants and refugees, the subjects of mobility, those who directly drive the processes and have the right to set their priorities, especially when gathered in collectives or other organized groups; in addition, the perspective of CSOs, of people who deal directly or indirectly in service to migrants and often have contact with a large number of people, thus having a broader view of local challenges; finally, academia, researchers, who have interdisciplinary theoretical tools for a more complex, comprehensive, global, and intersectional interpretation of the factors involved in local challenges. The dialogue between these different spheres allows for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and the involvement of different communication codes, not just verbal: often, artistic expressions, in the broad sense of the term, allow for a better understanding and expression of certain realities.

Expanding further on this reflection, the II Conference, both by the location where it was held –Tijuana, on the border between Mexico and the USA– and by the geographical and cultural diversification of the organizers and participants, as well as the long and complex process of "transnational" planning and organization –through continuous online meetings in different languages– became, in all its stages, a workshop of "border", as a social space of encounter between diversities, with all the richness and, indeed, all the difficulties that this implies; it also became a workshop of "(i) mobility" for all those who arrived in Tijuana from other countries and continents, but also for those invited, especially from countries of the Global South, who ultimately did not participate in person due to not obtaining the necessary documentation in time. The realities of "border" and "(i)mobility" permeated the entire event and are partly conveyed in the various articles and communications that make up this book: they are contributions from migrants,

members of civil society organizations, and researchers who allowed themselves to be challenged and dared to analyze, reflect, describe, narrate, and meditate on the mobility of migrants and refugees and the action of CSOs.

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank all those who, in some way, contributed to this significant event, from the funders to the participants, including all the organizing entities. The II Conference, in continuity with the first one, is yet another small seed in the commitment towards a fairer and more fraternal world, where no one can be considered a "foreigner".

Roberto Marinucci
Brasília, 25/03/2024
36 anos do CSEM

PAPERS

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INTERPRETATIVE KEYS TO CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL MIGRATIONS
Challenges for civil society organizations

Eduardo Domenech

Thank you very much, Handerson, for the presentation. It is also a great pleasure for me to be with you at this moment. I am very grateful for the invitation and the opportunity to participate in this space to share with you some reflections on the challenges of organized civil society in migration and refugee issues, especially in a very particular context, as I intend to show below. We are currently witnessing the expansion and intensification of migration and border controls in the world. When I was invited, I was asked to point out some of the global dynamics that characterize contemporary migrations and I was told that I was expected to offer some interpretative keys on contemporary migrations on a global scale, preferably from a "bottom-up" perspective, that is to say, that the reflections should contemplate the actions of civil society organizations. In this sense, it seems to me to be essential to talk about the transformations in the processes, policies and practices of

migration and border control in the world, but also about migrant struggles, without ignoring the coordination between the global, regional and national scales, under the hegemony of the narrative of "safe, orderly and regular migration". And I also consider necessary to name some issues that seem to have been somewhat neglected in the debate on control and freedom of movement. I wonder, for example, what has happened in civil society spaces with the "right to migrate", so claimed, so named and so defended at different times and in different spaces. I have the feeling to some extent the right to migrate as a claim has been relegated, displaced by "safe, orderly and regular migration". I say this also as a provocation to fuel the debate.

The ideas I would like to share with you are based on several years of critical research on border migration control policies and practices, particularly in the South American region, as well as on the fieldwork I have carried out with the research team I coordinate in Córdoba, in several South American countries. Between late 2021 and mid 2022 we have been present in several border areas including Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia. And, undoubtedly, for these considerations I also recall my participation in different spaces of migrant activism in Argentina.

First of all, I would like to share with you some more general questions about what some authors have called the "globalization of migration control" (Düvell, 2003). We are in an era in which migration and border control is no longer deployed solely on a national scale, including some model imports or exports. Since the 1990s, the " migration control globalization " has taken place through a specific mechanism: namely, the regionalization of migration policies in general and migration control practices in particular. The region becomes the most important unit in terms of migration and border control.

We are immersed in an era of proliferation or multiplication of borders (Mezzadra, Neilson, 2017). Clearly, we are dealing not only with a quantitative increase, but also with a greater intensity of border controls in the world. And it is also necessary to point out that it is not only about the spread of punitive control, but also about the expansion of humanitarianism as a tool of movement control (a

process that we can call the humanitarianization of control) in the contemporary world.

With the pandemic, border closures and confinement were instituted as the most widespread solutions globally; there is some consensus that they are the expected solutions to control the spread of COVID. Therefore, we have witnessed and are embroiled in a process of re-borderization of the world, as some authors have pointed out (Aradau, Tazzioli, 2021; Bigo, Kuskonmaz, 2021). In these very times we can also observe the emergence of crisis narratives, named as "migration crises" or "refugee crises", in the world, together with or arising from the so-called great displacements of people . In this sense, it seems to me that one of the challenges is to think that migratory crises, refugee crises, are not given, that they do not exist by themselves. They do not exist objectively, but there is a political production of the crisis, of the migration crisis, of the refugee crisis.

My first concern in this presentation is how to share with you this phenomenon of expansion, of the widespread acceptance of the new mantra of migration governance, which is safe, orderly and regular migration. And I say mantra because it is assumed in a repetitive, unreflective, automatic way in many spaces, even in the field of immigrant activism. From a critical point of view, safe, orderly and regular immigration is understood as the consecration of a technocratic formula for the global control of so-called irregular migrations, which I prefer to call illegalized, inasmuch as there are concrete actors who produce these processes of illegalization in the contemporary world. Consequently, my concern has to do with what I mentioned before: to what extent in the spaces of civil society the right to migrate has been displaced by this technocratic mantra of safe, orderly and regular migration. I think we could discuss the question of safe, orderly and regular migration extensively. I would like to say two or three things about it in a very synthetic way.

First of all, this formulation comes from the so-called migration management scheme, popularized in Spanish as "gobernabilidad migratoria" and then "gobernanza de las migraciones". It is part of the device known as global governance of migrations, which

basically aims -according to critical readings- at disciplining migrations in the world. This brings us back to a central issue in the political debate on migration and borders: control versus freedom of movement. And, in this regard, it has a short history and a long history. The short history takes us to the 2016 New York Declaration, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact for Refugees, both from 2018. The long history relates to the shaping of the international refugee regime and the emergence in the 1990s of certain IOM consultant proposals such as the so-called international regime for the orderly movement of people.

With these global pacts, this formula of orderly, safe and regular migration is enshrined. This is a political triumph of technocratic actors such as the IOM. In this long history we can observe a historical constant: there is this concern, this preoccupation with "ordering" migration. The interesting aspect here is that this category always appears to be linked to the challenges that large movements of people present to immigration regimes and policies. We could say at this point that there are very significant transformations in terms of migration and border control whenever there are large movements of people, as at the present time. This happened in the period after both world wars, in the nineties, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the dissolution of the USSR and, currently, in contexts of war, political instability or economic blockades, as in the case of Syria, Venezuela and Ukraine. Essentially, movements in a south-north direction are the ones that generate the great transformations in migration and border controls. So, there is one key issue, to understand that it is not just any type of movement that destabilizes migration and border controls or regimes, but always refers, as established in the New York Declaration, to the so-called forced and irregular migrations. This helps us to understand that transformations in border control are always linked to so-called "irregular migrations". In these transformation processes we can see a relative loss of state monopoly in the material and symbolic struggles waged in the field of migration and refuge.

There is currently a multiplicity of actors involved in the regulation of international population movements. International

organizations, especially those of the United Nations system, have acquired an unusual protagonism in the disputes over the ways of thinking and acting on migration movements. Other actors, such as national and international NGOs and religious organizations, have begun to play an increasingly important role in the processes and strategies for controlling movement at the regional level. As a result, disputes over the political definition of migration and refuge have acquired very particular connotations in the current stage. And one of them has to do with the notion of "migratory crisis" produced within the framework of these schemes of global governance of migration. Precisely its emergence or its production is linked to specific strategies, with specific modes of intervention, which end up having multiple consequences for migrant lives.

Currently, one of the fundamental strategies that we can observe is the so-called "regional responses". In this regard, it is worth mentioning the R4V platform, which emerged in 2018 in the context of the so-called "Venezuelan exodus". I believe it deserves our attention insofar as it has been presented as a humanitarian response. From a critical perspective it could be seen, in reality, as part of these schemes of global governance of migrations and, in particular, as a strategy of externalization of border control. It also implies, among others, processes of datification of migration control and humanitarization of migration control.

I believe that in this background of expansion, of proliferation of borders at the global level, it is important to understand that expanding control does not only occur at the punitive level, but also at the humanitarian level. So, in terms of control, it is not only a question of detaining or blocking movement and punishing migrants. Control can no longer be understood only in terms of punitive measures. Today, border migration control strategies are aimed at containing, dissuading, dispersing, channeling and anticipating movement.

For this reason it is important to consider how humanitarian control was instituted to achieve these objectives. There are four major processes that we can identify in the field of migration and border control today: securitization and militarization; externalization; humanitarianization; datification. They are not the

only ones, but they fundamentally determine or organize certain configurations of migration and border control. Some processes and practices of securitization and militarization are often more evident than others because they are generally associated with punitive control. Most criticisms point to these processes or practices. However, it is also important to pay attention to the process of humanitarization of control. New modalities of movement control are related to humanitarian interventions. Moreover, there is increased evidence of how securitization and humanitarianism operate in tandem. Humanitarian "responses" may also be part of border externalization strategies as is currently happening in the region. Finally, although the datification of control (basically understood as the production, processing and use of data for border migration control purposes, expressed through figures such as biometrics, databases, monitoring and mapping tools, among others) goes largely unnoticed, it is extremely important to take it into account in order to understand the most recent mutations of migration and border control. In short, all the processes mentioned above are involved in strategies of deterrence, containment, dispersion or anticipation of movement.

That being said, in all cases control is contested, it is always resisted. I agree with those who understand the notion of the overflow of control as highly productive for thinking about how to act and think in relation to immigration and the care of migrants or the defense of their rights. Whilst for global governance schemes the notion of ungovernable migration is unacceptable insofar as it destabilizes the desired order, from critical perspectives this untamed migration is recognized as a creative force that enables us to imagine other ways of organizing the social and political world. As proposed from the perspective of the autonomy of migration, migration and border controls are reconfigured precisely on the basis of the turbulence of migration. It is a force that destabilizes national orders of sovereignty and borders. Consequently, border crossings can also be understood as acts of resistance or disobedience as several colleagues in critical migration and border studies have proposed. We would not be gathered here today if there were no border crossings and neither if those border crossings were not "irregular" as they are called. It is precisely those crossings

that make migration something incorrigible; a non-criminalizing perspective of migration needs to assume border crossings as acts of resistance, of contestation in the face of control. And finally, I do not want to miss the multiplicity, but also the multiplication of migrant struggles, the diversification of migrant struggles in the world, in particular the so-called struggles for movement, in the face of the policies of externalization of borders. What is happening in Tijuana could be categorized as such: these are struggles for mobility that involve very diverse strategies, from individual or family strategies to collective ones.

On the basis of these general notions, I would like to point out some issues that can be productive for the debate. On the one hand, I believe that there is a need for a profound critique of so-called statocentric or nationalist solutions to migration. There are a variety of "solutions" that are generally framed in the classical perspective of citizenship. A critique is needed because, generally, these policies or practices do not end up dissolving the fundamental division between migrants and nationals or migrants, refugees and nationals. For this reason, it is necessary to go beyond these statocentric or nationalist solutions, which end up reinforcing a division that gives a foundation to the ways of regulating the movements and lives of migrant subjects against which we think and act.

There are several actions that we could review, but many of them are related to the reinforcement of control, even if they are not presented that way. Instead of appealing to statocentric solutions, where the challenge is also to think about how our actions as organized civil society are penetrated by state thinking, we can go further and consider the possibilities and limits of a non-border (or anti-border) policy, articulated with other struggles such as the anti-racist and feminist ones. I believe it is important to think of communal politics, of radical solidarity, especially in the current contexts of expansion and intensification of hostile policies towards migrants.

In this regard, it is essential to think about the re-politicization of borders. One possible way is through the delegitimization or disavowal of actors specialized in migration control, not only State

actors. There is a whole heterogeneous universe of actors involved in daily tasks and activities of migration and border control that alter mobility projects and make migrant lives precarious.

The challenge is to critically think about the intertwining of securitization and humanitarianism, without assuming them to be opposing logics or rationalities. This is a false opposition because, in reality, what migration and border controls show today is an increasing articulation between securitarian schemes and humanitarian formulas. Along these lines, there is a need to carry forward a debate on humanitarian control and the new forms it is acquiring in migration and refugee issues. The concept of "control with a human face" seeks to criticize precisely those control actions or practices articulated with elements of the human rights narrative. I believe we must advance in the construction of an alternative language, particularly against the governance of migration within the framework of a policy of production of critical knowledge of a different nature.

I also consider it necessary to expand the margins of autonomy of civil society organizations, to build their own agendas, especially when there are more and more alliances between organized civil society organizations, migrant organizations and international organizations or international cooperation agencies that endorse or promote different formulas of border migration control.

I deem extremely important what is happening here in this space, this building of alliances with academic sectors; I want to be precise: with critical academic sectors, because academia is also very heterogeneous. It is not only an alliance between civil society organizations and academia, but also a relationship with certain sectors or groups in the academic community. In my opinion, these alliances should go beyond national spaces to build transnational links and networks between organizations and movements that oppose technocratic and neoliberal migration schemes such as safe, orderly and regular migration. It is necessary to question this category that has penetrated into different spheres of organized civil society at the same time that it is necessary to recover two slogans that have become political strategies of global scope: "No human being is illegal" (as an affirmation of "incorrigibility" according to Nicholas De Genova, 2010) and the right to migrate, extremely

widespread in spaces of organized civil society (or rather, the notion of freedom of movement). As we know, "safe, orderly and regular migration" does not promise any freedom of movement.

To conclude, I would like to refer to the so-called "politics of the imagination". In this sense, the World Social Forum on Migration, whose first edition was organized in Brazil, was a forum for designing and producing imaginative politics. The "Another world is possible" idea of the World Social Forum on Migration was an invitation to think of alternatives to the dominant conceptions of migration. However, beyond the imaginative politics, we could also consider the " interference politics " as part of the repertoires of struggle. While there are structural issues that may be difficult to change as an organized civil society, I believe that they can at least be interfered with, hindered. It seems to me that, in this sense, the notion of split temporality proposed by Sandro Mezzadra can be productive. Split temporality implies attending to the urgent but at the same time thinking with a more long-term, medium-range, long-range temporality, which implies, for example, notions related to the abolition of frontiers, whether in a material or symbolic sense.

Wrapping up, as I have done on other occasions, I would like to retrieve Abdelmalek Sayad (2008) and his notion of "heretical rupture", used to question certain consensuses around the ways of thinking and acting on migration. He makes a plea for a heretical rupture of the national order and of the order of emigration or immigration. It is necessary to be heretical nationals of the national order or heretical immigrants of the condition of immigrants precisely to be able to revert, subvert, resist, transform those policies, those practices of migratory and border control that make migrant lives precarious. Who are these heretical nationals, these heretical immigrants? Sayad refers to those who refuse to conform to the set of norms that define them and that define immigration or immigration; who refuse to submit to the imperative and the provisional, the subordination at work and of political exclusion; who refuse to be expelled or expelled, excluded or excludable from the political, according to the division between nationals and

non-nationals. I hope that heresy takes place in these days ahead of us, that we can have a conversation as national or immigrant heretics. Thank you very much.

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2

CIVIL SOCIETY AND MIGRATION POLICY
Advocacy and solidarity

Maurizio Ambrosini

In this paper I will look at grassroots mobilizations by citizens in support of refugees and (weak) immigrants, in particular through the lens of "active citizenship", and I will propose the concept of "de-bordering solidarity", to express the political meaning of such mobilizations. With this term, I refer to various forms of support provided by activists and volunteers, through which these actors contest policies of asylum and borders in practice (Schwiertz, Schwenken, 2020), even when they do not aim to achieve profound political changes or do not advance overt political claims (Fleischmann, 2020; Ambrosini, 2021).

1 The humanitarian action in question

Refugees receive assistance not only from public institutions, but also from NGOs and other civil society actors: volunteers, social movements, religious institutions. This is particularly true for rejected asylum seekers, who can remain on the territory and make ends meet thanks to the support of these non-public actors (Ataç, Schütze, Reitter, 2020; Leerkes, 2016).

Reception and support provided by non-public actors, however, meets several criticisms. A wide stream of scholarship has aimed at critically analysing what is labelled "humanitarianism", or "humanitarian reason" (Fassin, 2012) as a uniform category, detecting its internal flaws and unintended consequences; sometimes suggesting that it should entirely dismantled, in other cases highlighting its complexities and limits (Ticktin, 2014).

The first issue concerns the meaning of humanitarian interventions in political tragedies. To cite an example, in her influential work on Hutu refugees from Rwanda, Malkki (1996) spoke of "speechless emissaries", denouncing how humanitarian actors transform refugees into pure victims, dehistoricizing and depoliticizing their condition. Likewise, Rajaram (2002) denounced the representation of refugees as "mute bodies" by international humanitarian agencies, advocating that refugee situations "cease to be sites where Western knowledge is reproduced" (p. 263). Khosravi (2010), in turn, in his auto-ethnography, described how, once hosted in a camp, he was trained to become a victim, being deprived of his dignity.

The link between humanitarian support and states' policies falls in the spotlight accordingly.

While in the United States some well-known scholars have praised humanitarian actors as determined opponents of anti-immigrant policies (Hagan, 2008; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2006), or as providers of crucial services to people who do not possess a legal status of residents (Marrow, 2012; Portes, Fernández-Kelly, Light, 2012), in the European debate, on the contrary, criticism has prevailed. Humanitarian actors, including NGOs, would be accessories of state policies aimed at keeping refugees distant from the First World, trapping them in inhospitable refugee camps and denying the possibility of accessing rights: they would cooperate in managing unwanted immigration (Agier, 2011). Or, in another version of the argument, they would soften both borders' closure and a generalised repression of undesirable human mobility by introducing some elements of compassion into immigration policies, at the price of treating migrants and refugees as victims (Fassin, 2005; 2011). According to this perspective, "humanitarian

action thus forms part and parcel of the governance of migration" (Fleischmann, 2017, p. 57).

A frequent observation regards the fact that humanitarian organizations, such as the Red Cross, depoliticize their activity (Malkki 2015), emphasizing their political neutrality. The fact that NGOs usually reject a political engagement, emphasizing rescue of human lives, exposes them to the accusation of embracing an "antipolitics of care". Priority given to ethical values and relief of human suffering is seen as a withdrawal from a fight in favour of justice and a new political order (Fassin, 2012).

As a consequence, contemporary humanitarianism is seen as deeply embedded in the neo-liberal order: "Contemporary humanitarianism endorses neo-liberalism becoming restructured along neo-liberal premises regarding its agents and their roles, their activities and their assessment, their ways of thinking and talking, and their self-perception" (Sözer, 2020, p. 2166).

In this article, as in most of this stream of literature, the "humanitarian" sector is considered as a whole. It ranges from international agencies such as UNHCR or OIM, through semi-public organizations such as the Red Cross, and big NGOs, to local grassroots initiatives.

Quite similar is another observation: the outsourcing to civil society of public services is often labelled a fundamental feature of the neoliberal project (Harvey, 2005; Kearns, 1992). In particular, service-oriented NGOs are considered useful to the system. Good intentions notwithstanding, these NGOs enable politicians to continue to espouse a rhetoric of closure without facing accusations of inhumanity. Their activities may even create consensus on exclusionary policies by preventing highly visible human rights infringements that might backfire. Such statements avoid the issue of the destiny of people involved, and imagine that public opinion would rise up against state policies in the case of loss of human lives. What has happened in the Mediterranean in recent years would suggest at least more caution in this regard. And it appears cruel to use the suffering of people in need in order to achieve a political change.

2 Grassroots initiatives as an expression of humanitarian action

Various forms of humanitarian help stem from grass-roots initiatives. Della Porta and colleagues (2018), Feischmidt and colleagues (2019), Rea and colleagues (2019) among others, have studied the wide set of actions and initiatives that are being established "from below" in various European countries in solidarity with asylum seekers coming from the Middle East and North Africa.

I conceive these activities as expressions of a de-bordering solidarity. National borders have regained a strong political importance, especially after 2001, responding to an increasing demand for security and protection against external threats (Balibar, 2012; Newman, 2006). In such a context, defence of national security against terrorist attacks has been combined with a fight against unwanted immigration (Adamson, 2006; Andersson, 2016), triggering a criminalization of unauthorized border crossings and sojourn on the territory. Not only smugglers, but also humanitarian actors helping irregular immigrants have been legally prosecuted in several countries (Stierl, 2016; Müller, 2020). Against this backdrop, many activities in favour of migrants and asylum seekers acquire a political meaning, even if not openly declared or even conceived: they imply an objection against borders, either external (rescuing people from the sea, against border closure), or internal (providing various types of help to people who are not authorized to remain on the territory, against removals and bureaucratic obstructions: Artero and Fontanari, 2021). Opponents, and also several governments and judiciary authorities, see well this point: they do not attack people who voice against borders, but people who support migrants in practice, helping them to cross borders and establish on the territory (Schwiertz, Schwenken 2020)

Initially these initiatives received a more positive evaluation by scholarship, which focused especially on no-borders movements and saw a counter-hegemonic meaning in their protests (Vandevoordt and Verschraegen 2019). More recently criticism has been voiced in this case as well, highlighting similarities with the "humanitarianism" previously analysed (Sandri, 2018; Herrmann, 2020)

A case in point is the large mobilization by private citizens in Germany during the so-called "Summer of Welcome" in 2015. According to some estimates, it involved from 10 to 20 percent of the adult population (Karakayali, 2017), often without any previous experience of voluntary work, and without any political or religious affiliation. Pries (2018, p. 49), citing some German newspapers, talks of the "September Miracle" in Germany and other countries. However, also this social movement has provoked criticism. Some observers see the ambiguity inherent in caring and helping people in distress, denouncing the infiltration of individual and psychological motivations. A point of reference is again a study by Malkki, whose title is emblematic: *The Need to Help* (2015). She claims that practices of humanitarian support were inspired in the first place by personal interests, such as the desire to find a diversion from the routine of daily life and current work, or by the need to make "oneself as part of something" (*ibidem*, p. 123). In the same vein, humanitarian aid can be analysed as a response to private emotions, on which the present communication of solidarity works, to raise funds and support (Chouliaraki, 2013). Kapoor (2005) goes further by speaking of "narcissistic samaritanism", in which the benevolent self-searches for a "glorification" even when he/she claims the desire "to empower the Other". The sentiment of a lack of gratitude by refugees towards their supporters (Moulin, 2012) is often cited as testimony of this hidden motivation: the helping subject demands to be recognized and gratified by sincere and warm expressions of gratitude by beneficiaries. Refusal, protest, lack of cooperation are seen as faults in the appreciation of what they receive. More simply, volunteers tend to choose more rewarding activities, in terms of personal contact and emotional payback, avoiding tiresome and frustrating tasks, even if necessary (Vandevoordt, Verschraegen, 2019).

According to Pries, this stream of criticism claims that "caring for refugees had nothing to do with altruism, but was a comfortable way of using the refugees as an object for stabilizing their own lives... People were looking for meaning in their lives or for social recognition and were making more or less helpless and destitute refugees the objects for solving their own existential problems" (2018, p. 58).

Another step consists in highlighting selfish interests, or, according to critical studies on humanitarianism, the confirmation of an asymmetry of power between givers and receivers: volunteers tend to reproduce inequalities and hierarchies, an attitude of superiority inherent in humanitarian assistance and compassion (Fleischmann, Steinhilper 2017, p. 22). According to Fassin (2012) and many others, caregivers, holding the power to decide whom to help, and how, establish a "relation of inequality" (p. 3).

Being mainly Western educated women of the middle class, they exercise forms of paternalism, or better, a "mental motherhood" towards refugees (Braun, 2017), assuming an educational and emancipatory mandate. They desire to teach them the right way to behave in a European country, revealing a background of colonial stereotypes. This occurs especially when they consider refugee women as (passive) victims to emancipate from patriarchal control. In various ways, they confirm the superiority of the Western way of life, put refugees in a subaltern position, and shape asymmetric relations between givers and receivers of support (for a similar criticism from the USA, see Nagel, Ehrkamp, 2016)

Another relevant body of criticism concerns the political awareness of volunteers and their commitment to the political dimension of solidarity towards refugees. Karakayali (2017) observed that volunteers, while portraying refugees as victims deprived of agency, tend to exclude references to the social or political context of suffering. Kleres (2017) is even more critical, highlighting how several "emotional regimes" have affected welcome initiatives in Germany, depoliticizing civic actions. Compassion, following Arendt (2006), is seen as a "depoliticizing emotion" (p. 153).

Vandevoordt and Verschraegen (2019) have talked instead, more positively, of "subversive humanitarianism": "a morally motivated set of actions which acquires a political character not through the form in which these actions manifests themselves, but through their implicit opposition to the ruling socio-political climate" (*ibidem*, p. 105). Despite this statement, they insist on their "ambiguities": beyond the production of "vertical relations" between helpers and recipients, the definition of specific categories of recipients, based on vulnerability, legal status or deservingness,

and the substitution for flaws in government policies. Under several aspects, they liken grassroots mobilizations to depoliticized humanitarianism.

3 Why practical solidarity is personally meaningful and politically relevant

The crisis of reception policies in recent years (Dines, Montagna and Vacchelli 2018) in the EU and in the USA has to be confronted with this body of literature. A first question clearly regards whether criticism can be applied in the same terms to all humanitarian endeavours. I wonder if search and rescue activities run by NGOs in the Mediterranean can be inserted into a frame of complicity with governments and with a neo-liberal governance of asylum; if Carola Rackete, the young captain of the ship Sea Watch 3, to cite an icon of this activity, can be seen as an ally with the Italian government or with the EU policies. And the same can be said about the other NGOs which have saved lives in the Mediterranean, at risk of confiscations, heavy fines and accusations. One is surprised by the lack of nuances and distinctions in the vision of what is called "humanitarianism" in general terms, and in the harsh condemnation of its activities.

Expressing a different vision, Irrera (2016) showed the mixing of conflict and cooperation, of political and practical activities, developed by several NGOs in their relations with EU authorities, in treating the "refugee reception crisis" (Rea et. al. 2019) in the Mediterranean. Also Cuttitta (2018) admitted that humanitarian action is not always so depoliticized or connected with governments policies as previously claimed. NGOs can assume different positions, but at least some of them try to question and contrast governmental policies and practices.

Turning to grassroots initiatives and volunteers mobilization, it does not come as a surprise to find that pure altruism (probably) does not exist: individual motives and personal interests blend with solidarity in regard to others. Already thirty years ago, Wuthnow (1991) subtitled his famous book, *Acts of compassion: "*Caring for Others and Helping Ourselves*"*. Social scientists such as Godbout

and Caillé (1998) have theorized the implicit pay-backs of altruistic behaviours, and at the same time they have claimed that "egoism that finds its pleasures in altruism is very different from the crude, primary egoism whose universality the modern ethos takes for granted" (p. 4). Caillé (2007) has advocated a "modest conception of the gift", underlining that gift-giving is never perfect: gifts and personal interests are combined in the actions of donors, are not incompatible and recall each other. Adopting the logic of gift-giving however, means breaking with the circular and narrow logic of rational economic calculations. It implies putting the search for individual benefits in relation to the well-being of other people.

Furthermore, compassion is not necessarily in contradiction with a political commitment to justice and rights. It can be seen as a "political virtue", an element in political life which serves to reinforce a strong connection between the personal and the political (Whitebrook 2002, p. 539). Schwiertz and Schwenken (2020) talk of "inclusive solidarity" and "solidarity citizenship", to define civil society initiatives aimed at renegotiating societal structures in solidarity with people on the move. This "solidarity from below" strives to overcome forms of exclusion on the national level and to create "links and feelings of closeness between people from very different origins" (*ibidem*, p. 409).

In a polarized political situation, in which harsh adversarial stances against asylum seekers have gained ground in several countries, the fact of giving help to refugees in various ways appears in itself an action loaded with political meanings and consequences (Schwiertz and Schwenken 2020). And not without dangers, because not rarely supporters of (irregular) migrants and asylum seekers have had to face xenophobic attacks and legal problems (Agustín and Jørgensen 2019). Practical and mundane solidarity acquires a political meaning, and this is perceived as an act of disobedience, subversion, violation of state sovereignty by its opponents.

In this perspective Sandri (2018) talks of the "volunteer humanitarianism" of "grassroots organizations" at the so-called Jungle of Calais, where hundreds of volunteers assumed the burden of delivering humanitarian aid and basic services to

asylum seekers precariously hosted in the camp. Even if these grassroots organisations were not initially motivated by political considerations or connected with political activism, but instead mobilised by humanitarian concerns, they went beyond the "neoliberal governance" of borders, contesting states and border regimes. Thus, this form of humanitarianism can be seen as a form of "civil disobedience" (*ibidem*, p. 66) and "cannot be interpreted simply as an expression of the neoliberal project." (*ibidem,* p. 76). In the same crucial place, and in the same vein, Monforte and Steilnhiper (2023, p. 7) observed that "By being present in the field" activists and volunteers "engaged into practices of solidarity based on relations of sociability and affectivity and, in so doing, aimed to create new political imaginaries that challenge violent bordering policies (…). Indeed, through their daily encounters with migrants, they aimed to challenge the logic of division, isolation and fear that is at the core of the politics of dehumanization and exhaustion".

On the other side, no-borders movements and radical left activists have also started to provide goods and services to asylum seekers and immigrants: Zamponi (2017) has termed these activities as "direct social actions": "actions that do not primarily focus upon claiming something from the state or other power-holders but that instead focus upon directly transforming some specific aspects of society by means of the action itself" (Zamponi, 2017, p. 97). In this way, solidarity initiatives and political claim-making are not two separate (and even opposed) forms of action, but are related. Activists explain that they have moved from a political mobilization to a "mobilization of doing" (*ibidem,* p. 98). As Della Porta (2020) has argued, distinctions between social movements and civil society tend to blur, and an "hybridization" between these two types of social actors is going on. Political claim-making and direct social actions reinforce each other: direct social action provides a hub of shared experiences that fosters politicisation; or allows the expression of political claims; or grants legitimacy and credibility to be spent in the realm of political claim-making.

4 Different types of actors of de-bordering solidarity

Debordering solidarity's actors try in various ways to open breaches in external and internal borders. In doing this, they acquire a political meaning, sometimes explicitly, other times implicitly, or even strategically, by choosing not to exhibit a political motivation. Supporters of asylum seekers, and unwanted immigrants, however, are very different, in ideological, organizational and professional terms. I distinguish in this regard four types of supporters (Campomori, Ambrosini, 2020).

The first group are NGOs and other specialised third-sector organizations: mainly endowed with professional staff, they deliver services to asylum seekers. Often they cooperate with national and local governments, but they can also act with independence and also against state policies, as the conflict over Search and Rescue activities in the Mediterranean has shown.

The second group is formed by other civil society organizations, ranging from volunteers' associations, through trade unions, to religious institutions: they mix in various ways professional competences with the free contribution by volunteers. They assist in particular people who fall outside the public provision of welfare services: rejected asylum seekers, refugees in transit, irregular immigrants. Health services, shelters, soup kitchens, language classes, are typical examples. Furthermore, despite their heterogeneous cultural background, they take public positions in defence of refugee and immigrant rights in the public debate.

The third group consists of social movements: as I showed above, coming from a radical political engagement, they have more recently been involved in delivering various forms of help to migrants and refugees in need: shelter in squatted buildings and support in crossing national borders are probably the best-known expressions of their solidarity. Furthermore, they are also involved in supplying other practical services, such as bureaucratic and legal assistance, food, education, entertainment. Migrants and asylum seekers' movements can be added to native social movements: mainly active in demonstrations and protests (Chimienti 2011),

through hunger strikes, marches (Monforte and Dufour 2013), occupations of central sites in cities (Ataç 2016; Fontanari, 2018), they can also combine political activities with practical support: for instance, through squatting (Hajer and Ambrosini 2020), or cooking and dispatching food (Swerts and Oosterlynck 2021).

The last group are simple citizens, mainly natives, who have taken part in various local initiatives of refugee reception, without associative labels, and without declaring a political or religious engagement. In Germany, for instance, according to Herrmann (2020), most volunteers of the Summer of Welcome of 2015 founded their own self-organized groups rather than joining established organizations. Up to a third of these volunteers even declared that they organized their activities entirely by themselves, outside of any type of group. As in the case of other spontaneous mobilizations, most of these initiatives have petered out, while others have assumed a more institutional and professional form (Rea et Al. 2019).

Overall, these various supporters provide what Leerkes (2016) calls "secondary poor relief" and Montagna (2006) and Belloni (2016) describe more positively as "welfare from below", while Agustín and Jørgensen (2019) talk of "civic solidarity". Another type of help is the delivery of moral support by some civil society actors, particularly faith groups, to people who experience social exclusion and personal suffering (Bloch, Sigona and Zetter, 2014, p. 110).

The notion of "subversive humanitarianism" (Vandevoordt and Verschraegen, 2019), almost an oxymoron, tries to capture the hidden meanings, and also the ambiguities, of these activities. As I already argued, I place these activities under the concept of "de-bordering solidarity". Actions of help contest policies of asylum and borders in practice, but often do not aim at subverting the social and political order, or they acquire a political meaning only in a second moment, being confronted with various oppositions; nor do they share the ideological framework and rules of conduct of most established humanitarian agencies (Sandri, 2018). Furthermore, softening the political meaning of de-bordering solidarity can also

favour an expansion of the support to migrants and asylum seekers, involving other citizens not eager to engage in political struggles (Ambrosini, 2021). Political awareness can follow. As Artero (2019, p. 158) argues in his study on humanitarian assistance to refugees in Milan, "volunteering functioned as a micropolitical practice: it allowed volunteers to be outraged by structural injustices, sympathise with migrants and (...) engage in outspoken forms of dissent such as lobbying, advocacy and public demonstration".

Concluding Observations. Solidarity from below beyond humanitarianism

Borders, national sovereignty, immigration and asylum are contentious issues in the present public debate (Triandafyllidou, 2020). In particular, civil society's humanitarian endeavours and grassroots initiatives of solidarity have been the object of this paper, under the label of "de-bordering solidarity".

Humanitarian activities, however, have been harshly criticised in the sociological and anthropological literature of the past two decades, especially in Europe. Grassroots activities have often received in turn a widespread critical evaluation. In this article, I have compared this situation with the political backdrop of the refugee reception crisis in the European Union.

Against this background, I have claimed the political meaning of solidarity activities, even when they do not have an explicit political motivation (van Selm, 2020). Even if engagement can respond to personal needs and reasons, it has political implications (Fleischmann 2020). It questions national borders, challenges state policies, weakens immigration restrictions, hinders deportations. Consequently, it can be conceived as "de-bordering solidarity". It is precisely for this reason that it is blamed by anti-refugees actors and not rarely by the public authorities (Tazzioli, 2018).

I have also maintained the necessity to distinguish among different types of pro-refugee actors. They range from big international NGOs, other civil society actors, social movements, to common citizens without any label. It is an oversimplification to

put all of them in the homogeneous category of humanitarianism. It is true, however, that this diversified set of subjects is often able to form an advocacy coalition on the side of refugees' (and immigrants') rights, on what I called the "battleground" of immigration policies. Through political campaigns and practical actions, they influence the governance of such issues in democratic countries: for instance, the effectiveness of exclusion of rejected asylum seekers and other immigrants with irregular legal status. These mobilizations can be seen as practices of "active citizenship", and they can encompass a myriad of activities which aim at solidarity with the weakest and their social inclusion, going beyond the boundaries of legal entitlements, citizenship, and national belonging.

This paper, hence, has intended to bring new insights to broader questions, such as humanitarianism, solidarity, civil society and active citizenship, connecting migration studies, public policies and social movements. In particular, it has elaborated the concept of de-bordering solidarity as the frame to grasp grassroots citizens' activism.

To conclude, I advocate deeper understanding of humanitarian activities developed by civil society actors in favour of refugees and other immigrants at the margins. In this historical period of restrictions in asylum seekers' reception, various actors from civil society fight to protect human rights and to keep borders open for foreigners who are need. Their support activities do not contrast with political activism. On the contrary, these forms of de-bordering solidarity, the (explicitly) political and the humanitarian, converge for various aspects.

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3

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS, MIGRANTS, AND CHALLENGES IN AFRICAN CONTEXTS

Rose Jaji

Introduction

The growing numbers of migrants and the circumstances in which they move have resulted in governments failing to cope with the volume in some cases. These numbers have also generated alarm in prospective destination countries leading to restrictive migration policies that make it even more difficult for migrants to use "regular" channels. Besides migration policies, there are other factors that facilitate or inhibit "regular" migration and therefore influence migrants' choices of routes in their journeys. The literature shows that people of different genders belonging to different classes and possessing varied skills face differentiated opportunities to migrate. Many people with the necessary financial resources and social capital are able to use "regular" channels of migration and get to their destinations without facing many obstacles. Similarly, people with human capital that is transferable to the country of destination have a better chance of earning decent incomes and enjoying job security in the destination. People of different genders also face varied mobility opportunities depending on gendered cultural norms in the countries of origin and gendered preferences in the labor market in the countries of destination. The unequal

mobility opportunities emanating from these factors result in many people resorting to "irregular" migration which often renders them vulnerable to various challenges in transit and in the country of destination. These challenges and the image of "crisis" that is associated with "irregular" migration around the world place the migrants in situations where they need interventions to ensure that they move and live in security and dignity. Many governments are unable or unwilling to guarantee "irregular" migrants' human rights, security, and dignity. This has resulted in Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) assuming this role. Without government support and faced with government resistance in many cases, assisting the migrants is a daunting task. This article addresses the challenges that CSOs working with migrants in African contexts face. The article frames these challenges around interfaces among CSOs as well as between CSOs and country of transit and destination governments, international organizations, host communities, and the migrants themselves. The article concludes by offering a reflection agenda, which explores possibilities that could strengthen the operations of CSOs in African contexts. This reflection agenda includes linking CSOs in different countries on the continent and beyond in a bid to strengthen CSOs' voices and promote regional and global resonance in their activities.

1 Civil Society and Migrants' Journeys

Limited opportunities for "regular" migration due to a wide range of reasons that include restrictive migration policies in prospective countries of destination and exorbitant costs for travel documents, visas, and travel fares force many migrants to find alternative ways to travel from their country of origin to the country of destination. Clandestine migration outside "regular" or "legal" channels exposes migrants to various dangers in transit and in the country of destination. "Irregular" migration often results in the journeys taking longer than they would through "regular" channels. For example, migrants sometimes stagger their journeys and spend several months and even years in transit in order to earn more money for the journey and/or strategize on how to proceed

against restrictive migration policies in the intended country of destination. At a global level, the literature has documented numerous challenges that "irregular" migrants face. They predictably work without work permits, which exposes them to enslavement, human trafficking, and exploitation (Demissie, 2018; Gallo, Konrad, Thinyane, 2020; Nisrane, Ossewaarde, Need, 2020; Norwood, 2020). They also experience racism and xenophobia which exacerbates the challenges they face (Erel, Murji, Nahaboo, 2016; Klotz, 2016; Rzepnikowska, 2019). For example, African migrants in South Africa are vulnerable to xenophobic violence. In particular, Zimbabwean migrants who work on farms in South Africa are vulnerable to exploitation (Bolt, 2015). Considering that many countries of destination see deportation as the appropriate response to "irregular" migrants, CSOs play an important in these situations where migrants are sandwiched between undesirability and exploitation.

CSOs also face the challenge of protecting migrants from transnational criminal syndicates that take advantage of "irregular" migrants' precarious circumstances. Human trafficking has become more prevalent as more people who are unable to use "regular" channels to migrate end up falling into the hands of criminals who promise them easier passage to the intended destination and employment. Embedded in human trafficking are other crimes such as people smuggling and drug trafficking. Migrants inadvertently participate in the latter as the so-called blind mules. They are also at risk of becoming victims of organ harvesting (Gonzalez, Garijo, Sanchez, 2020). Migrants of different genders fall victim to various forms of exploitation including sexual abuse. The "irregular" migration route exposes migrants to arrest and detention in both countries of transit and destination for illegal entry. Migrants who are used as blind mules are arrested and convicted for drug trafficking regardless of the fact that they may not have known that they were carrying drugs. State security institutions sometimes use violence. For example, the Moroccan police has routinely used violence against African migrants seeking to enter Spain and Europe through the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla sitting on the shores of Morocco.

A combination of various factors that "irregular" migrants face on their journeys inundate CSOs with countless cases of human rights violation. Working towards protecting migrants' rights where the state brazenly disregards these rights is a mammoth task, which places CSOs at loggerheads with the state. Staff in CSOs sometimes risk their own lives because their activities can disrupt human trafficking and draw the ire of those involved and standing to benefit from this crime. In particular, CSOs working with "irregular" migrants find themselves in situations where they have to engage in a delicate balancing act in terms of pursuing their mandate to protect and assist migrants and at the same time not violate immigration laws in the countries where they operate. This is because their advocacy for fair treatment of migrants sometimes draws criticism and even criminalization of their work which governments and members of the public who hold anti-immigrant sentiments portray as supporting "illegal" migration.

2 Migrants' Agency, Self-organization and Mistrust

CSOs' mission to assist migrants does not always translate into mutual understanding between them and the migrants. Contention can occur where migrants see CSOs as working against their goals. There are numerous instances in which this misunderstanding can occur in ways that make it difficult for CSOs to provide meaningful assistance and protect the migrants. CSOs in transit countries provide negative information about onward journeys and the prospective country of destination, which contradicts the positive information coming from the migrants' personal networks, the migrants can misconstrue such communication as intended to scuttle their onward journeys. Similarly, advocating return to the country of origin, even if CSOs may suggest this with the best intention for the migrants, can lead to suspicion, skepticism, and mistrust where the migrants are determined to get to the intended country of destination despite the obstacles. CSOs that are perceived by the migrants as working with the governments in the country of transit and/or the country of destination to deter migration lose the

migrants' confidence and trust, which makes it even more difficult for them to share information and assist the migrants.

With improvement in communication technology, migrants seek information on their own and are in constant communication with those who have reached the desired country of destination. The image of success from family and friends who have migrated inspires the would-be migrants leading to the determination to migrate (Dekker, Engbersen, Faber, 2016; Pourmehdi, Al Shahrani, 2021) or to continue with the journey for those in transit. As CSOs work towards creating awareness especially on the dangers encountered during the journeys, many prospective migrants rely more on information about the country of destination but not about the risks encountered in transit (Obi, Bartolini, D'Haese, 2021). At a symposium under the theme "African Migration, Mobility, and Displacement", which I attended in Accra, Ghana in March 2023, a panel made up of representatives of CSOs raised concern about migrants sometimes rejecting their advice because the migrants and would-be migrants often interpret advice which contradicts their intentions with suspicion or as failure to acknowledge their intellectual competence to make decisions for themselves. For example, some would-be migrants in Ghana had lost money to unscrupulous migration brokers in the prospective country of destination. Migrants who are determined to move even avoid CSOs altogether and only look for them after they have been cheated out of their money or subjected to violence.

Some of the tensions between migrants and CSOs are generated by the question of accountability where migrants suspect that staff in CSOs spend much of the donor funding on themselves instead of on the migrants. Accusations of CSOs exploiting the plight of intended beneficiaries are not unique to migrants: during my doctoral fieldwork with refugees in Nairobi, Kenya from 2006-7, refugees constantly asked why CSOs and international organizations spoke about lack of funds when their staff drove "big cars". Beyond accusations of exploitation, migrants sometimes see CSOs as pushing donors' agenda. For example, the European Union (EU) and its Member States fund CSOs in sending countries such as Ghana, and the Gambia in West Africa as well

as Tunisia, Egypt, and Morocco in North Africa. CSOs that receive this funding tread a fine line between promoting the EU's border externalization agenda and promoting migrants' rights. It is difficult for them to convince migrants that staying in view of the perils of the Sahara desert and the Mediterranean Sea is in their best interest when deterring entry into the EU is one of the objectives of this funding. Mistrust thus arises where migrants and CSOs have different perceptions, for example, of risk or danger in transit and in the intended destination. This is illustrated by the case of Caritas's microfinance project in Tunisia. The migrants who received the cash through this project used the money to cross to Italy instead of building a life and integrating in Tunisia in line with the objective of the microfinance project (Cuttitta, 2020). While the goal is to assist the migrants, gaps between the assistance that is provided *vis-á-vis* the migrants' aspirations potentially strain relations.

From the examples cited above, it is clear that people who engage in "irregular" migration need assistance but this does not mean that they are helpless victims. Migrants are increasingly creating their own organizations which they see as more responsive to their specific needs. Just as in "regular" migration, "irregular" migration is preceded by gathering of information and weighing of the pros and cons of engaging in clandestine migration without requisite travel documents. Many migrants who use "irregular" channels of migration rely on people smugglers who are not always independent criminal syndicates. Contrary to the dominant view, people smugglers utilize their ethnic, religious, and economic networks with local people in border regions and migrants do not necessarily see them as criminals as is the case in the border regions between Ethiopia and Sudan (Ayalew, Adugna, Deshingkar, 2018). The deployment of intricate personal ties and bribery of border guards generates incongruous concepts between the people smugglers and migrants on the one hand and the state on the other. The migrants view smugglers as people who assist them while the state views them as criminals. This places CSOs in a difficult position in terms of assisting these migrants without being seen by the state as complicit.

3 Interface with Funders and International Actors

Organizations that pool their resources and complement each other's efforts have a greater impact. However, working together can be a challenge because of various reasons that include conflicting strategies and agendas as well as competition for funding. Civil society and international organizations working with migrants are no exception to these kinds of challenges. This is attributable also to lack of expertise and resources to influence processes relating to migrants' rights. In many instances, CSOs are unable to generate their own funds and rely on external funders who retain the prerogative to decide on priorities that serve their own interests in the field of migration. For example, the EU funds partnerships on migration governance that are in line with its border externalization agenda and demonstrate the adage "he who pays the piper calls the tune" (Cuttitta, 2020; Dimé, Jaji, 2023). This is at variance with CSOs that support migrants' rights and a more holistic approach to migration governance focusing on other migrants who are not of concern to the funders, for example, people migrating within the continent of Africa. In Senegal which is involved in a partnership on migration with the EU, many CSOs are critical of the EU, which provides the funds for migration-related issues and earmarks its funding for return of "irregular" migration from EU Member States. CSOs working in the field of migration view this focus on return of "irregular" migrants as failing to address migration issues in Senegal and the country's priorities in a comprehensive manner (Dimé, Jaji, 2023).

Where funders' interests are inconstant, CSOs usually find themselves championing shifting if not contradictory positions on migration as they seek to meet the terms of each funding cycle. This inconstancy predictably puts the credibility the CSOs concerned in question. In other words, the challenge for CSOs that receive external funding is how to harmonize their stated mission with funders' changing priorities and interests. For instance, Germany, which supported return migration especially to West African countries such as Ghana, is now seeking to "import" skilled migrants including those from this sub-region. This means that CSOs in West Africa that receive funding from Germany now need to alter their

approaches so that they can fit into the country's current interests and priorities. CSOs' reframing of their agenda in line with funders' interests emerged as one of the challenges raised at the symposium in Accra alluded to above.

CSOs working with migrants operate in the same field as international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The nature of their mission and engagement with the state requires these international organizations to prioritize diplomacy. In contrast, CSOs may find more robust engagement more effective and appealing. Cooperation can be replaced by mutual accusations where international organizations may see confrontational approaches as political and counter-productive while CSOs may perceive the IOM and UNHCR's diplomatic approach as complicity. In my research with refugees in Nairobi referred to above, CSOs openly assisted urban refugees which was contrary to the country's encampment policy at the time. In contrast, the UNHCR official whom I interviewed as part of the research stated that the agency "cannot work against the government" by assisting urban refugees (Jaji, 2009). This created the kind of division of labor that resulted in the UNHCR channelling its support to encamped refugees and tacitly approving of Kenya's encampment policy while CSOs operating in Nairobi directed their assistance to urban refugees self-settled in the city and thus appeared to be challenging the encampment policy.

4 Government Authorities

Governments in many countries that receive significant numbers of "irregular" migrants are predictably against immigration. This has resulted in recourse to restrictive immigration policies. In countries such as Ghana and Senegal, CSOs were invited to participate in the formulation of national migration policies. However, participation does not always result in CSOs' views and recommendations being included because governments tend to decide on the content of the final policy document. Some participants in the CSO panel at the Accra symposium indicated

that whole they had participated in the formulation of Ghana's national migration policy which the country adopted in 2016, they had not been able to play an active role in the implementation of the policy. In Senegal, a few CSOs participated in the formulation of the national migration policy document in 2018. They, however, criticized the resultant document which was formulated at the aegis of IOM stating that it was not comprehensive enough to cover the various migration trajectories in Senegal (Dimé, Jaji, 2023). The Senegalese government has not officially adopted this document thus creating an uncertain and obscure policy environment for CSOs that work with migrants.

CSOs' work is complicated by stringent migration regulation regimes and limited space for CSOs to navigate structural barriers often created by host governments. CSOs' support for migrants has even resulted in accusations of encouraging "irregular" migration or not being patriotic. For instance, in 2014, the South African government issued undocumented Zimbabweans the Zimbabwe Exemption Permit (ZEP) which enabled them to stay, study and work in South Africa. However, the South African Ministry of Home Affairs decided to terminate the ZEP on December 31, 2022. The Helen Suzman Foundation, a local think tank, took the government to court and the High Court in Pretoria ruled against termination of the ZEP which it further said would be valid until June 2024. While this may give the migrants who hold this permit reprieve, working with migrants in this kind of environment poses several challenges for CSOs that stem from the uncertainty that this short-term reprieve generates among the migrants.

In parts of Africa where CSOs are involved in rescue operations, for example in North Africa where migrants seek to cross the Mediterranean Sea in unsafe overloaded boats, one of the major challenges is whether to return rescued migrants to the country of departure in North Africa or to take them to the first destination at the end of these perilous voyages in Southern Europe. Either decision places CSOs involved in rescuing migrants in conflict with the respective government. This is salient considering that the EU has agreements with countries in North Africa as part of its border externalization policy. Protecting migrants' rights in countries that

have laws and policies that seek to curtail immigration remains one of the obstacles that CSOs face in many African countries. Government at both ends of the voyage do not want to keep or receive the migrants.

On the political front, CSOs face governments that play to citizens' anti-immigration sentiments. Immigration has become a very political topic in many countries receiving migrants. This is illustrated by the fact that migration has become one of the political topics that determine victory or defeat in elections. The politicization of migration spurs governments in countries of destination that receive significant numbers of migrants to implement immigration policies that constrain "regular" channels. These countries adopt punitive methods of dealing with "irregular" migrants through securitization and "policialization of immigration" (Fassin, 2011: 221). The securitization of migration has seen many governments associating migrants with crime, terrorism, and social ills. In such contexts, CSOs that assist the migrants face accusations of abetting "criminals" and undermining the government and the country's territorial integrity.

Migration policy works in tandem with governments' geopolitical interests, which results in selective inclusion of migrants usually based on nationality. For example, the anti-immigrant rhetoric in South Africa targets African migrants in what has been referred to as "Afrophobia" (see Amusan, Mchunu, 2017; Crush, Tawodzera, 2014) explained as "Africa's fear of itself" (Matsinhe, 2011). Not much of the xenophobic rhetoric in South Africa, if any, targets migrants from the global North. The South African government has urged its citizens to desist from xenophobic attacks but it has not done much to end these attacks. Discrimination is a major problem in such contexts and CSOs' recommendations are often disregarded which means that these organizations cannot contribute to much positive change in the circumstances of the migrants without the co-operation of government authorities. Migrants provide a ready scapegoat for government failure to meet the needs of citizens and it appears as though many African governments use them to play to public opinion for political ends especially in elections and in times of national crises.

5 Local People and Volunteers

It is difficult for CSOs to assist migrants where their immediate environment is characterized by political repression which turns repressive governments against CSOs especially those working in the area of human rights. It is not uncommon for authoritarian regimes in Africa to monitor CSOs and tighten laws that governs them when these organizations are seen as threatening repressive regimes' grip on power. While the restrictions are intended to control CSOs' political influence on citizens, they deliberately or inadvertently affect migrants because the legislation applies to all CSOs. In Tunisia, CSOs worked as an extension of the government until the revolution in 2011 which means that those working with migrants could not go against the government's position on migrants. In Egypt, the revolution led to more restrictions that affected even CSOs that supported migrants and advocated their rights (Cuttitta, 2020).

Anti-immigrant sentiments have been on the rise especially in countries that receive significant numbers of migrants as countries of destination, transit or both. North African countries receive migrants mostly from African countries most of whom are on their way to Europe but end up staying because of the difficulties associated with this "irregular" route. The most stable countries in Africa have received migrants and refugees for decades. South Africa, which receives many migrants from across the continent is currently facing economic pressure and problems related to poor service delivery to citizens, for example, power and water cuts. As economic woes continue unabated in countries such as Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana which host a considerable number of Zimbabweans have seen a rise in anti-immigrant sentiments and xenophobia. In particular, African migrants in South Africa are accused of committing various crimes and "stealing" jobs from citizens (Alfaro-Velcamp, Shaw, 2016). They are also accused of burdening public social services such as healthcare in the host countries. This perception of migrants makes it difficult for CSOs to facilitate migrants' access to labor markets and social services. In 2022, the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) of Limpopo Province in South Africa made headlines when she accused a

Zimbabwean migrant woman of depriving South Africans of healthcare and demanded to know from her whether the president of her country would pay for her treatment at the hospital (Jaji, 2023). This incident sparked a polarizing debate in which South Africans who are anti-immigration supported the MEC while others argued this conduct was unprofessional. In this kind of environment, it is likely that "irregular" migrants may not seek healthcare and other services for fear of abuse and harassment. This can reverse the strides made by CSOs in terms of advocating migrants' access to social services in the host country.

CSOs' work gets complicated where they have to address migrants' needs in environments where public discourse, the media, and politics clearly express hostility towards migrants. Many anti-immigration politicians claim to be the voice of citizens and this implicitly portrays CSOs that work with the migrants as encouraging the migrants to stay against the wishes of citizens. This hostility and resentment directed at migrants is fuelled by host country fatigue evident in how former South African president, Jacob Zuma, reacted to the outcry following another episode of xenophobic violence. In his address at a Freedom Day rally in 2015 as reported by the Lusaka Times of April 28, 2015, Jacob Zuma blamed the attacks on the migrants' countries of origin by asking, "Why are their citizens not in their countries? It is not useful to criticise South Africa as if we mushroom these foreign nationals and then ill-treat them" This easily resonates with citizens living in material deprivation especially when they see migrants as enjoying a better living standard. Citizens who hold anti-immigration sentiments have called for migrants to leave South Africa and rebuild their countries (Alfaro-Velcamp, Shaw, 2016). In countries where such sentiments are prevalent, directing assistance to migrants creates resentment among the economically marginalized citizens and becomes counter-productive when the citizens react by physically attacking the migrants and their businesses as happens in South Africa where some anti-immigrant citizens organize themselves into groups that set their mission as ridding the country of migrants. For example, Operation Dudula, is a vigilante group in South Africa which uses the mantra "citizens first" and blames "illegal aliens" for

the country's problems (Jaji, 2023). CSOs that work with migrants engage in awareness campaigns on migrants' rights in environments where anti-immigration groups such as Operation Dudula often exhibit lack of awareness and information on historical migrations that show that belonging and migration in Southern Africa have a longer history which is excluded by the current borders that were drawn at the Berlin conference of 1884 by European colonial powers during the scramble and partition of Africa.

6 Networks and Partnerships among CSOs and Beyond

Although CSOs may have the common agenda to assist migrants, tensions can develop amongst themselves based on unfavorable mutual perception. As with relations with other actors, divisions among CSOs can occur based on whether there is mutual identification, for example, in terms of agenda and strategy. This leads to different motivations and agendas in which CSOs that support the state advocate reinforcement of the borders while those that are independent champion collapsing of the borders (Cuttita, 2020). Divisions and contradictions among CSOs make it difficult for them to speak with one voice because intra-CSOs conflicts can divert their attention from their core mission of assisting migrants. They can end up aligning themselves with different actors and reduce themselves to platforms for and against actors on the opposite side. Divisions among CSOs sometimes take the local or international dimension (Milner, Klassen, 2020). In some instances, there is resentment based on the view that donors prefer to channel their funding to international CSOs because they see them as more transparent and accountable whereas national or local CSOs are seen as prone to corruption and embezzlement of funds. The absence of solidarity among CSOs as well as between CSOs and other actors in their local environment can reduce their impact on migration policy and advocacy for migrants' rights.

CSOs also work with various actors and this raises the problem of balancing divergent interests. They often have to juggle conflicting

interests between funders and host governments (Weiss, 2013). This poses serious challenges in countries where governments view CSOs with suspicion, for example, as mouthpieces of foreign actors where their activities do not align with government interests (Milner, Klassen 2020). In order to remain operational or not invite the ire of governments that are authoritarian, some CSOs may choose to conform and hope that the government will grant them space to operate without much harassment. This can include not collaborating with CSOs that the government views as a threat or as pursuing a foreign agenda. Governments' divide and rule tactics result in CSOs working in isolation, which renders them less impactful.

Many CSOs and local scholars rarely work together as they remain in their respective spaces represented by the terms practitioners and academics respectively. Much of the knowledge that is produced by universities and research institutes rarely influences practice because of limited or lack of engagement, for example, between CSOs working with migrants and researchers studying migration. Locating migration within African history shows that research outputs by social scientists and historians has an important role to play. For example, precolonial historical mobilities in Southern Africa challenge the definition of outsiders and insiders based on the borders inherited from colonization. In particular, *Mfecane*, a time of violent political conflict which occurred in the nineteenth century in Nguniland in present day South Africa, saw breakaway factions move up north and settle in regions that now constitute different countries in Southern Africa. Countries such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, and Zambia have citizens who trace their ancestry to Nguniland but these people currently face xenophobic attacks when they migrate to South Africa. Inclusion of this migration history in CSOs' engagement with local communities and awareness campaigns could foster a new narrative that reduces xenophobia.

6 Reflection Agenda

In view of the various challenges highlighted above, this article suggests a reflection agenda for CSOs and other stakeholders in the migration field such as policy makers, academics, and migrants' organizations. As a way forward, there are several issues that need more reflection so that CSOs are able to work on them within their specific national context. While CSOs can have internal differences, a united front would be indispensable as they seek to effectively discharge their mandate in environments where they interface with usually non-cooperative states. In terms of funding, CSOs need to find ways to navigate the power asymmetries. Funding generally comes with conditions and CSOs still need to find ways to handle conflicting interests especially between their mandate and funders interests. This situation gets complicated when the same funders have partnerships with the host government as the case of Senegal cited in this article demonstrated.

Expertise is another area that is characterized by power imbalances. Much of the expertise that informs civil society programs comes from academics/experts mostly in the global North where much of the funding comes from yet local CSOs have a deeper understanding of the nuance and context of migration within their countries (Milner, Klassen, 2020). Where CSOs are able collaborate with local academics, it is important to harmonize knowledge and evidence produced by academics/experts and CSOs' activities as they navigate local political structures. Meaningful cooperation between CSOs on the one hand and local universities, think tanks, and research institutes on the other is more beneficial than the compartmentalized approaches that still characterize the division of labor in the field of migration. To this end, partnerships beyond those that are conventional and based on funding and shared interests need more exploration.

The emphasis on strengthening of cooperation with other local institutions in the local environment does not mean that CSOs should invest only in local partnerships. Creation and strengthening of global and regional networks that have an impact on migration policy and migrants' experiences are important so that efforts in

one country can be replicated elsewhere in a transnational context. This would benefit migrants more as they move to different countries in contrast to isolated efforts that are confined within national boundaries. CSOs also need to increase and strengthen their cooperation with international organizations such as IOM, UNHCR, and other relevant international stakeholders.

Inter-sectoral cooperation and networks that facilitate resource-pooling are important for efficient utilization of limited resources. Inclusion of diverse actors who possess varied resources and skills produces more capacity in areas such as knowledge production, awareness campaigns, and advocacy. Focusing on issues of mutual interest to both the migrants and host communities has the potential to reduce governments' resistance to CSOs' activities as loss of citizens' support has unwanted political consequences. Introduction of employment schemes and other income-generating projects that benefit both migrants and citizens can reduce government resistance to regularizing migrants and issuing them with work permits. While the separation of migrants from local people is practical considering the limited resources at CSOs' disposal, this can lead to resentment especially when the local people live in similar economic deprivation and precarity. Support that is exclusively directed to migrants often exacerbates racism and xenophobia both of which counteract CSOs' efforts to create and foster an environment in which migrants can live in dignity. Overall, CSOs in African contexts need to explore ways that enable them to effectively assist migrants cognisant of the uniqueness of the political, economic, and sociocultural contexts in which they operate.

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4

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) ADVOCACY STRATEGY TO PROTECT THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN MEXICO

Giovanni Lepre
Emilio González

Introduction

Human mobility is a long-standing social reality in the Americas. Population movement in the region known as "Mesoamerica", Mexico and Central America, during the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century has remained dynamic, constant and on the rise. The "Mesoamerican migratory system" (Durand, 2016), a term used by academics specialized in human mobility in the region, has had a predominantly economic focus. Economic asymmetry between the countries of the south and north is one of the main reasons behind this structural feature of human mobility in the region. The world's leading economy, the United States, coexists in the same region with countries whose Human Development Index (HDI) ranks among the lowest in the continent, such as Haiti, Nicaragua and Honduras.

In the past 10 years, a constant increase in forced displacement has been observed in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Cuba, Haiti and Venezuela. Since 2013, several studies, reports and qualitative and quantitative research have been published evidencing violence, insecurity and threats as the causes of population outflows. This is an increasingly undeniable reality. Thousands of people do not choose to migrate, but instead are forced to flee, to move looking for a place where they can find protection.

Mexico is no stranger to human mobility. Historically, there are four main facets of population movements in Mexico: origin, transit, return and destination. In addition, there is also a dimension of forced internal displacement in the country's mobility.

1. *Mexico as a country of origin*. More than 11 million born Mexicans live in the United States; taking into account the over 25 million Mexicans born in the United States, 36 million Mexicans live outside their country (Pew Research Center, 2017). As a result of this fact, Mexican State and society have for several decades defined a marked identity around Mexico's character as a country of origin of migrants in search of improved economic living conditions.
2. *Mexico as a transit country*. From 1995 onwards, the social and economic instability of Central American countries, after the reconstruction of the civil wars and armed conflicts of the 1980s, boosted economic migration from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Mexico became an obligatory transit point for millions of people migrating to the United States in order to improve their lives economically. This dimension of human mobility has been permanent over time.
3. *Mexico as a country of return*. For the last 10 years, some specialists have been warning about the increasing returns of the Mexican population that had migrated to the United States years before. Several factors were at play, mainly the economic difficulties in the United States following the 2008 crisis. As a result of this reality, the

Mexican government and civil organizations began to design response plans to reintegrate the returning Mexican population. Return has become a public policy concern for all actors involved in the response to the changes and adjustments of the human reality in the country.

4. *Mexico as a country of asylum*. The fourth dimension of human mobility in Mexico has to do with its role as a host country. According to figures from the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid (COMAR), between 2017 and 2022 the number of people seeking asylum in this country has increased by more than 700% (UNHCR, 2023a). In 2021, Mexico was among the three countries with the highest number of asylum requests in the world, after the United States and Germany. The onset of this increase coincides with rising percentages of people who stated violence, persecution and threats as the main causes for leaving their country of origin in studies, reports and documents published since 2014. The expansion of the UNHCR Operation in Mexico has occurred in this context of increasing forced displacement in the region. In 2016, UNHCR had three offices in the country: Mexico City, Tapachula and Acayucan. Currently, UNHCR is operating in 21 cities in the country, throughout central, northern and southern Mexico.

5. *Internal displacement in Mexico*. In recent years, the number of Mexican people displaced within their country due to violence, insecurity and threats in their communities has increased. According to figures from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC, 2022), at present there are more than 386,000 people who were forced to flee their homes and remain within Mexican territory. Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Michoacán, Michoacán, Chiapas and Zacatecas are the leading states where forced internal displacement occurs. Since 2019, the Mexican State acknowledged the existence of this reality, and is adapting its institutional designs, regulations and generating diagnostics to better understand the causes

and consequences of this scourge that plagues entire communities in several states of the country.

1 Mexico as a country of asylum: a multi-causal reality

The following five reasons explain Mexico's current status as a country of asylum.

1. *The deteriorating conditions in the country of origin* is one of the main causes that explain Mexico's status as a destination country. People do not leave their homelands by choice, but by being forced to flee. The migration movement is not an economic one, allowing people time to decide and plan their migratory process, but a forced displacement that takes place in circumstances of great uncertainty, improvisation and urgency. Many people are not clear about which country to move to; they are looking for a place where they can find protection from persecution and threats in their countries of origin. Mexico has been considered by these individuals as a country where they can find safety. This forced displacement factor also explains the rise in asylum requests from Nicaraguan citizens in countries such as Costa Rica and Panama. Economic migration has a south-north direction; forced displacement is also south-south.
2. *The strengthening of the asylum system in Mexico*. The accelerated rise in the number of applicants for refugee status recognition in Mexico has brought with it an effort to strengthen COMAR's capacities. Although the number of applicants grew exponentially, COMAR has improved the efficiency of its refugee status determination procedures. In 2022, COMAR adjudicated 54% of the applications it received, which was a 20% increase in its processing capacity compared to 2019, when it adjudicated 34% of the applications received. This has influenced people's decision-making process to stay in Mexico, as in some

cases, in a timeframe of six months; they manage to obtain their positive decisions and their permanent resident cards. Their timely access to migration documentation via their asylum procedures is one of the reasons why thousands of people consider staying in Mexico, given the impossibility of returning to their countries due to violence, threats and persecution. UNHCR has documented this through its yearly participatory assessments with asylum seekers and refugees. Although there is still a significant backlog of pending applications, the asylum system is more robust today than it was in 2018.

3. *The challenges and high costs associated with gaining irregular access to the United States* has led to thousands of people wishing to remain in Mexico. Historically, the United States has been foremost in receiving migrants and refugees from different regions of the world. However, in the last 5 years, the United States has significantly tightened its policies on access to its territory and asylum through the implementation of measures such as the Migrant Protection Protocol (MPP) and Title 42. People are increasingly aware of the difficulties of accessing U.S. territory, the high cost of paying smugglers and the risks they face at the hands of organized crime when crossing Mexico without documentation. This reality has been influential enough for a significant number of the population within the region's mixed movements to decide to remain in Mexico, rather than undertake the complicated and dangerous journey to the United States.

4. *The increase of asylum seekers in Mexico generated an advance in the policies regarding the response and attention to the refugee and asylum seeker population*. This has led to an improvement in labor and socioeconomic integration opportunities in central and northern Mexico, such as Monterrey, Saltillo, Guadalajara, San Luis Potosí, Guanajuato, Aguascalientes, among others. UNHCR, alongside state and municipal authorities, as well as civil society organizations and allied private sector companies,

had implemented since 2016 the Local Integration Program (PIL), which is intended to facilitate employability of refugees who began their asylum procedures in the southeast of Mexico, but who wish to live in a locality in Mexico where they have better prospects for socioeconomic development. In 2022, 12,796 refugees were resettled as part of this program. Since 2016, more than 29,000 people have benefited (UNHCR, 2023a). UNHCR forges alliances with companies in different industry sectors to provide job opportunities in cities in the central and northern parts of the country with high promise for development. This is an important incentive for thousands of people who are waiting for their asylum procedures in southeastern Mexico.

5. *Strengthening refugee population social networks in the south and north of the country*. The rise of refugees who see Mexico as a destination country has resulted in the establishment of social support networks in cities such as Monterrey, Tijuana, Cancun, Queretaro, among others. Currently, among the refugee population, an analogous process is taking place to the creation of social networks in the 1990s by Mexican migrants from certain states who decided their destination location based on the presence of support networks in the Mexican states where they were born. For example, people from Michoacán and Jalisco decided to go to California because there were strong social networks of their "paisanos" in that state. Today, a similar process can be seen in the decision making process of Hondurans settling in Monterrey, the Venezuelan population in Monterrey and Cancun, or the Haitian population in Tijuana. The existence of friends, relatives and acquaintances from the same countries is one of the main factors influencing the population's decision-making process regarding their final destination in Mexico. Social networks facilitate the integration process, as they often become the only references people have to obtain information, support and guidance when arriving at a new destination.

2 UNHCR's advocacy strategy in Mexico

Evidence for advocacy

In this article, the term advocacy will be used to describe the intention of an actor, individual or coalition to influence the decision-making process of another actor, individual or coalition. Activities to influence the public policy cycle vary depending on the actor that carries them out. In the case of non-state actors, such as international agencies or civil society organizations, the advocacy activities are mainly aimed at influencing States to adopt courses of action that guarantee the fulfillment of the human rights on behalf of the people for whom the organizations work (UNHCR, n/d).

Generating evidence to inform the public policy cycle is one of the main functions of international organizations. Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998, p. 16) refer to four methods used by transnational actors to influence the decision-making of state actors, one of which is the use of information for placing an issue on the public agenda. This process is one of the main indicators of the effectiveness of an advocacy strategy: when, thanks to the provision of objective information by specialized actors, decision-makers begin to glimpse the need to address a situation with a new approach, or, definitively, to adopt the issue on the agenda for the first time.

It has taken several years to place forced displacement on the public agenda of the Mexican State. Economic migration has been at the center of the public policy process, due to Mexico's migratory history as a country of origin. Likewise, starting in 2011 with the tragic events in San Fernando and Cadereyta, Tamaulipas, following the disappearance and murder of hundreds of migrants at the hands of organized crime who were traveling irregularly to the United States, civil society organizations worked hard to position the issue of transmigration on the public agenda. Beginning in 2011, the human rights, in particular life and safety, of people crossing Mexico without documentation became a priority issue on the agenda of civil society organizations.

In this context, in 2013, UNHCR undertook a gradual and long-lasting advocacy process by documenting the increasing number of people with potential international protection needs within the region's mixed movements. Between 2013 and 2014, UNHCR published two reports on unaccompanied children, which evidenced violence as one of the main causes of departure for the children and adolescents interviewed (UNHCR , 2013). Likewise, UNHCR strengthened its support to alliances of civil society actors to improve the analysis of the causes of departure of people arriving irregularly to Mexico through the southern border. In this context, annual reports have been published by the Red de Documentación de las Organizaciones Defensoras de Migrantes (REDODEM), which have documented an increased percentage of causes of departure related to violence, as well as the increase of Mexico as a destination country in the travel intentions of the population consulted. Similarly, the UNHCR has had an impact on the design of instruments for the collection of information and analysis of human mobility trends in the region to measure the dimension of forced displacement. In 2017 and 2018, surveys such as the Encuesta de Migración de la Frontera Sur (EMIF) and EMPORE (Encuesta Sobre la Población Refugiada en México) were conducted (UNHCR, 2017). In 2021 UNHCR supported El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF, 2021) in conducting the Survey for Applicants for Refugee Status Recognition and Refugees (ESCRR). Also, in 2021 UNHCR conducted a meta-study, analyzing most of the reports measuring the causes of population outflows in the region since 2014. This analysis showed that on average more than 40% of people from Central American countries (Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador) consulted referred to violence, insecurity or threats as reasons for fleeing their communities of origin (UNHCR, 2019).

More recently, UNHCR has worked in the documentation process of forced internal displacement in Mexico. Since 2019, it has partnered with local and federal authorities and other international organizations in specialized information surveys. Most notably, the Internal Displacement Characterization Exercise in Chihuahua 2023 was carried out: the first survey on the subject conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI),

the maximum reference of the Mexican State in the generation of evidence on all issues of public interest (UNHCR, 2023b). In addition, UNHCR supports civil society organizations, such as the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights (CMDPDH) in drafting reports and bulletins that focus on the main trends of forced displacement in the country's main entities that suffer from this scourge.

Every well-executed public policy cycle consists of the following stages: diagnosis, formulation, implementation and evaluation. In order to design effective courses of action to resolve a public issue, it is important to have objective information that is useful for taking decisions that have an impact on the concrete lives of the people who need attention. Since 2013, UNHCR has directly influenced Mexican State institutions to recognize the magnitude of forced displacement within mixed movements in the region. With this evidence, UNHCR has also influenced civil society organizations to adopt forced displacement as part of their agenda of advocacy and defense of the rights of people in mobility. The generation of objective information confers legitimacy on UNHCR and civil society organizations, facilitates dialogue with State institutions, is useful for strengthening coalitions of actors with diverse interests, and informs public debate on the nature of human mobility in the region. Evidence has been pivotal in persuading the Mexican State to adopt the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees, to follow its participation in the Comprehensive Framework for Response and Protection (MIRPS) and its subsequent commitment to the 2023 Global Forum on Refugees. Evidence is the first link to ensure compliance with the rights of refugees and persons in need of international protection.

3 Empathy for advocacy

Forced displacement is a constellation of stories of pain, uprooting and sadness. Victims of persecution, threats and insecurity flee in fear, unable to return to their communities of origin because their lives are in danger. We are talking about entire families, children, adolescents, women, men, elderly people,

LGBTIQ+ population, people with disabilities: the whole social fabric disrupted by violence and insecurity. Upon arrival in the host country, people are often received with disdain, indifference and, in some cases, with hatred and resentment. Discrimination against people in mobility is one of the main obstacles for them to fully enjoy their human rights. Discrimination rips apart community social fabrics, alienates populations and fosters an environment of mistrust. Discrimination, racism and xenophobia are reproduced through stereotypes and stigmas anchored in the culture, history and social dynamics of entire communities. These scourges are fed by misinformation, by ignorance regarding human mobility. Ignorance is the most powerful fuel to ignite the destructive fire of xenophobia. Therefore, it is a fundamental task to influence the spectrum of social communication to counteract the narratives of hatred that are reproduced in all areas of public life.

UNHCR designed a public communication strategy based on the promotion of empathy as a social value that prevails in community relations. Empathy is understood as "the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, to see things from the other person's perspective rather than our own" (UNODC, n/d). It is through empathy that society can reduce xenophobia, discrimination and racism. UNHCR, therefore, has been documenting numerous stories of refugees in order for society to understand the difficult circumstances they have gone through in their cycle of displacement. Through the use of social networks, traditional media and other spaces of mass dissemination, UNHCR seeks to influence the opinions and perceptions of the entire social spectrum to counteract hate speech. At the same time, through the engagement of partners such as "Goodwill Ambassadors", seeks to win the "hearts and minds" of the population that is unaware of the causes and consequences of displacement on the lives of entire families forced to flee from their original communities.

Likewise, in recent years, in addition to influencing society by building bridges of empathy, UNHCR has emphasized the need to disseminate success stories of refugees in the social imaginary. The enormous potential for enriching society through the economic, cultural and social contributions of the refugee population is one

of the main subjects of UNHCR's social communication advocacy strategy. Not only the desolate and sad stories, but also the stories of resilience, of overcoming, of building positive social capital for the host communities. Massively disseminating these stories is part of the strategy to transform negative perceptions, stigmas and stereotypes surrounding the population in mobility. UNHCR conducted several focus groups in some border cities in 2021 with Mexican population. One of the main comments made by the participants was that learning stories of overcoming obstacles among migrants is very significant in overcoming the negative perceptions they have about this population (UNHCR, 2021).

A key to achieving this is the strategic presentation of information. For example, it is estimated that the labor force of 30,000 refugees adds up to 160 million in annual fiscal contributions to the national economy. This is compelling evidence of the benefits that the successful integration of the refugee population brings to the country. Since 2016, UNHCR has implemented the local integration program, which aims to support refugees to integrate in localities with ample socioeconomic opportunities in the center and north of the country. In 2022, 12,796 refugees were resettled as part of this program, while 43, 586 refugees benefited from on-site integration support. More than 500 private sector companies employ refugees. Within this population universe, there have been thousands of success stories (UNHCR, 2023a). Turning these stories into narratives about the transformative power that is achieved when a refugee gains access to full rights is a very effective advocacy strategy to combat racism, discrimination and xenophobia.

4 Advocating for the right

UNHCR's main area of advocacy to promote the rights of people in mobility is the pursuit of the national legislation's harmonization with the high international standards on the subject. UNHCR has participated in key processes for the adoption of specialized national legislation to promote the rights of refugees and asylum seekers in Mexico. In 2011, UNHCR supported in the consultations prior to the formulation and adoption of the Law on

Refugees and Complementary Protection (reformed in 2014 to be called the Law on Refugees, Complementary Protection and Political Asylum). Also, UNHCR advocated with the legislative branch in 2016 in the approval of the constitutional reform that enshrined in Article 11 the right to seek and receive asylum for all persons in Mexican territory.

UNHCR provided technical assistance in the discussions and drafting of the General Law on Children and Adolescents, which sets out the rights of refugee children in Mexico. This law seeks to protect one of the population groups with the greatest needs in the region. The UNHCR has also intervened in cases under analysis by the National Supreme Court of Justice, through the preparation of amicus curiae briefs. In these interventions, the UNHCR looks to support those who impart justice, by bringing international standards on international protection relevant to the resolution of specific cases. As an example of such interventions, in 2019 the UNHCR presented an amicus related to the 30-day deadline to apply for asylum in Mexico and in 2020, the UNHCR developed an intervention regarding the standards that Mexico must observe when receiving asylum seekers from the United States, within the framework of the MPP.

Another key advocacy activity of UNHCR to promote the implementation of international refugee law is the "Judgment Award: Access to Justice for Migrants, Refugees and Other Persons Subject to International Protection", which has been held for seven years. This award promotes the adoption of judicial rulings in line with the highest international standards in this area. Working with the judiciary is key to making the constitutional right to seek asylum a reality, as well as the provisions of the Law on Refugees, Complementary Protection and Political Asylum. The strengthening of the adoption of specialized regulatory frameworks and the effective delivery of justice are fundamental tasks so that refugees, asylum seekers and persons in mobility enjoy their human rights and have the legal certainty that when they are violated, the judicial system will respond effectively.

In addition, since 2016, UNHCR has worked hard to build a network of legal assistance, guidance and representation operationalized by civil society organizations and legal clinics of some public and private universities in Mexico. With the support of lawyers and paralegals present in most of the shelters throughout the country, people in mobility receive objective information that allows them to inform their decisions. Thanks to this network, the right to seek asylum has spread to virtually every corner of the country where there is a migrant shelter. This assistance is of particular importance to ensure that people in mobility are aware of their human rights, including the right to seek asylum, as well as the implications of the refugee recognition procedure. From 2021 to 2023, 400,000 legal assistances have been provided thanks to the work of 150 lawyers and paralegals from 24 organizations. In turn, the presenters of legal assistance and representation services can identify paradigmatic cases through which civil society organizations have filed strategic litigation against the implementation of migratory measures contrary to the constitutional order, such as prolonged detention, the 30 working day deadline to request asylum upon entering Mexican territory, among others.

In more recent times, the UNHCR has promoted the adoption of legal tools for the service of justice providers in the area of internal displacement. Notably, with the publication of the Manual on Internal Displacement in 2022, it sought to strengthen the delivery of justice to victims of internal displacement (Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación, 2022). Likewise, UNHCR has provided technical advice and support for the adoption and regulation of local legislative frameworks in states such as Chiapas, Michoacán, Estado de México and Sinaloa, as well as in the discussions on a federal regulatory framework to address the situation of internal displacement at the national level. With these actions, UNHCR contributes to the construction of an institutional framework aligned with international standards in an area in which the Mexican State does not yet have solid institutional capacities to attend to the more than 386,000 people who have fled their communities of origin within the national territory.

5 Strengthen Networking

Human rights advocacy processes are empowered by establishing transnational coalitions of non-state actors who are able to find common courses of action. Margareth Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1999, p. 91) define "transnational advocacy networks" as "coalitions of actors whose agenda is the defense of ideas, principles or people, often involving individuals seeking to change or shape public policy". In the cause of human rights, coalition work is fundamental to reduce the asymmetry between the power of the State and that of civil society organizations and other non-institutionalized social actors. In particular, NGOs enjoy legitimacy, as they are often the actors closest to refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons. The in-depth knowledge of the concrete reality experienced by people in mobility gives NGOs a fundamental role in global public policy discussions to strengthen the protection regime for refugees and displaced people (Lester, 2005, p. 127).

Mexico has a long tradition of humanitarian assistance to people on the move. Since 1982, with the Central American exodus, social actors began to organize themselves with the objective of providing shelter and food to people who arrived in Mexico without the means to rebuild their lives. Today, there is a multiplicity of civil society organizations concerned with the rights of people in mobility. UNHCR has worked with civil society by incorporating the dimension of forced displacement into the network that civil society organizations have created in recent years to address human mobility in the region with a human rights approach.

UNHCR accompanies and strengthens the effectiveness of the interventions of civil society organizations designed to provide care and protection to refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people through the shared generation of evidence, the joint design of specialized care protocols for persons with specific needs, and the coordinated organization of spaces for dialogue and advocacy with local authorities to address a common issue. The results of this work over the years have been tangible: thousands of people receive specialized information on their rights and options in Mexico,

they are directed to specialized care services, according to their age, gender and diversity, their documentation and regularization processes in Mexico are accompanied, and permanent working groups are held with local authorities in various municipalities of the country.

The shelters, soup kitchens and safe houses run by civil society organizations are the backbone of humanitarian assistance in Mexico. Working with religious-based organizations, especially churches, has been one of UNHCR's main priorities. By supporting the technical strengthening of its humanitarian workers, as well as the construction of infrastructure, UNHCR increases the protection space for people on the move in border areas and other regions of the country with high numbers of migrants and refugees. In 2022, "UNHCR supported 132 shelters in 48 cities with improvements in infrastructure, staffing, distribution of non-food items and increased reception capacity. More than 15,000 people accessed comprehensive assistance in these spaces, which are the cornerstone of the humanitarian response" (UNHCR, 2022a).

The organizations that provide first-line assistance often do so under very difficult conditions, and are victims of harassment by state and non-state actors that violate the rights of people in mobility. Therefore, networking is essential to stand up for those who defend the human rights of people in a situation of mobility. UNHCR promotes spaces for consensus among civil actors with different backgrounds, capacities and strategic priorities. Through these spaces, the work of organizations that face all kinds of difficulties in their daily work is made visible. Protecting humanitarian workers is an imperative in the cycle of protection of people in mobility. Knowing what their main vicissitudes are and accompanying protection processes in shelters for people in mobility is a constant concern of UNHCR. The UNHCR works together with civil society organizations in the implementation of the Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders of the Ministry of the Interior. Through this mechanism, human rights defenders of people in mobility can receive protection from the State in situations of violence that threaten their safety.

Concluding observations

UNHCR's advocacy efforts to influence the public policy of the State and the humanitarian work of civil society organizations have people at the center of all interventions. UNHCR's main interest is to ensure that the victims of forced displacement, both internal and international, find protection and well-being in this country. Mexico has great human, economic, social and cultural capital: it has opened its doors at several moments in its history to thousands of people who have fled violence, insecurity and threats. Mexico has solidarity and fraternity with those who need it most in its historical DNA. However, in order to write another chapter in this history of Mexican humanitarianism, we need the agreement of all the actors involved in the protection and assistance to people in mobility. UNHCR will continue its efforts to act as a bridge of understanding between State actors, civil society organizations, the private sector, universities, other international agencies, donors and other sectors of society interested in promoting a more inclusive country, with opportunities for all people of good will.

There is a multilateral architecture suggesting roadmaps to provide protection and solutions to forced displacement. In 2016, the New York Declaration was held, triggering the creation of the Global Refugee Pact in 2018. This pact articulates the commitments of States to implement concrete actions in favor of the protection of people in situations of forced displacement. The Global Refugee Forum in December 2023 will be an important occasion to review the commitments, strengthen them and create new ones taking into account the changing world of recent years. At the regional level, the Los Angeles Declaration of 2022 sets out commitments for countries in the Americas in the context of the exponential increase in mixed movements throughout the Americas. UNHCR guides its advocacy actions within the framework of these multilateral processes, convinced that evidence-based dialogue, the generation of empathy, the promotion of law and the strengthening of networking are fundamental to provide a new home to thousands of refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons who look with hope to their future under the Mexican sky.

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5

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND CONTESTED DISCOURSES ON BEHALF OF MIGRANTS

Eduardo Torre Cantalapiedra

Civil society organizations (CSOs) defending migrants are a key institutional actor in the support of migrants transiting through Mexican territory with the objective of reaching the United States. Among other things, shelters provide the necessary rest, food and lodging, information on routes and other services to enable some of the migrants crossing the country to continue on their way. Beyond the role of humanitarian assistance, CSOs have had a socio-political advocacy role. In recent years, some CSOs on behalf of migrants have developed a greater degree of advocacy activities or even some have focused exclusively on advocacy.

One of the advocacy activities of CSOs has been the elaboration of contestation discourses on migration issues, in opposition to official discourses, especially in relation to Mexican migration policies. These discourses are of utmost importance insofar as they seek a paradigm shift in migration policies from control centered on national security to one that focuses on the human security of migrants. Likewise, not taking into account the migrants' aspirations is one of the reasons why migration policies fail (Castles, 2006).

In the scenario of collective migratory mobilities, such as the different *Via Crucis* and caravans that have crossed Mexican territory in recent years, migrants together with members of CSOs have developed a set of discourses of protest against containment policies, against the treatment Mexican migratory authorities give them, against the conditions they suffer during transit and the defense of their human rights (for example, the right to free mobility through territories).

The objective of this paper is to analyze the discourses that migrants and their defenders raised during the assembling of migrant caravans and *Via Crucis* caravans that departed from Tapachula between 2021 and 2023, as well as the role of CSO members in such discourses. In order to achieve this objective, we first examine the ways in which the *mass media* retrieve the different voices of the social actors involved in migration. The voices of CSO members not only represent the positioning of these organizations in the face of the migration phenomenon, but to a certain extent, they also represent a loudspeaker for the voices of migrants. Furthermore, through a review of different digital media news texts, we analyze the contested discourses of the migrant caravans and how the voice of the pro-migrants activists is present in them.

1 The CSOs' voice in the media

The media discourse on migration is constructed in an intertextual basis through various sources, among which the officialdom stands out (Torre, 2018). Through their press releases, press offices, public statements, among others, government actors make available to the media huge amounts of information that benefit them; which, due to its low cost of obtaining, the presumption of veracity and relevance of this, the media reproduce in many occasions without filtering, to the extent that government actors' voices manage to have great access to the media discourse (Caminos, 1997; Chomsky, Herman, 2001). One might say that, regarding migration, as in other areas, the press contributes towards making the official discourse socially hegemonic.

Migration policies are the topic most frequently addressed by Mexican authorities in the digital press. In recent decades, this discourse is plagued with misrepresentations and dissimulations regarding the migration policies they carry out, it seeks to legitimize at all costs their migration control actions designed from the paradigm of national security (Torre, 2019; Ávalos, Celecia, 2021). Therefore, it is necessary to generate discourses from different trenches challenging hegemonic discourse of the authorities, highlighting issues related to the authorities' discourses on the subject, as well as exposing the "should be" of migration policies from the migrants' and their advocates' point of view.

The migrants' voices have a considerably lower presence in migration news than governmental actors (Torre, 2018; Red Acoge, 2020). Since they also have less power in the media discourse[1], which means that their voices appear exclusively to illustrate their experiences during their journeys through territories and borders.

Although with a smaller presence than that of the authorities, the voices of several CSO members who support and stand in solidarity with migrants appear recurrently in the mass media (Torre, 2018). Some CSO members have access to media that may be sympathetic to them. In addition, they become referents to whom journalists turn to as experts and relevant actors on migration issues. In the same vein, migrant advocates have been, on many occasions, the loudspeaker for migrants' voices, when these have remained silenced.

Since conditions are not usually conducive to the development and continuity of migrant activism in transit countries such as Mexico -as migrants are mostly passing through the country and are focused on pragmatic migratory interests-, CSOs are the ones that most frequently carry out advocacy actions in favor of migrants, articulating solutions that they consider to be the most beneficial for them (Da Silveira, 2015; Basok, Candiz, 2020). This is also evident in the construction and dissemination of pro-migrant discourses that appear in the media. However, as much as activists seek to

[1] Understood as the power that the different social actors with presence in the media narrative exercise over the media characteristics of their texts: topics, size of the coverage, perspective on the problem, among others (De la Fuente-García, 2017).

represent the interests of migrants, their discourse is usually more articulated and with more political overtones than that usually held by migrants. Therefore, the voice of CSO members should not be confused with that of migrants.

At least since the 1990s, one of the most relevant discourses that these organizations have deployed is that which evidences the abuses and aggressions suffered by migrants as they pass through Mexican territory (Basok, Candiz, 2020). On countless occasions, migrants' advocates have succeeded in having such denunciations incorporated into news texts, especially when tragic events occur in relation to the migratory phenomenon. This discourse has been accompanied by the generation of evidence by shelters to illustrate the panoply of adverse situations (especially crimes) suffered by migrants in transit (Infante et al., 2019; Gómez, 2020); which has also sustained numerous news and media reports.

In the context of migrations in transit through Mexico, one of the most politically charged and relevant events in terms of the generation of vindictive discourses have been the collective migrations -self-denominated, migrant *Via Crucis*, migrant *Via Crucis* caravans and caravans-, which for more than a decade have made different journeys through the national territory and have had both similarities and differences in terms of size, point of departure and destination, composition according to nationalities, political demands, presence of CSO members, among others. These marches were largely under media spotlight, particularly investigative journalism[2], which is the one that best recovers the different voices involved in social phenomena, including those of migrants and their defenders.

In this type of collective mobilities, CSO members frequently take a predominant role in press conferences and media interventions (El Colef, 2019) due to the experience such activists have in intervening in the media, the journalists' interest in gathering these voices -from people they consider leaders/conveners/coordinators of the marches-, the interest activists have in disseminating certain discourses, that migrants prefer not to assume this role as

[2] One of the key aspects of investigative journalism is the search for several quality sources (Rodriguez, 1994).

spokespersons of the group, etc. CSO members are continuously on the field accompanying these caravans, so year after year they have the opportunity to weave discourses in front of the media and develop skills to deal with them.

The voice of the members of the CSOs participating in the marches, together with the migrants, were shaping a discourse that was reflected in the media, where the activists were frequently the source cited. Throughout the first years of these marches, some aspects were reiterated:

1. demands for free transit and open borders;
2. denouncing abuses and aggressions by organized crime and authorities, as well as human rights violations; among others, using the metaphor of the *Via Crucis* (which will be discussed in more detail in the following section);
3. requesting the suppression of the National Institute of Migration (INM);
4. promote policies from the perspective of human security and protest against containment policies based on the national security paradigm (for example, the Southern Border Program in 2014);
5. denounce violence in their countries of origin, which would turn them into refugees (at least de facto).[3]

2 The *Via Crucis* caravans contestation' discourses: CSOs' role

Between January 2021 and June 2023, more than a dozen migrant caravans departed from southern Mexico (CNDH Mexico, 2021; Hale, Ma, 2023). Although they did not have the same media impact as the caravans of late 2018 and early 2019 (Torre, 2022), several of them had a prominent media presence. In 2021, we

[3] For more information, consult: De Jesús, 2011; Henríquez, 2011, 2013; Ramos, 2012; Mensing y Pskowski, 2014; Ureste, 2014; Redacción de Animal Político, 2014; Mariscal, 2015; Servín, 2015; Alfaro, 2017; Orellano, 2017; Semple, 2018; Redacción Voz de América, 2018.

focused on the analysis of news in digital media that highlighted their coverage of the caravans that departed from Tapachula between August and October (CNDH Mexico, 2021); in 2022, the emphasis was placed on the caravan that departed on June 6 and marched in the context of the IX Summit of the Americas (Sánchez, 2022); and in 2023, the focus was on the *Via Crucis* that departed Tapachula on April 23 after the fire at the immigration detention center in Ciudad Juárez (Avelar, 2023). All of them were supported by members of CSOs, with the following standing out for their presence in the media: Irineo Mujica of Pueblo Sin Fronteras and Luis Rey García Villagrán of the Centro de Dignificación Humana (Center for Human Dignification).

3 The "ciudad cárcel" protest speech, 2021

The combination of Mexican migration containment policies (which prevent them from moving north) and refugee policies (with significant delays in the resolution and delivery of documents, especially in times of pandemic) turned Tapachula into a waiting room for migrants; at times the agglomeration of migrants was such that it was very difficult for them to subsist while waiting for their refugee formalities to be resolved or to obtain humanitarian visitor cards (TVRH) (Rojas, 2021; CNDH Mexico, 2022; Torre, 2023a). Between August and October 2021, in the context of this situation of immobility, several groups of migrants departed in a caravan, after having carried out various protest and protest actions in the city.

Migrants and caravan activists' protest discourse of 2021 and the political activities carried out in Tapachula in that year can be synthesized in five points: 1) to demand free mobility -since they seemed to be "trapped"-, 2) to request streamlining of migration and asylum procedures by the authorities of the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (Comar) and the INM, 3) to highlight the difficulties migrants had to face in order to have a dignified life in the city, 4) to denounce the mistreatment given to migrants by the authorities during transit, their stay in the city and in the migratory stations, and 5) to demand not to be treated as if they were criminals

(Torre, 2023b). One can observe from the content of this discourse of protest and vindication that it coincides to a large extent with the claims of the *viacrucis migrantes* and *viacrucis migrantes* caravans of the previous decade.

When analyzing the media, it is possible to observe both the importance of CSO members in the construction of this rhetoric and the fact that these actors tend to use metaphors and other linguistic resources that considerably enhance it. In this regard, the use of the metaphor of the prison city is especially noteworthy in that year: In a telephone interview, [Irineo Mujica] assured that "what puts at risk the physical integrity of vulnerable migrants, such as women and children, is the foolishness and obstinacy of the Mexican State to maintain Tapachula as a *migrant prison*; where there are one hundred thousand people stranded" (Irineo Mujica, cited in Henríquez, 2021).[4]

Indeed, in order to protest the situation that the migrants were suffering in Tapachula, a whole series of metaphorical expressions[5] were developed around the idea that: TO BE IN TAPACHULA is TO BE IN JAIL. This conceptual metaphor synthesizes all aspects of the protest discourse regarding the situation they were living in Tapachula, but also seeks both empathy with the migrants and disgust with the actions of the authorities (Torre, 2023b). Many journalists used these same metaphors to give a critical tone to their news and reports regarding the actions of the authorities (e.g., please refer to Reina, 2021).

Although in 2021, there was a boom in the "prison city" rhetoric in reference to Tapachula, this had emerged in previous years since the situation of overcrowding and lack of protection for migrants in the city began to become critical. In 2019, it could be read in the digital press: "According to Quique Vidal, deputy director of the Fray Matías Center, Mexican authorities have effectively created

[4] The italics in all the quoted paragraphs are ours, in order to emphasize the use of metaphorical expressions.

[5] Examples of these expressions used by activists recovered from digital media: *prison city* (Henríquez, 2021), *being imprisoned* (Jiménez and Henríquez, 2021); *migratory fences* (Peña, 2019)

"migratory fences" that block the entrance and exit of Chiapas, so that migrants cannot continue northward, and are left in a sort of *'prison city'"* (Peña, 2019).

While the situation in Tapachula has not changed, CSO members have continued to profusely use the prison city rhetoric, along with other metaphorical expressions such as "bureaucratic wall". Suffice it to cite two examples of how this narrative is sustained over time: "through delaying tactics to inhibit migration [...] they have tried to detain the migrant here on the southern border, turning the southern border into *migratory jails*, *migratory prison cities*, as is Tapachula, as is Tuxtla Gutiérrez [...]" (Luis Rey García interviewed in France24 Español, 2022). And more recently in 2023: "The majority of migrants do not want to be here, we are forced, just as the community of Tapachula is forced to have so many people by force; they have turned this city into *the great prison* of Latin America", pointed out Mújica" (Irineo Mujica quoted in Clemente, 2023).

4 The caravan's speech in the context of the Summit of the Americas, 2022

Although this may be the largest migrant caravan to transit through Mexican territory, the march starting on June 6, 2022 did not receive a great deal of media coverage. When the defenders' voices were taken up, they maintained similar discourses to those of previous collective mobilizations. Like the demand of TVRH to be able to transit through the national territory:

> It is necessary that this migratory crisis be addressed in accordance with the law, immediate humanitarian visas valid in national territory for one year," demanded Luis Rey García Villagrán, director of the Center for Human Dignification and organizer of the mobilization, in statements to Efe (Sánchez, 2022).

However, part of the discourse, given the context of the celebration of the Summit of the Americas, emphasized the

importance of informing the authorities of the States of the region regarding the reasons why they are leaving their countries and the need for their right to free mobility to be recognized: "The activists accompanying the group stressed that one of the objectives is to draw the attention of the leaders of the Americas to the needs of those fleeing their countries" (Clemente and Pesce, 2022).

> We state to the leaders of the countries meeting today at the Summit of the Americas that migrant women and children, migrant families, we are not a bargaining chip for ideological and political interests," he added. "We travel for our freedom, because we have the right to migrate (Voice of America Newsroom, 2023).

5 The protest speech of the migrant *Via Crucis* after the burning of the immigration detention center in Ciudad Juárez, 2023

On March 28, 2023, in Ciudad Juarez, a fire at the immigration detention center (temporary stay) resulted in the death of 40 migrants and 27 people were hospitalized, of which a dozen were seriously injured (Becerril, 2023). The media extensively covered this tragic event due to its great journalistic relevance: in light of the responsibility of the State regarding the migrants in custody, the political and social transcendence of this event[6], given it was a story of human interest that appealed to the emotions of the population, etc.

In this sense, the digital media have widely followed this case: showing videos with images of what happened, recovering the voices of the different actors involved, portraying the victims of the fire, covering the pain experienced by the families and communities of origin of these migrants, denouncing the authorities' bad practices, recovering the statements of the President of Mexico and

[6] In the past, similar events have been pointed out as turning points in Mexican migration policies, thus the massacre of the 72 migrants in San Fernando (Tamaulipas) changed Mexican migration policy (Silva, 2015) -at least in the discourse-; the repulsion to such event contributed to generate a context in which new forms of socio-political advocacy by CSOs were generated (for example, the migrant *Via Crucis*) (Vargas, 2017).

other authorities, following up the progress of the investigation into the events, among others.

Coverage of the migration agenda rose considerably, including a growing awareness of the new caravans departing from southern Mexico. The political momentum was propitious for CSOs and caravan migrants to position themselves after this event. The activists who convened/accompanied/coordinated the *Via Crucis* that departed in April 2022, together with the migrants who were part of them, articulated a protest and vindictive discourse in relation to the burning of the detention center in Ciudad Juarez: they protested the death of the 40 migrants and the need to bring justice and punish those responsible for it; they showed their rejection regarding Mexican migration authorities and institutions, advocated for the dissolution of the INM, as well as for dispensing the National Guard and militarized forces for migration containment; all this together with claims for changes in policies that would allow them free transit through Mexican territory (Mariscal, 2023).

Most of the media's construction and dissemination of this rhetoric was carried out by CSO members, especially Irineo Mujica of Pueblo Sin Fronteras, whose voice was taken up on many occasions by the press: "Today we go out symbolically denouncing a crime of the State. We lost 40 dead migrants who did nothing" (Irineo Mujica quoted in AFP, 2023). In addition to demanding justice and punishment for those in high command, Irineo Mujica's discourse compels the Mexican government to make profound changes to its detention and deportation system and to provide more avenues for migration:

> 'Structural changes are required in the National Migration Institute, "we want justice for migrants [...] In this viacrucis we ask for justice for the murderers from the government, that they stop hiding the high command, we also ask them to close these prisons [alludes to migratory stations and other detention centers]; we also ask for dismantling of the National Migration Institute', expressed the activist (Irineo Mujica quoted in Morales, 2023).

Irineo Mújica, of the organization Pueblos Sin Fronteras (Peoples Without Borders) and organizer of this mobilization, said "they are pleading to put Francisco Garduño, head of the National Migration Institute (INM), on trial, to close all the migration stations in the country, to demilitarize the INM and to offer migrants flexible ways to regularize their status" (Clemente, 2023).

For this summoning Mújica prompted that this caravan be named *Via Crucis* migrante (AFP, 2023), a term used by previous marches (*viacrucis* migrantes or *viacrucis* migrantes caravans) to the migrant caravans of late 2018. "The *Via Crucis* also seeks to make visible the migrants' suffering as they cross the Country" (Irineo Mujica quoted in Grupo Reforma, 2023). As the activist points out, the *Via Crucis* migrante involves making a simile or comparison between the migrants' transit and Jesus' path to the cross, in order to vindicate migrants and promote both compassion and empathy with them, especially among people who share these religious beliefs. Therefore, in 2016, the human mobility pastoral referred to a migrant's *Via Crucis* as follows:

> With this *[Via Crucis*] we want to participate in this journey during the Lenten season, placing before our eyes, the suffering and pain of so many men and women who like Jesus carry on their backs the cross of their lives, impoverished and marginalized, as they seek with hope for a different future. They are migrants (Pastoral de la Movilidad Humana, 2016).

As already noted in the "prison city" speech, the rhetoric remains, but now there is special mention of the migrant stations, insofar as the fire of Ciudad Juárez makes evident the risks implied by this type of facilities. "Tapachula is a hell and a big jail full of corruption, and we depart to Mexico City to demand justice and freedom peacefully in *Via Crucis*," expressed the activist" (Grupo Reforma, 2023).

> The caravan is led by Irineo Mujica, an activist who defends migrants' rights with over 20 years of experience. At the beginning of the march, Mujica said that Tapachula is a city that keeps migrants "prisoners" and has demanded the elimination of the National Migration Institute (Inami) and

of the jails or detention centers where migrants are housed before being deported (Avelar, 2023).

Concluding observations

Due to their experience and continuous presence in the transit spaces and their skills in dealing with the media, the CSO members who participated in the caravans are key to the construction, development and dissemination of protest rhetoric that recovers the demands of these collective mobilizations of previous years, as well as nourishing themselves with elements of the current situation. In other words, CSOs are on the one hand the memory of the discourses of the *Via Crucis* and caravans, as well as having the expertise to introduce the elements of the conjuncture of current public debates.

The prison city speech is an ideal example of all of the above, since it is a speech whose central demands are similar to those of previous years, but are also nourished by the elements that have generated wait-and-see situations in the southern cities in the last five years, which were especially difficult in 2021. In addition, it is a rhetoric that is nurtured by metaphors and other linguistic elements that require the development of certain communicative skills. A central aspect of this rhetoric has been the conceptual metaphor TO BE IN TAPACHULA is TO BE IMPRISONED, which synthesizes and makes more visual the rhetoric of both migrant protests and their advocates, but also appeals to favorable emotions towards migrants.

The CSO members' speeches covered by the press in the caravans in the context of the Summit of the Americas in 2022 and the protests against the fire in Ciudad Juarez in March 2023 focus more on the situational aspects, although without neglecting the structural aspects. In the first case, CSO members articulated a rhetoric that challenged the regional leaders in the context of the Summit. In the second case, given the tragic event of the deaths of migrants in the Ciudad Juarez detention center, under the responsibility of Mexican immigration authorities, activists focused on certain aspects of their speeches such as the demand for the

dissolution of the INM or a change in its structure, as well as the recovery of the term "viacrucis" to describe all the suffering suffered by migrants in their journeys through Mexican territory.

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6

ENTRAPMENT IN TIJUANA, CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION AND CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MOBILITY
Potential topics worth considering for networking

Aída Silva Hernández

This paper focuses on problematizing the Tijuana border as a scenario in which the effects of asylum policies issued by the United States since 2016 are condensed. Policies that slow down the application processes and force people in search of international protection to remain in an entrapment hiatus at the Mexican border. The containment of human mobility is a mechanism that retains their passage in the prelude to the intended destination, while entrapment refers to the forced and prolonged wait that stems from that retention, in a "process directly linked to the issue of the impossibility of movement caused by the border apparatus in the transnational flow of certain people" (Del Monte, 2022, p. 57). As such, entrapment constitutes a state of forced immobility; a condition of subjection that lengthens the stay at the border and whose periodicity remains uncertain: at the expense of progress in the processing of applications by the U.S. government. Socially, entrapment places people in a state of marginalization: it exposes them to the risk of suffering different types of violence, generates a strong emotional burden and reinforces precariousness and

exclusion to the extent that it reduces the employment possibilities of asylum seekers or the continuation of schooling for minors, among other effects.

In this context, the discussion incorporates the role played by civil society organizations and distinguishes, specially, the characteristics of the living conditions and the care provided to children and adolescents who participate in such dynamics, whether accompanied by their parents or unaccompanied.

The purpose of this cross-analysis is to put under consideration possible elements worth considering for civil society networking, taking into account that a network represents a strategy of care and synergy between organizations, institutions and other possible actors, which could benefit people immobilized at the border. What components should be taken into account in the creation of a network and what particularities of the population groups in mobility, including the promotion of agency - in this case of children and adolescents - are important to take into account for this collaborative action? The basic idea is to highlight the heterogeneity of the population groups in mobility that arrive at the U.S.-Mexico border and the relevance of designing specialized attention: borders are multiple, migrants are diverse, and it is important to think of an equally differentiated strategy for their greatest benefit.

This presentation is based on the results of qualitative sociocultural research conducted by the author in 2016, 2018 and 2022 with people in mobility in Tijuana, most of whom were forcibly displaced. The ethnographic information retrieval was carried out at different moments of the fieldwork through a focus group, semi-structured and in-depth interviews, direct observation and participant observation.

1 Containment and Entrapment at the U.S.-Mexico Border

With the primarily *de facto* collaboration of the Mexican government, Tijuana is one of the cities along the international border that sustains the resonances of U.S. asylum policies since 2016, when the daily quota system opened a growing chain of obstructions to asylum processes in that country. That quota system

known as *metering* imposed a cap on the number of asylum applications received daily, in highly variable ranges (from none to 100, for example), all ultimately insufficient to meet demand. As a result, asylum seekers were piling up at the Mexican border waiting for their turn to present their applications to U.S. immigration authorities.

The daily quota system was followed in 2018 by the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), a policy that required asylum seekers to remain in Mexico between court hearings until their cases were disposed of, resulting in months of entrapment. Both the daily quota system and the MPPs were in effect when the Covid-19 pandemic emergency occurred, leading to the shutdown of the asylum system in March 2020 and the entry into force of Title 42, a public health-based provision that empowered the U.S. government to expel any person entering its territory, including those seeking to claim their right to asylum. It was estimated that during this period there were around 9,600 people on the waiting list in Tijuana, with a minimum of 10 months of entrapment (Leutert *et al*., 2020). Among this total waiting list, a significant proportion of accompanied children and adolescents were found in the shelters, regularly representing approximately 30 to 40 percent of the total number of those sheltered.

In 2021, a hesitant resumption of the asylum system was observed with the Biden administration, prioritizing MPP cases that had been left open. At this point, the metering system had been cancelled and a registration application or app appeared for the first time to track asylum cases in that program: CONECTA, coordinated by an agency perceived as neutral or impartial, as is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR. Outside of the MPPs, the United States was only receiving exceptionally vulnerable cases through humanitarian parole and family reunification for unaccompanied minors, without fully reactivating the traditional asylum application channels, as required by U.S. regulations (Mossaad, 2019). In January 2023, a second app related to asylum processes in the United States came into operation: the CBP-One portal, in which the applicant states to be under vulnerable conditions and expresses interest in presenting

its case from its country or while already at the border. When they are able to access the system (overcoming common application failures), and meet the requirements, they receive a date to appear at the international border crossing point to continue the process in U.S. territory.

All this scaffolding of the last years, mostly complex and confusing, has been extending and aggravating the problems of containment and entrapment in Tijuana with its consequent challenges for the care of immobilized people, demanding adjustments how civil society organizations operate and demanding their budgets to the maximum.[1]

In addition to the migration scenario, the general characteristics of the city have an impact on the lives of people in mobility and represent risk factors. According to the Secretariat of Citizen Security and Protection, Tijuana was the municipality with the highest number of intentional homicides from January to October 2021 and 2022 (SSPC, SNSP, 2022). And according to the Secretariat of Citizen Security of Baja California, in 2022, 2,049 homicides were reported, an average of five per day, in addition to other 44,773 crimes in the year, such as robberies of various types, domestic violence, injuries and rapes (SSCBC, 2023). On the other hand, according to 2020 Census data, Tijuana is the most populated municipality in the country, with almost two million inhabitants (INEGI, 2021), with a population density of almost 1,800 inhabitants

1Although this exploration does not address the role of government as an actor that should be part of the network, it is worth noting that in Tijuana the participation of the three levels of government has been minimal compared to the presence of civil society. At the municipal level, there is the Dirección de Atención al Migrante, an operational office; at the state level, for some years there was the Consejo Estatal de Atención al Migrante, an entity with coordination functions, but without direct attention to the population. At the end of 2019 the federal government opened the Centro Integrador Carmen Serdán, the first shelter in the city coordinated by a governmental agency, and in 2021 the government of Baja California, together with other allies, opened the Migrant Sanctuary. In general, from 2016 to 2022 the government has intervened on-site with urgent reactive measures to the arrival of massive -and, therefore, eventual- flows, as happened with the 2018 caravans and the assignment of the Benito Juarez sports unit to receive them for a few days, then concentrated in the former El Barretal entertainment center, in operation for a month and a half, when the average waiting time at that time was eight months for MPP.

per square kilometer. It is one of the most expensive cities in the country, with a complicated geography due to its slopes and tributaries. This refers to the saturation and dispute for urban space, to the quality of life of its inhabitants in general and, specially, to the living conditions of the population in mobility: precarious housing within their reach and exposure to particularly unsafe areas of the city, with the latency of being revictimized.

2 Civil society in Tijuana, agency and networking

Because of the historical-migratory evolution of the city, this border has been a point of concentration of civil society organizations specialized in the care of people in mobility, especially since the 1990s (Jiménez *et al*., 2012). Over the years, some shelters have endured since then and more have been opened, forming a vigorous inventory to cover the specialized care of different population groups, such as single men, families, women, children and adolescents, and the LGBT community.

What do civil society shelters represent for contained and entrapped migrants? In a recent research (Silva, Alfaro, 2022) there was evidence that in addition to covering the fundamental need for accommodation, shelters are seen as safe spaces of trust and accompaniment; even as a community of welcome and faith, considering that several shelters are coordinated by religious congregations or Catholic and evangelical churches that offer the possibility of continuing with religious practices of the people in mobility, which may represent some relief for them. In the case of forcibly displaced persons, staying in shelters also provides a sense of anonymity and protection from their aggressors. Thus, these spaces, to one extent or another, become cardinal sites for the recovery of physical and mental health. On the subject of civil society organized in a network, it is worth asking in what way the binding work could strengthen a crucial strategy for their integral protection. What possible housing, settlement or peace processes are possible under these conditions and how the agency capacity of people in mobility is or can be incorporated into the scaffolding of resources for this purpose.

Such resources of the associations constitute a rich range: from providing a roof, food, physical and mental health care, education, legal advice and/or defense of Human Rights and even the promotion of political participation, to the promotion of skills of people in entrapment, the incorporation of their capacities as part of the resources of and for the association; some facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge, job training and something fundamental for the strengthening of the soul: they build a sense of community and a space for identity reconstruction.

Due to their socioeconomic background and their ground track record, the vast majority of people in mobility who seek asylum in the United States arrive at the border in precarious monetary conditions, with little or no social capital (social networks) and going through a delicate emotional situation when they have been displaced from their communities and lost their patrimony. In such conditions, given the scarce participation of the government, the associations are the first to make available diverse resources to alleviate their forced stay in the city. Associations are groups of individuals who develop a collective, stable and non-profit activity, including civil society organizations, religious congregations or faith communities, and international organizations such as United Nations agencies (UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM).

In the local civil society scenario, the Scalabrinian congregations, which founded and runs the Casa del Migrante since 1987 and the Madre Assunta Institute since 1994, stands out. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Coalición Pro Defensa del Migrante (COALIPRO), formed in 1996, was the first legally formalized civil society network in Tijuana, made up of these Scalabrinian associations and others of similar date, such as the juvenile shelter Casa YMCA and the then called Albergue Juvenil del Desierto in Mexicali. These associations were later joined by the Salvation Army and its subsidiary for women and accompanied children Casa Puerta de Esperanza, the Migrant Worker Support Center and the Center for Human Rights and Civic Education, the latter two in Mexicali. The objectives of this network include efforts to cover the basic needs of the shelters, while seeking to strengthen and professionalize its member organizations (COALIPRO, 2022).

It places special emphasis on public policy advocacy and the defense of the human rights of the population in mobility on both sides of the border, working in collaboration with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Alliance San Diego and San Diego Welcoming Task Force, among other organizations (field notes, 2023).

Two decades after the constitution of COALIPRO, the arrival of the Haitian diaspora marked a turning point in the civil society scenario in the city, since the emergency generated by this massive arrival motivated the participation or creation of different associations for their attention, such as churches, soup kitchens, legal advice centers and citizen initiatives. Based on this diversity, studies by El Colef, a research center with four decades of presence in Tijuana, have distinguished shelters between traditional and emerging, the latter emerging from that 2016 juncture (Albicker et al., 2017; Paris, 2018). Another research (Silva, 2019) distinguishes a typology from the operational modalities of a little more than 40 shelters, referring as welfare shelters to those that were mainly dedicated to the coverage of immediate basic needs with a short time of stay; As transitional shelters and integration-promoting shelters were those that provided support to facilitate eventual processes of labor insertion and/or social integration in the city, and on the other hand, long-stay shelters, where it was observed that people could stay indefinitely, establishing close ties with the host organization. As can be seen, the above refers to a significant diversity of civil society organizations in the city, many of which are still in operation (March 2023).

Notwithstanding, the constitution of a network of associations, formalized or notarized, has not progressed at the same pace. In addition to COALIPRO, in force to date, there are several civil society organizations that work with their affiliates in the United States or with their representatives at the international level, while others maintain links within their congregations or churches, such as the Pentecostals, the Salesians, Jesuits and others. These internal networks undoubtedly constitute important alliances to create synergy from and with their own institutions, coinciding in missions and profiles, but without being able to articulate in a broad

and diversified way with other associations. It is worth reflecting on how this potential plural connection in Tijuana could play in favor of better care, forming networks that harmonize resources and expertise for institutional and inter-institutional strengthening, including advocacy work.

Formalizing networking is relevant, especially when it is postulated that the resources provided by the associations may represent the enabling impulse to promote the construction of agency (Giddens, 2006) of the various population groups in mobility, including children and adolescents. Agency in the sense of a person's capacity to respond to a given situation. When the social subject is an agent, he can impact the conditions that have been imposed on him in a beneficial way for himself. From the theoretical proposal of the duality of structure, "structure should not be assimilated to constraint, but is both constrictive and enabling" (Giddens, 2006, p. 61). In empirical terms, entrapment as a consequence of a political system can be alleviated as a life experience to the extent that the individual manages to intervene to improve his situation. If containment, waiting and entrapment (structural) place people in mobility in the suspension of their trajectory, of their objectives, will and rights (individual), action appears as a contestation mechanism. Associations, it is reiterated, are important actors in the promotion of this path. Thus, the principle of agency stands out as "commitment temporarily constructed by actors from different structural environments - the time-relational contexts of action - who, through the interaction of habit, inventiveness and judgment, both reproduce and transform these structures as an interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations" (Emirbayer, Mische, 1998, p. 970). This appreciation coincides with the results of research conducted by the Scalabrinian Center for Migration Studies (CSEM), observing that "within the limits of information, uncertainty and other existing constraints (physical, normative or political-economic), social actors seek to solve problems, learn to intervene in the flow of social events that surround them and continuously monitor their own actions" (Botega, 2020, p. 214).

The proposal addresses the need to review whether an association favors or limits the scope for incorporating agency expressions: from its normativity (mission, vision and origin, how it conceives its target public, operating rules and regulations, the profile of its human resources and inter-institutional relations); its foundations of meaning (possible considerations related to the agency, with the conceptualization of the problem it intends to solve or alleviate and what is perceived as the needs of the population served); and in its practices (daily work strategies on the part of the staff, distribution of functions, coexistence and the capacity of the association to make its practices more flexible in order to provide personalized attention to exceptional cases; informative, affective and spiritual accompaniment).

In the academic literature, associations are commonly examined in their collective action, in their impact on the public agenda, understanding that they are associations that "pick up the resonance that the constellations of problems of society find in the spheres of private life, condense it and raise its volume or voice, so to speak, and transmit it to the space of public-political opinion" (Habermas, 2005, p. 447). However, the proposal here does not prioritize these actions of the associations as spokespersons in the public sphere, but rather focuses on the articulation they establish with the people they serve and from where, in operational and daily terms, they would be exercising a positioning that is perhaps less public but equally effective towards participation and guarantee of rights. Thus, the associations stand out as actors that articulate, extend, and have resources, based on the fact that most of them are "the space of human association free of coercion, in addition to the set of relational networks established on the basis of family, faith, interest and ideology, which fills that space" (Walzer, 1995, p. 153).

In Tijuana, as an example of the scope of this practice between association and agency, initiatives such as Visión de los Migrantes, established in 2018 by the Haitian community to become their own spokespersons and defenders of their rights, and Casa Hogar El Puente, founded in 2019 by Honduran caravaners to house mainly displaced mothers and their children who had been detained at the

border for months, have emerged. Although in both cases there was no formalized network work, there was a linkage between associations that had migrant leaders themselves as a node (Field notes, 2016, 2018-2020).

3 Care for children and adolescents in restraint and entrapment

Is it possible to think of a collaborative network of associations that specialize in caring for children and adolescents? In this scheme, is their agency incorporated towards a less welfare-oriented and more integrative care, recognizing minors as full subjects of rights? We start from the premise that the civil society's efforts are a palliative for children and adolescents to cover the costs of waiting and entrapment generated by the U.S. asylum system. In the structural and institutional dimension, this implies a transcendental point: to have spaces for agential expression as a way towards participation and full recognition of their rights. To this end, it is essential to examine the conceptualization of children and adolescents from which care is provided: whether it is a primarily paternalistic adult-centric perspective in which children and adolescents are conceived as individuals dependent on adult supervision and therefore "led" or guided by adults who make decisions concerning the minor, or whether it is an approach based on comprehensive protection guided by the principles of the best interests of the child and the progressive autonomy of children and adolescents (UNICEF, 2006).[2]

In empirical terms, in order to approach possible answers to the questions that open this subsection, we start with a very brief mention of the general characteristics of children and adolescents in Tijuana and how they are cared for by civil associations, inquiring whether there is a sense of promotion of their agency in the care provided. Regarding the first point, Silva and Alfaro (2022) found that accompanied children and adolescents in

[2] For further discussion, see Cillero, 1998; Bustelo, 2023 and Ortega, 2023, among others.

Tijuana come from both urban and semi-urban contexts, most of them are forcibly displaced by the violence of organized crime and/or family violence, heading for the United States-Mexico border because most of them have transnational social networks. This provides them with fundamental complementary resources, such as information on the migratory environment to make decisions, affective accompaniment and monetary support. When accompanied, it was possible to notice that there is a significant restructuring of the family throughout the displacement and while they are at the border, with the figure of the mother predominating as the central axis, especially in the case of displacement due to family violence by the father or stepfather. In an adjustment of roles, children and adolescents commonly see themselves in these extreme circumstances as caregivers of their mother and younger siblings. They even seek to act as containers, making themselves "the strong ones", which generates an extra emotional burden on top of the already traumatic experiences of displacement.

It was also observed that the child-rearing practices in the family are replicated more intensely at the border. That is, if there was good communication with the children beforehand, this is practiced with greater intensity in the waiting period, talking about the situation, explaining future options and attending to their opinions, in an exercise of emotional care, agency and family resilience through effective communication by making them part of it. Conversely, if there was a poor relationship between children and parents, the suffering and uncertainty tended to be exasperated amidst a sense of loneliness and grief.

Regarding the profile of unaccompanied adolescents staying at Casa YMCA while they wait to apply for asylum in the United States, it was noted that they characterized by moving in groups of peers, whether siblings, cousins and/or friends in their second childhood and adolescence, and that in the case of adolescent women, they have come to the border accompanied by their baby, a profile that undoubtedly demands very particular attention logistics (Field notes, 2022).

Regarding the care provided in some civil society shelters, the accompanied adolescents estimated the treatment provided by the

staff to be "good" or "fine," that is to say, superficial and sparing. The reason for this lies in the assumption by the shelter staff that the parents are responsible for their children, so that contact (reception and instructions) is limited to the parents or adults who take care of them. In these cases, there is usually a persistent need to strengthen the right of children and adolescents to be heard and to address their concerns directly. On the other hand, in the case of unaccompanied children and adolescents, direct communication is opened with shelter staff for their emotional, legal and community care, in addition to facilitating long-distance contact with parents or close relatives.

Under this framework, networking would harmonize contributions from different types of associations -civil society, religious congregations, and international organizations- to identify and promote the agency of children and adolescents and their possibilities to amplify institutional interaction and take advantage of it, considering their age, sex, ethnicity, socio-cultural elements specific to their nationality and condition of accompaniment. The indicators of the agency of children and adolescents to be considered are their individual abilities and capacities, knowledge, skills, schooling, as well as the social capital they may have (relationship with other associations and their own social networks, whether family, community or other).

Under these considerations, the ideal objective would be to crystallize a local model of networked care that incorporates the agency of children and adolescents (NNA) in its design[3]. It should make the available resources of the associations themselves more efficient; provide the migrant, in this case the children and adolescents, with a sense of transformation of the conditions in which they wait, and thirdly, make effective the minor's right to participation, visualizing them as an agent "capable of deploying (repeatedly, in the flow of daily life) a spectrum of causal powers, including the power to influence that deployed by others" (Giddens, 2006, p. 51). Against the common perception of the migrant who

[3] In 2017, UNICEF published a series of articulated documents based on the promotion of resilience that could be taken up as documentary input for a network specialized in children and adolescents.

transits in a state of suspension of rights and a suspended form of existence (Hess, 2012), the construction of agency brings with it the power of action and respect for Human Rights, as pondered in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and specifically in Mexico in the legislation related to migration and the human rights of children and adolescents.

Final considerations towards networking

In this document we have briefly reviewed the contextual components of the Tijuana border that should be taken into account when considering networking as a strategy for attention and synergy, advocacy and defense of human rights, as well as some particularities of children and adolescents in mobility to be considered within this collective production, including their potential for agency. It is recognized that the research was limited to the role of the State and the government in the problem of border containment and entrapment, as well as its possible participation in the constitution of a network of associations, being responsible for guaranteeing comprehensive protection and the restitution of the rights of people in mobility. However, before thinking of an intergovernmental linkage, the proposal starts with the consideration of starting with a network of civil society and churches, as they are more homologated associations in terms of experience, positioning, sensitivity and permanence.

Finally, some reflections that emerge from the proposed equation are highlighted: the challenge of matching missions and objectives in a network among the diversity of forms of work of the organized civil society in Tijuana. The importance of considering the linkage of networked civil society organizations with alternative actors in the locality, be they citizen and/or educational initiatives. Emphasize the relevance of continuing to observe an internal institutional flexibility to adapt to the highly changing patterns of current mobility that generates at the same time the need for particular attention to specific groups, such as distinguishing women who are mothers and who travel with young children, people with addiction problems or with chronic diseases, for example. In this

specialization, recognizing children and adolescents as social actors is a way to promote their agency that is integrated into networked resources and adds to the recognition of their human rights.

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7

INDIGENOUS MIGRATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Laura Velasco Ortiz

Introduction

Indigenous peoples have migrated since pre-colonial times, but it was under European colonization that they experienced territorial dispossession and massive displacement under different names such as *encomiendas* or *resguardos*. Over the centuries, indigenous migration and displacements were obscured under the categories of national migrants, such as Mexicans, Chileans, Argentines, Bolivians, in light of the industrialization and urbanization processes in Latin American countries. The great rural-urban migrations were thought of as a phenomenon of the social change of depeasantization and the emergence of urban populations, and less about the ethnic reconfiguration of the continental geography. Their visibilization as migrant peoples did not occur until the end of the 20th century, after the indigenous mobilizations for recognition and autonomy and the subsequent decolonial turn, which meant a critique of the categories of Indian, indigenous or native peoples. Currently, scholars use the ethnic and racial lens to study internal and international migrations. This text presents a general approach to indigenous migrations in Latin America.

1 The structural forces of the indigenous peoples' migrations

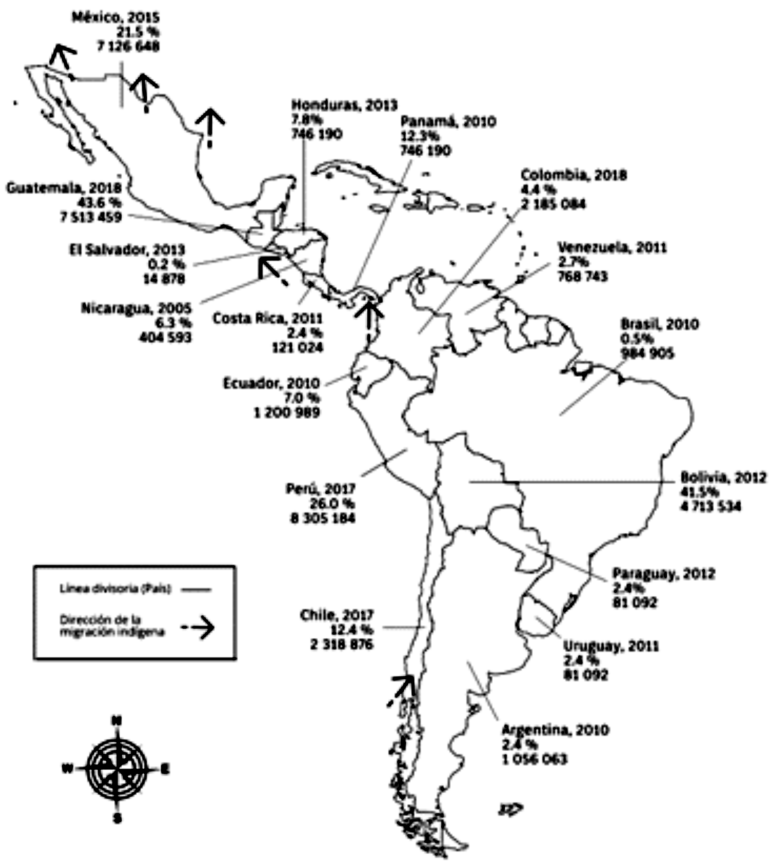
The great displacements organized by the colonizers in the different historical periods from the 16th to the 18th century throughout Latin America were the basis for the dispossession of the territories of the indigenous peoples. From Patagonia in the Southern cone of the continent to the Great Chichimeca in the North of the continent where Latin America meets the United States, indigenous peoples experienced the dispersion and fragmentation of their territories and the disarticulation of their communities at the hands of European conquerors and colonizers. In particular, the fragmentation of indigenous territories and communities was exacerbated by the delimitation of State Borders, and led to the creation of border indigenous peoples whose free transit was interrupted and who were classified as distinct nationalities. This was the case of the Mapuche peoples who were divided between Argentina and Chile; the Aymaras between Bolivia and Peru; the Yanomami in Brazil and Venezuela, and the Ngäbes (or Guaymíes) between Panama and Costa Rica.

Colonial relations were institutionalized in the independent and modern States with indigenist policies and developmentalist models that constructed the way of life and the relationship with nature and their territories as backward ways of life, subject to acculturation and assimilation, or else to extermination strategies.

But after more than five centuries of institutionalized colonization in the continent, there are currently 58 million people who ascribe to 800 indigenous peoples in the different continental regions of Latin America (ECLAC, 2018). Map 1 shows the geography of indigenous peoples in the continent, the size of their population and the proportion they represent of the total population. Map 1 also shows the diverse temporality of the sources that provide data on the amount of peoples, which makes comparison difficult. However, with the data shown in such map, it is visible that Peru, Guatemala and Mexico are the countries with the largest indigenous population in the continent, followed by another group with smaller populations such as Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile and Argentina. However, the meaning of such numbers for each

country is different. For example, Guatemala and Bolivia are the countries where the indigenous population reaches almost 50% of the population (44% and 42% respectively). While for Mexico and Peru they only reach about one fifth (26% and 22% respectively).

Map 1. Population self-identifying as indigenous in Latin America (17 countries), according to the last census and estimates to 2018, with general direction of indigenous migration



Source: Author's elaboration based on Map v.1. Latin America (17 Countries): population self-identifying as indigenous, according to last census and estimates to 2018 (ECLAC and FILAC, 2020, p. 154).

These indigenous peoples confront global capitalism on two major fronts: on the one hand, the extraction of natural resources such as territories and their resources like water, timber, minerals; and, on the other hand, the relentless search for cheap and exploitable labor at the lowest possible cost. One way of lowering the cost of labor is the symbolic power of ethnic-racial discrimination that inferiorizes indigenous peoples and places them as subjects of savage exploitation in agribusiness, extractive mining, domestic service or informal commerce in large cities.

2 Indigenous peoples' mobility and migration patterns

A review of existing literature on indigenous migrations in Latin America (see Velasco, 2021; Morales, 2007) points to three types of mobility that can occur within each country (internal) or between different countries (international), with the clarification that these mobility patterns can be experienced by the same people and even by the same person.

The first type is constituted by cross-border ancestral mobilities that refer to the ancient mobilities that indigenous peoples carry out as part of their territorial practices, such as pilgrimages, gathering/hunting/fishing or rituals, which have now been fractured by the State border and have given rise to their status as cross-border indigenous peoples.

These types of mobilities exist throughout the American continent. In the Southern Cone there are the Mapuches of the Arauco region between Argentina and Chile, who have been crossed by the State border since the 19th century. It would also be the case of the Quechua and Aymara whose indigenous languages are the second and third most spoken in Latin America and who were crossed by the borders of Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador. In Central America, the Ngäbes (or Guaimís) are another border people who crossed the borders of Panama and Costa Rica. Further North in the great Mesoamerica, the Mam people were divided between Mexico and Guatemala, imposing obstacles to their daily transit over their historical territory. In the Great Chichimeca (also known

as Aridoamerica), ancestral mobility is the basis of a nomadic culture of the great deserts of North America. Peoples such as the Odham on the Western border or the Kikapu-Kickapoo on the Western border between Mexico and the United States. To colonial violence is added the colonizing violence of the States. This is what González-Casanova (1969) called internal colonialism to describe the role of modern states in the domination and subordination of indigenous peoples under the nationalisms and capitalism of the twentieth century.

The second type of mobility occurs under the great processes of urbanization and industrialization in Latin America in the mid-20th century, giving way to the founding of large cities. These were the times of rural-urban migrations and the nascent agro-industrial regions. This was followed by the great internal and later international labor migrations, which gave rise to the processes of indigenous urbanization. According to del Popolo and Ribotta (2011) and Rodríguez (2008), labor migrations are the origin of the great transformations in the ethnic geographies of the continent. According to these researchers, rural-urban migrations are the dominant ones among indigenous peoples, which are mostly short-distance migrations to neighboring towns and cities close to their territories and of very young populations. Migration to the cities has changed the rural face of indigenous peoples.

Researches from the Southern Cone to North America points to processes of urbanization of indigenous identities that do not respond to the idea of total assimilation. Although there are documented variations throughout the continent, ethnic reconstitution and revitalization in the cities and their contribution to the cultural diversity of Latin America's large cities is a fact. They report the emergence of ethnic agents, such as associations of migrants gathered around their places of origin, as well as processes of reconstitution of the indigenous identity and community forms, through the reproduction of festivities and indigenous rituals and the appropriation of coexistence practices in urban neighborhoods. We are aware that this urbanization process has configured the Mapuche community in a trans-territorial fashion through migration to Santiago de Chile. There are complex effects of these

community reconstitution processes such as: (a) the dependence of the remaining members on remittances; (b) the emergence of new hybrid identity categories such as Mapuche-Warriache (Imilan and Alvarez, 2008) or Mapurbe Mapunky 1 (Kropff, 2011, 81); (c) a final consequence of urban migrations is the emergence of ethnic agents such as organizations and collectives based on kinship and ethnic ties that struggle for recognition and culturally diverse integration in these urban environments. These changes are visible in other indigenous currents in countries such as Ecuador, Bolivia and Mexico. In the latter country, urban indigenous identities have enriched the popular culture of large cities (Chenaut, 2016) and are part of the workforce and folklorization of the indigenous in Mexico's elite tourist centers (Castellanos, 2010).

Indigenous labor migrations have another pattern when associated with global agribusiness. Agro-industrial labor has important antecedents in colonial and slave forms of exploitation such as plantations and haciendas, and later in transnational companies such as the United Fruit Company that operated in Costa Rica, Guatemala and Cuba since the beginning of the 20th century. Today, this sector has evolved into large global agricultural chains such as the Driscoll company that produces the variety of berries that feed the urban middle classes. Given the seasonality and intensity of agricultural work, the migrant and ethnized population is the labor force that sustains this sector. In this regard, we can review three cases of short- and long-distance migrations. An exemplary case is the Nägabe (or Guaymi) and Kuna who migrate periodically from Panama to the banana farms in Costa Rica since the beginning of the 20th century. This case condenses the processes of land dispossession to which a diversity of indigenous peoples were subjected by transnational corporations, impoverishment and their incorporation as agricultural workers periodically confined to camps and subjected to intensive exploitation processes (Eberhard, Simons, Fernning, 2020b). The Aymara people on the border between Chile and Argentina, who were divided by the state border and converted into migrant laborers for the Argentinean agricultural industries that developed in the 1970s (Bello, 2007),

[1] A mixture of Mapuche and urban, and mapuche-punk.

are another emblematic case. On the border between Mexico and the United States, the Mam people live the same experience of dispossession of their lands by coffee growers since the 19th century, to later convert them into cross-border agricultural laborers working in highly precarious conditions on their ancestral lands (Bezaré, 2007). Or by displacing them to the margins of the cities that were part of their ancestral territories in a process that Camus (2012) calls the deindigenization of urban territories in Guatemala and Oemichen finds in the case of indigenous peoples in Mexico City, the ancient Tenochtitlan (2007).

In the northern part of the American continent, export agriculture in the Pacific corridor that crosses the Mexican northwest and extends beyond the border to reach the Pacific coast of the United States has since the 1980s incorporated indigenous peoples such as the Mixtecs who travel long distances from their places of origin to move between different ranches and companies with increasingly industrialized processes and in increasingly fragmented value chains that include the consumer markets of the global north (Kearney, Nagengast, 1989). This migratory process has given rise to transnational communities and pan-ethnic categories such as indigenous Oaxacalifornians or Mayan-Americans and to continental encounters and alliances among indigenous peoples.

3 Identity and community reconstitution

Migrations of indigenous peoples, whether internal or international, made significant changes for the communities and their members. Young people are the most important component of contemporary migrations and the most vulnerable in terms of identity (del Popolo, Ribotta, 2011) due to processes of symbolic and structural racism. Large contingents of young people are growing up outside their places of origin, losing contact with ritual forms, language and community habits that give them a sense of belonging and facing racism as indigenous people in the places of destination. Hence the importance of agents of ethnic reconstitution in the places of destination, such as organizations of indigenous migrants and local policies of integration and cultural diversity.

In this respect, several papers (Aravena, 2014; Bastos, 1999; Castillejas, 2011; Ordòñez, Colmenares, 2019) point to patterns of reconstitution of indigenous communities and therefore of identities. Internal and international migrations have produced individual ethnic agents embodied new indigenous intellectuals who have reworked new interpretations of what it is to be indigenous at the same time that members of the communities have reworked their forms of belonging in separate territories, constructing ascriptions and belongings in absence and at a distance (see Barabas, 2014; Kearney, Nagengast, 1989, for the case of Mexico).

After more than five hundred years of military colonization and its institutionalization in Latin American states, the scenario contained in Map 1 points out how wrong the idea of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was about the assimilation or disappearance of indigenous peoples.

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8

WHAT IF WE HACK THE ASYLUM MACDONALIZATION IN MEXICO?

Love letter to the defenders of migrants' rights

Amarela Varela-Huerta

In this reflexive writing exercise of what was a presentation at the meeting that reviews this book, I address concepts around practices of life and practices of death in defense of those who defend migrants and refugees in contemporary Mexico. More than analyzing the agency of fellow migrants, their practices, their desires, this text proposes to focus on the guild of defenders of the migrants' rights: namely, you.

And that is why I made this love letter, because the transfeminist comrades say that hatred and misunderstandings (which you face every day in your diverse activisms) are fought with tenderness pedagogy[1]. So this missive is to honor the work you do in everyday life, and by that I mean the exercise of emotional endurance, of vital endurance, the dignity and vital energy you put into the radical hospitality you practice. And since it is a love letter, it also contains a few uncomfortable questions, because when one loves one commits sincerity, which from my perspective is the basis of

[1] Please refer D'Emilia, Chávez, 2015.

tenderness: transparency. This transparency is based on questions and not on certainties.

A melancholic thing is that this love letter is written, framed, from the academic space-time, crossed by what I call academic neoliberalism , which has undermined the ability to exercise a praxis, to reflect to understand, to understand to imagine how to transform reality and to ponder on what we exercise as strategies for such social change. A praxis similar to the one master Paulo Freire (2017) or the founders of liberation theology/philosophy (Dussel, 1980) taught us, or even master Orlando Flas Borda (1999), with his antagonistic proposal of Participatory Action Research, in which he practices a radical critique of the premise that research should pave the way to "development", that which today has us all thirsty and sweating because of climate change, having preferred barbarism over other forms of social organization and relationship with nature, a discussion that has also been taking place in feminisms for a long time (Rodríguez and Herrero, 2010).

I would like to report that in the academy, sadly in which I work, we have a process of neoliberalism where we have to compete - as you will understand - not only for resources, but also for prestige, which is more dangerous. In the same way that you have taught me that there are many ways of exercising faith and there are many ways of inhabiting spirituality; in the academy there are also many ways of constructing knowledge and there are many people who believe they are telling the truth, or assume, or believe, that they are telling the truth and that their truth is unique, and therein lies the danger.

Just as an example, the necropolitical fantasy repeated by many people and institutions that migration must be "safe, orderly and regular" is a discourse that was imposed as truth, as the master Michael Foucault (1997) would say, based on very complex disputes of power relations. But this discourse, which today seems to be an unshakable truth, is actually quite new, opposed to the certainty that migrations shape and explain us as a species. The mantra of "win-win" migration governance (Neira-Orjuela, 2020), came to our theoretical, political and procedural imagination only in the 1990s with Bimael Gosh's (2012) white paper on migration

governmentality (Estupiñán, 2014). An "advisory service" that the supranational agencies proposed to this guru of the administration of time, space and the lives of migrants in the world. Of their deaths and their lives.

From this role, as a migration academic, I am here to share with you a series of clues that migrant feminisms can contribute to the driving question we were asked to answer as speakers on this panel when the event's organizers recommended to us the question of "what to do" in the current reality of migration. First of all, I would like to emphasize that, from my perspective, the question needs to be refined, given the answer to what to do is clear: to work on a daily basis so that all people can exercise their rights, because, as you say, no person is illegal. The question, I believe, is not what to do, but how to do it, without endangering our health, sometimes our lives, our integrity and our hope in the attempt.

1 Marxist, zapatista, guadalupean philosophy: locating my place of enunciation

In feminist thought, in order to tell our ideas, it has been proposed one must first exercise what Pierre Bourdieu proposes as "epistemological vigilance" (2008). Along with this famous sociologist, thinkers such as Aurora Levins (1998) or Mari Luz Esteban (2004), propose the need to "start from oneself" among scholars of society, socio-scientifically questioning a social problem involves self-interviewing, recognizing before the interlocutors who offer us their perspectives, their life stories, their experiences, the way in which the same research questions cross us researchers, even telling our interlocutors how the research problem found us before we made it our driving question. And we call this exercise of epistemological vigilance feminist autoethnography. This is my own.

I am a Marxist-Zapatista, a "Guadalupean philosophy". I belong to a Marxist family, which walked alongside social movements such as the student movement of 1968, but also popular workers' movements, such as the seamstresses' union in

the destroyed Mexico City, then DF, after the first September 19, 1985. In my childhood, I also remember playing in huge houses, which were fresh inside, built of adobe, but almost tropical in their gardens, when my mother and my aunt (both barefoot doctors), attended workshops in Cuernavaca with don Sergio Méndez Arceo: "that priest reads the bible from the perspective of the poor", my ancestors would tell me when I used to ask why they could go to those classes while my sisters and I were not allowed to go to catechism, the Sunday school that all our friends in the neighborhood we grew up in went to church for.

My family was from Protestant origin, but I don't know which specific creed. I only know that my grandmother, Ascension, was a Catholic in her childhood, when she and other Indians did not understand the bible because it was printed in Latin precisely so that the Indians could not understand it. I also know that she dropped out of Catholicism because at confession, when she was 7 years old, my grandmother confessed that she had not only read "Malditas sean las mujeres" by Manuel Ibo Alfaro - a nineteenth-century novel of Spanish romanticism very famous in America - but that she even confessed to the priest of Nopalucán, Puebla, that she loved that novel! My grandmother told us, always with laughter, that the priest punished her by instructing her to pray five Our Fathers and return the "diabolical book" to the original owner (a friend from her last grade, 3rd grade of elementary school). Chonita, as my grandmother was also called, prayed the Our Fathers, but could not return the novel to her friend because she had to flee from her stepfather's violence, and fled from that indigenous Nahuatl community in the Puebla highlands to the capital, where she spent her childhood and youth working in an inn until she married a supporter of Francisco Villa who, years later, to fulfill his role as provider, had to leave several times as a bracero to post-war Chicago.

When Chonita married my grandfather, who belonged to a family of Protestant believers, he incorporated her into his community, where part of my extended family still lives; but my grandmother, my mother and her two younger brothers exchanged the bible for books about the Cuban revolution and Che Guevara.

And just as my grandmother was shot in the right calf by the military on October 2, 1968, when she accompanied her children to the march, she also professed the act of faith of the revolutions that my mother and her siblings embraced from then on. I was born into that world of atheistic bets for a more just world. I grew up with my single mother in the heat of the revolutions and counterrevolutionary wars in El Salvador, in Nicaragua, in Panama, where liberation theology was a pillar for the struggles that my ancestors embraced.

For this reason I respect the church of and for the poor and that is why I learn from the liberationists who still remain on the routes of the migrants that they also accompany. That is why I also deeply respect the work you do in your communities. Then, when I was an adolescent, I had my own revolution: the armed uprising of the Zapatistas in 1994. I ended up becoming a person, defining my identity, in the Lacandon jungle, coming out of the civilian peace camps that the church of Jtatik Samuel Ruíz planted as a seed against the war. As a young woman, then, I knew the forced displacement of the insurgent Indians, I saw them going up and down the mountains with their children on their backs, carrying the marimba, with only dry tortillas to get through the days when the Mexican army entered their communities.

Consequently, we are shaped by migration, forced displacement, violence and the defeats of popular struggles, but also by the lessons learned from the Mexican Revolution, the youthful cry of 1968, the Zapatista uprising, and they explain the world to us. But it seems important to me to explain before you, an audience of religious women who take care of the daily life of the shelters that receive migrants, that I am not baptized and, unfortunately, I do not have a theological formation. I have only visited churches for weddings of dear friends, and also to look as an ethnographer at the spoils of war of the Amerindian genocide, I have visited some religious temples around Latin America. But, for that reason, listening to you these days about the mysticism that sustains your daily work nourishes me a lot, although it is definitely in another register.

2 Transitioning from what to do to how to do it?

When I was invited to this meeting I wondered, what am I going to tell the shelters about what to do, if they are the shelters where we, the academics, are going to do field work, where we learn what to do, besides "voyerear" (a verb that I will not explain due to the nature of the meeting, but that has a very vital origin), or where we are going to do ethnographic observation about the total war faced by migrant families that pass through or leave Mexico.

And I reiterate, on the question that summons us here today, warning, I have no answers to what to do, and I am sorry because that is what I was invited to do. You are the people who are in the field, those who are on the roadside, those who overcome the vicarious fatigue from one night to the next because you have to intervene the next day to look for those children who disappeared on the road, it is you and the migrant families who become human rights defenders along the way.

Therefore, I have the feeling from the academy that a concrete practice we can do is to train politically, ethically and scientifically the colleagues who later become lawyers, psychologists, social workers, communicologists, sociologists, doctors, accountants, administrators, internationalists. Many of these professionals end up working with you, many do so in precarious conditions, but they also learn a lot from the experience of living in the shelters. Therefore, from my perspective, a concrete way to continue defending the rights of migrants is to train professionals who are sensitive but also capable, so that they learn to ask questions, to always start from criticism, to learn to structure their languages, their practices.

In particular, I think it is important to bet on the training of journalists who intend to hack or change the narratives on migrations. In the mass media (Binimelis-Adell and Varela-Huerta, 2022), but also in the daily life of the shelters.

I have listened to them very attentively during these days of meeting, both at the workshops and in the corridors and after-dinner conversations. I sense, from these dialogues, that there are certain patriarchal scars in our imagination and ways of naming the

world, that these scars run through all of us. For example, I heard in this space that migrant women normalize violence, that they perpetuate it with their daughters, that men use shelters for criminal purposes. Hence I sense that we still have a series of very tattooed perspectives on migrants as criminals, migrants as victims, migrants as objects of study, migrants as clients and as a pretext for financing organizations. But I have also heard in your presentations, in your reflections and in your discussions, your perspective on the agency, the political agency, the cultural agency of migrants. The capacity to sustain life that you learn from migrants.

I believe one exercise of collective reflection that we can do is to recognize these patriarchal scars in our ways of naming and imagining the world of migration, in order to change the narratives, to decriminalize, to depersonalize migrants. But also to think about ourselves and to generate collective care strategies for the shelter workers themselves. It is necessary to take the time to dwell on their own mental health, on their self-care, on labor guarantees, to intervene in these territories marked by death.

As mothers who look for their migrant children in transit territories call it, working on the road generates post-traumatic stress not only in the families that migrate, but also in those who take care of these families. Among those who work in the world of migration it is common to hear blunt answers when questioned about how they face the challenge of accompanying migrant communities: "either you get burned out and start working on something else or you get toughened up".

Let's break down such a premise: if you get burned and run away, everything you learned, that you are a book, a book body, leaves with you. There is an interruption of memory for the struggles of the defense of migrants by burning and leaving sad, hopeless, overwhelmed, overwhelmed, overwhelmed, sick. If you get hardened, you talk about mutilated bodies, you talk about lost children, raped women in an impersonal way, never normalized, because you are naming it, it seems to have many layers, of repetition of experiences.

I know that among religious communities they do make an exercise of reflection, of truces, of healing, through their spirituality. And I welcome this, because this is not something we non-religious people, the whole range of non-religious people who also work in and for migration, do not have. Many defenders slip into sadness, use medicines that are against the law, precisely because they lack practices of radical and collective care to manage the sadness that accompanies migrants. In this sense, I believe that another academic endeavor, another concrete approach, is to support and help us to feel and think about these scenarios of death where sometimes it seems that violence totalizes everything and paralyzes us.

3 On the necro-political fantasy of safe, orderly and regular migration

Victoria Ríos wrote in her doctoral thesis (Ríos, 2022) about the mantra of the global governance of migration, namely the idea that migration can be "safe, orderly and regular" if we follow the rules of the game of capital and the States, which is a necropolitical fantasy that must be understood as a discourse that generates death.

In this part of the love letter I will dwell precisely on one of the dimensions that has been intersected by that fantasy: what in the academy we call the industry of humanitarianism (Clavijo, Pereira & Basualdo; 2019). In short, this idea proposes that the different ways in which humanitarianism or human rights can be part of migration control policies, are a concrete form of migration governance. Our dear Eduardo Domenech has worked a lot on this (Domenech, 2009, 2011, 2013) and I believe his conference in this forum is part of this theoretical development that I propose today. I state that in Mexico, as in Latin America, not only the human rights discourse has been instrumentalized, but also the infrastructure of human rights organizations, shelters and other spaces, to regulate migration based on the necropolitical fantasy of migration management.

There are many humanitarian workers in this meeting room. There are also technocrats in the nicest sense of the word; we

academics are also, in a certain sense, hyper-specialized migration bureaucrats, and we are all part of this industry of humanitarianism, we dialogue with it, we nurture it or question it. Even in this industry of humanitarianism there are workers who, more than workers, are anti-racist people who do not get paid for working with migrants, who work in something else and are also militants or activists.

And that too, I would like to tell you, is new. This instrumentalization is relatively recent, less than two decades ago, while migrations have always existed[2].

There is a book called The Border as Method and in chapter six (Mezzadra and Nielson; 2017), in case you do not have much time, but between one plane and another or when you have insomnia because of the case you attended, maybe you can take a look at it (it is available for free download at their publishing house, Traficantes de Sueños). In this book, Mezzadra and Nielson explain the instrumentalization of their faith, of their practice, of their infrastructure, by actors such as the International Organization for Migration (our friends from the IOM, today present in every shelter in Mexico in one way or another), the United Nations, specifically, its agency for refugees, UNHCR, also hyper-present in the decision making of the agendas and strategies of advocacy in Mexico today.

I offer you the possibility of holding workshops (without funding so as not to be blocked by any of these agencies) on the extent to which the networks of migrant shelters for migrants, religious or secular, are today "supported" by these two agencies, IOM and UNHCR, and in what sense they have transformed their dynamics or even the ways to build memory of the consequences of the war on the bodies and histories of migrants.

There is an instrumentalization of knowledge, expertise, time and, above all, of the ethics of those who sustain life in migrant shelters, whether as staff, religious communities or activists, by these supranational agencies. Not to mention the state institutions that cynically send large layers of the migrant population in distress

[2] Other literature addressing it but referring to Europe and the African territory where it has externalized its death policies, can be sought in Didier Fassin (2003 and 2016) cited in the bibliography at the end of this text.

to their shelters, which today are overflowing with people, wounds, sadness, but also life.

Supranational agencies such as UNHCR or IOM and institutional actors in Mexico, use the battery of the humanist right discourse to swallow all that living work that many times you do on a voluntary basis or with precarious contracts (because nobody works in a shelter to get rich, right?). I say this with all due respect, there is a global strategy that is already rooted in Mexico to transform all that work and will into one more tool of that necropolitical fantasy of a "safe, orderly and regular migration".

As a result, humanitarianism is used in the regions that our African colleagues spoke to us about in this forum, it is used in Mexico, in Argentina, in Chile, in Brazil, to depoliticize, to cleanse humanity from the activism that you carry out and that leaves so much work and so many traces in your bodies and in your stories, in your nightmares and in your dawns. With this instrumental use of humanitarianism, for example, containment barriers have been generated, containment belts, buffer zones so that migrants cannot continue to climb to the global north they hope to reach.

You are not responsible for that. I do not mean to say that you are mercenaries on behalf of an industry, what I am saying to you is that your practice is appropriated by capital, by that system of borders that exploits the living labor of migrants, but also that of us.

I know that we academics sometimes speak in a cryptic way, but I am sure that you follow me because I stand for what I have learned with and from you, from journeying with you, from sharing with you.

I reaffirm this instrumentalization of desires, of insomnia, of pain, of money, of the infrastructure that capital turns the humanitarian network into, is part of what Eduardo Domenech explained in his conference, the global government of migrations. And it generates unspeakable consequences, as the journalist Marcela Turati says, when she reconstructed the massacre of migrants (2023), because there is no State that exercises justice, much less reparation for the victims of this global government of migrations. Because in contemporary times, death is a way of governance.

As a closing remark: on the practices of life in the migrations that we support

Everything I have just told you are the practices of death, but then, what are the practices of life that sustain migrants and those who accompany them on their journey? The practices of life, for example, are the resistances within the shelters that turn these spaces into oases generating truces. This is not only the responsibility of you, workers in the world of humanitarianism. It is also a capacity, a counter-conduct[3] of migrants who politicize humanitarianism.

In relation to these daily actions of migrant agency and hospitality, I brought a list, but I am not going to read it anymore because I do not have time. So I did not bring answers to what to do to defend the rights of migrants, but to how to do it, and they have to do with you and your practices of resistance, the ways in which you exercise hospitality every day.

With the research team at my university, we focused on tracking how many attacks on migrant homes and migrant advocates had happened since the pandemic[4]. And so far, from 2020 to this 2023, there are seventeen overt attacks, in addition to the daily racism and the legalized and military racism of the 35,000 members of the National Guard, hurting migrants and the defenders themselves.

In short: there have been attempts to kidnap children in situ in the shelters, intimidation by the crime administered by the State, that is, the National Migration Institute, in collusion with the networks that administer human trafficking. There have been murders of people in charge of migrant shelters. There have been water cuts, power cuts to disable the work of the shelters. There have been outbreaks, demonstrations on the part of neighbors who feel overwhelmed by the fact that other poor people inhabit their territories. There have been imprisonments for practicing solidarity.

All these cases were reported by the press and, in spite of this, they have had no impact in this country with fourteen

[3] We owe this idea to a very clever gay Frenchman, Michael Foucault, who studied subjects in capitalism. As a result, he proposed the term counter-conduct, to refer to practices of disobedience to the established order, which are not openly ideological.
[4] I thank Uacemita journalist Gabriela de la Rosa for carrying out this tracing work.

femicides a day and four child abductions a day. Mexican society lives in a permanent post-traumatic state and is unable to express its indignation at the murder of a priest who ran a shelter for immigrants. Our research indicates that acts of violence remain in legal impunity, but also in social impunity. There is silence, stupefaction.

But also during this time (2020-2021 which is the monitored stage) there has been an apprenticeship among migrants, who have invented very original ways of sustaining life, sometimes beyond the shelter networks, as what was narrated to us in yesterday's group exercise by Sister Magda, about Haitian migrants, who manage their daily life in the shelters or outside of them, through practices that involve them, that moved them from the place of guardianship, of the guarded, to take charge of the planning of the daily tasks, of their exercise.

As Iliana Martinez told us here yesterday, the practices of accompanying and embracing migrant resistance are transforming the defenders' own communities. We have the case of Las Patronas, in Veracruz, the case of the women in the mothers' caravans and how patriarchal genealogies were interrupted among the girls and boys who saw their grandmothers go to look for their daughter who was lost due to market violence, patriarchal violence and State violence.

And so we come to the end of this love letter, with a question that, in order to be understood, offers context.

What and how do shelters look like from the outside? In addition to the instrumentalization of humanitarianism, from the outside we see a staff of workers, a union, all of you hyper-precarized, without stable labor contracts. We see the large agencies subcontracting to replace the role and responsibility of the State.

For example, my UNHCR friends told me that in Mexico, the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance, COMAR, has only 137 agents with the capacity to grant refugee status, who are paid with funds from the Ministry of the Interior's federal budget. At the same time, those same UNHCR colleagues told me that 209 COMAR agents are paid with UNHCR funding. There are twice

as many agents with signature capacity in COMAR paid with externalization, with outsourcing. And this is what I call the macdonalization of asylum, its outsourcing or the subrogated management of that obligation of international law to which the Mexican State is obliged. Meanwhile, the Mexican State itself has 35,000 National Guard agents deployed in this country. We recently learned that the Mexican government spent 5 billion pesos to open a bunker in military camp number one, where our parents were detained and disappeared until today, where it is presumed that some of the 43 students who taught us that in Mexico, the State is also responsible for the violence.

Having said that, I would like to ask you, to see if you can answer me with other love letters: how can we hack the agencies that instrumentalize our rituals, our energy, our work, our time, our lives in the service of migrants in order to stop them?

Before receiving your letters, I contribute with my clues; I believe that generating spaces of self-care and collective care where they name their own violence that is lived in the teams of the shelters, to generate protocols of safety at work.

Another one is to organize, unionize, associate, demonstrating that we recognize the practices of impunity within some of the structures of the shelters where there are also patriarchal relationships.

I can imagine a lot of other things, but I would like to ask you, please, if you would do me the favor of telling me why we have agreed to be hired in a precarious way to manage the asylum, how we were cornered to such a counterinsurgent place, how your hearts feel?

My heart is somewhere between angry and crushed but willing to feed on its rage and to organize myself with yourselves in order to, and with this question I close, maybe: How can we hack the asylum's macdonalization in Mexico?

With love, from the Monster City

Amarela

April 2024

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COMUNICATIONS

1

IMPACT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ON THE ROLE OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN DEFENDING LIFE AT BORDERS

José Luis González

are ten organizations of the Society of Jesus (several institutes, faculties and branches of the Rafael Landívar University, Fe y Alegría with its 56 schools, parishes, radio stations, etc.). Three of them are not Jesuit establishments, but since their inception they have wanted to be in the JMN. There are two other Jesuit initiatives in other countries that work with migrants: Jesuit Migrant Service (JMS) and Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS).

This subject is divided into three sections. 1) **What do we do** in the JMN regarding the topic that has been proposed for this talk? 2) **What we have learned** in this journey with migrants in the transformation of the conditions that limit their rights? 3) **What we dream** in relation to a world without borders where migration is a right recognized and practiced without unnecessary suffering?

Beforehand, we were supposed to reflect on what we mean by "advocacy" or "cross-border" work, but we do not have enough time to do so. It should be noted that "cross-border" does not necessarily mean that one must be at the border, since two organizations can collaborate from two capitals far from the border, but with positive consequences for those who cross the border. And regarding advocacy, we must remember that it consists of transforming.

Not only as something proper to specialists, but from the popular protagonism, both of migrants and of those who help them. Experience teaches that "closeness" with migrants and refugees is a more "effective" transforming strategy than working breakfasts with consuls, events in large hotels with "Migration" officials or sterile meetings with congressmen supposedly interested in the subject.

1 What we are doing

1.1 Cross-border collaboration between Jesuit operate in Mexico and Central America in favor of migrants and refugees. Since 2013, a *Biprovincial Project* has been in operation (the Society of Jesus calls administrative territories such as Mexico and Central America "provinces"). Initially, the headquarters of this project was in Comitán (Chiapas) and since 2015 it is in Frontera Comalapa, inserted in that parish and in the diocese of San Cristóbal, and serves a shelter for refugees (San Rafael), a dormitory for migrants (San José), and a soup kitchen (Pope Francis). The labor is not only done by the Jesuits with an interdisciplinary team of professionals, but there is also a large group of volunteers in the pastoral care of migrants following a tradition of hospitality of that parish that in the 80's welcomed thousands of Guatemalan refugees. These cross-border teams also exist on other borders, such as the *Kino Border Initiative* on the Nogales-Arizona border, and in other countries in South America and the Caribbean.

1.2 **Cooperation in transnational assistance** through the RJM-CANA Regional Assistance Network (Central America-North America).[1] This assistance network is a coordination of lawyers and legal assistance promoters from Panama to the United States who coordinate to help migrants and refugees in legal matters, such as the search for missing persons, the location of detainees, the transfer of the bodies of deceased migrants, the processing and apostille of documents, etc. In some cases, they are Bufetes Populares of Jesuit universities, and in other cases, they are promoters or lawyers who work in care offices.

[1] https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=232945701591516.

1.3 Transnational advocacy on access to justice. The families of the victims of the Camargo massacre (Tamaulipas, January 2021) contacted us within hours of the tragedy, even before the news came to ight. Since then, we began to accompany (psychosocial, humanitarian, legal, spiritual) these families, most of them from Comitancillo (San Marcos, Guatemala), and together with the JRM of Mexico (Centro Prodh and SJM) and the Foundation for Justice and the Democratic Rule of Law, we followed the trial developed in Tamaulipas (Mexico), making it possible for the victims' families to be present at the hearings virtually, bringing them together in a room in Comitancillo (Guatemala), being able to intervene at any time through the zoom. Some of them came from other distant municipalities and it was very difficult for them to leave their jobs to attend all the hearings, as sometimes more than one hearing was held each week. Networking helped the case not to end up, like other massacres, stuck in Mexico.[2] The difficulties raised by the defense lawyers of the 12 accused policemen were even accentuated by the first judge, who suspended the hearings countless times with arguments as crude as "the defendants did not show up", when the defendants were in prison and it is the authorities who are responsible for presenting them at the hearing. The main challenge was to keep these families together for almost three years in order to not give up the case. The human and spiritual dimension led us to share with them the transfer of the bodies to their homes, the funerals, the grave visits, the Masses and anniversaries, sharing as a single family moments of pain and also of resistance from their indigenous Mam culture.[3]

1.4 Promotion of migrant protagonism and of their relatives. This protagonism necessarily requires taking a step from the individual to the collective, which is almost impossible in transit

[2] Months after this presentation, the "Camargo case" came to an end with the conviction of the 12 state police officers responsible for the massacre. It is the first migrant massacre case to come to an end in Mexico with a conviction. https://www.france24.com/es/am%C3%A9rica-latina/20230916-en-m%C3%A9xico-primera-condena-a-agentes-del-estado-por-una-matanza-de-migrantes.

[3] It is a transnational justice achieved precisely with two characteristics promoted by this meeting: networking and protagonism of the migrants or their families. https://www.plazapublica.com.gt/migracion/reportaje/camargo-es-un-parteaguas-familias-de-migrantes-asesinados-logran-condena.

migration (no one stops to create a migrant organization) but is easier at origin and destination. The JRM has promoted in the region the creation of Committees of Migrants' Relatives (Nicaragua, Honduras), Self-Help Groups of women who have their husbands or brothers outside the country (Mexico and Guatemala[4]), as well as support to already constituted organizations such as CONIGUA (Nicaraguan Community in Guatemala), or domestic workers in Costa Rica (ASTRADOMES). The first Committee of migrants' families in Central America was formed in Honduras (COFAMIPRO), after Hurricane Mitch, supported by Radio Progreso (RJM). The idea is to give migrant organizations or migrant family members a voice and to organize themselves in the defense of their rights. This requires educational processes such as those we are developing with thousands of children and adolescents on the phenomenon of migration5. It is necessary to distinguish, within civil society, between migrant associations and migrant support organizations, just as we distinguish between a popular organization and an NGO. Failure to distinguish between these two has caused migrant protagonism to be taken away by voices that are not migrants, or that the force of financing transforms militants into salaried workers, weakening grassroots organizations by stealing their militancy. The RJM is aware that we are not a migrant organization but a support organization, but we do not want migrants to be only "beneficiaries" of our help, but we want to walk WITH them. This preposition "with" was debated in meetings and assemblies when the name Jesuit Network WITH Migrants was defined. And we must be at the service of the organizations OF migrants so that the protagonism is theirs, because we already saw yesterday, for example, in the presentation of CONAMIREDIS (National Commission for the Support of Returned Migrants with Physical Disabilities), from Honduras, that the struggle for the recognition of their rights is heroic.

We end this first section (*What we do*) remembering that here we only display what concerns today's topic. There is also advocacy

[4] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJbB2-cs-gU&t=4s.
[5] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDuQeV6hZCo.

work in alliance with other networks to which we belong, and from which we work in strategic litigation. But our advocacy model aims to unite transforming effectiveness with proximity to the migrants themselves. That is why our *Center for Integral Attention to Migrants* in Guatemala City is called *Casa Myrna Mack* in homage to this Guatemalan anthropologist of Chinese origin (her parents and grandparents migrated to Guatemala) who not only studied the population displaced in the 1980s by the war, publishing two reports that helped to publicize and protect the Communities of Population in Resistance (CPR), but also approached and accompanied this population in difficult times. Two blocks from the Myrna Mack House is the place where she was killed with 27 stab wounds on September 10, 1990.

2 What do we learn?

We learn many values from migrants and from the people who help them, which help to transform mentalities, but also laws and policies, as we are going to see. In this and the following section, we will mention cases of the experience of the RJM as well as other cases known in other regions or shown by the media.

2.1 Resilience

The relatives of the victims of the Camargo massacre have overcome temptations to abandon the group and the legal action, but they have not done so because there is a resilience that has to do with the communitarian sense of their indigenous Mam culture, their Christian faith, and their desire that by winning the case, other massacres could be avoided. On All Souls' Day, on the highest hill in the municipality, we organized a workshop with everyone to make kites, which have the meaning of being the soul of their deceased.[6] At the end of the afternoon one of the strings broke and a kite flew behind the hill that sheltered us. We could not leave until the kite was found several kilometers away. We call that

[6] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCJWSblVRV0.

resilience. Likewise, migrants in transit show this strength in the face of adversities that are not only accidental but systematic, such as extortion and robbery by the police in Guatemala.

Resilience is not to endure but to respond from one's own capacities. Migrant struggles are made invisible by the powers that be. Almost no one in Mexico knows who Carmelita Torres was, a 17-year-old Mexican woman who, faced with discrimination against the Mexican population passing through Ciudad Juarez to El Paso in 1917, rioted. The authorities, with the excuse of stopping a plague of typhus, fumigated the migrants by making them undress in public places and spraying them with gasoline and kerosene against lice. The women were photographed naked and then these photos were circulated in the cantinas. She crossed the border every day because she worked as a domestic in El Paso. A year earlier there had been a fire in the El Paso jail because of gasoline and 30 inmates of Mexican origin died. On January 28, 1917, Carmelita decided not to be fumigated and convinced 30 other women not to be fumigated. Within hours there were more than 2,000 people on the Santa Fe bridge who refused. It is not known what happened to Carmelita after she was arrested. Those events were called "the Bath Riots".[7] And although the fumigations continued, the organized response capacity was the first transformation. The success of advocacy is not only political-legislative but also cultural. Dignity is not granted by law. It is inherent to every human being and migrants like Carmelita remind us of it with their courage.

2.2 Solidarity

Solidarity is more important than the law. In some countries there is a crime of solidarity with migrants. John Paul II said that it was necessary to go beyond the law and opt for solidarity:

"For the Christian the migrant is not simply someone to be respected according to the norms established by law, but a person whose presence challenges him and whose needs are transformed

[7] https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-64480746#:~:text=Carmelita%20Torres%2C%20una%20vecina%20de,UU.

into a commitment for his responsibility. "What have you done to your brother?" (cf. Gen 4:9). The answer must not be given within the limits imposed by the law, but according to the style of solidarity" (St. John Paul II, Message for the JMMR 1996, 5).

Las Patronas are the best known example of this solidarity. They make meals to be thrown in bags to migrants passing by on the train, in Cordoba (Veracruz). But on the borders we have discovered a historical "popular hospitality" and we have captured it in a documentary: "El mismo camino andamos (The same road we walk)".[8] Just to give an example: Don Ricardo Cano lives in Tziscao (Chiapas), a community near the Guatemalan border, and he told us that in 1981, a few hours after the Guatemalan army bombed and massacred a neighboring village, El Quetzal, many families arrived fleeing at night and crossed the border into Mexico, towards Tziscao. An urgent assembly of neighbors was held to see what was to be done with the hundreds of refugees and they agreed that each Mexican family would take in a Guatemalan family. Don Ricardo's (Mexican) house was a one-room house, but he divided it in two, drawing only one line in the middle, and for more than ten years Don Manuel's (Guatemalan) family lived with them.

We can likewise extend to other places and show this solidarity with migrants. Dionisis Avranitakis[9] , a Greek baker on the island of Kos who passed away in 2019, brought bread and food to hundreds of Syrian migrants and refugees who filled the island, and for this he received the 2016 Civil Society Prize from the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). This baker knew what it was like to be a refugee, as his family fled Smyrna in 1922 because of the Turkish invasion that expelled a million Greeks. Panagiota Vasileiadou[10], the "grandmother of refugees" who welcomed Syrian families into her home with no common language other than shared humanity, is in

[8] https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLc0CKgba9rg6z XVmrwqphY8WeMu6wE167.

[9] https://www.lavanguardia.com/internacional/20231116/9381525/guerra-hospital.html.

[10] https://www.lavanguardia.com/internacional/20160428/401429724379/abuela-ido-meni-abrio-casa-refugiados-europa-cerraba-fronteras.html.https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hb_Hdjy4CVw&t=1s.

Idomeni. Stratos Valiamos is a fisherman who rescues castaways[11] in Lesbos and for this he has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. And we could give other examples of solidarity that make an impact because they transform mentalities, prejudices and habits. And we have also learned from this.

2.3 Fraternity

In this case it is no longer about the solidarity of someone who has with someone who does not have, but about the fraternity among those who do not have, creating a kind of family that is expanding to form, for example, the caravans that have been created since 2018. Also here we find testimonies that consider fraternity above the law and above the bad tongues of the neighbors. In the community of Nueva Linda (Frontera Comalapa, Chiapas), a Mexican woman, prayerful, of few resources, Doña Candelaria, was called to pray for a Guatemalan migrant child, Miguel, who was dying of an intestinal perforation by worms and lived with his mother under a tree. Migrant day laborers, in that irrigated area, sleep under trees for months or even years. They return to Guatemala temporarily when there is no harvest in Chiapas. Doña Candelaria went to pray for the child, under the tree, but when she saw him in agony, she left her bed and her room to the child and his mother for five months, and struggled to feed him well and save his life, but she had to face her own neighbors who criticized her. In the end, the case served to discover that many Guatemalan children are not in school (in Mexico) even though the laws explicitly protect them to have the right to education, even if they do not have immigration papers. The RJM team informed the teachers at Nueva Linda about this regulation, and they accepted it. In addition, this increased the number of students to over 100 and the school was upgraded to receive more aid in school breakfast and other benefits. The following year, a third of the school's students were already Guatemalan. This is the result of a gesture

[11]https://www.lasexta.com/noticias/solidaridad/stratos-pescador-lesbos-candidato-nobel-paz-puedo-recordar-cuanta-gente-ahogado-sentido_201602125723d0844beb28d44600093f.html.

of fraternity. Miguel's mother and Candelaria say in the video that they are already "family". It is fraternity. Candelaria's gesture opened the Mexican school to many undocumented migrant boys and girls from Guatemala. That is advocacy, transformation.

There are many other testimonies of fraternity. The Tunisian fisherman, Chamseddine Marzoug, dedicates himself to bury the corpses of migrants that appear on the beaches of Zarzis (Tunisia), next to Libya. He says that these decomposing bodies "must be considered as our children, our brothers or sisters". Moreover, he points out that "this case does not only concern Tunisia, but the whole of humanity"[12].

In Lesbos, three grandmothers of refugees became famous because they went to the beach to welcome refugees and especially took care of the babies to be fed. Maritsa Mavrapidou, Despiona Zourzouvilis and Aimilia Kamvisi. The latter expresses the fraternity: "I felt that they were my own children, my grandchildren. We are from the same planet under the same God".[13]

Nevertheless, let us now see how the fraternity is even capable of creating laws and jurisprudence.

2.4 Transformation

Two examples illustrate how laws in favor of migrants are achieved through the heroic testimony of ordinary people.[14] We say heroic because they are achievements that have gone through the courage of civil disobedience and jail. The first one is Concepción Moreno Arteaga -Doña Conchi-[15], who passed away on October 2, 2021. She could neither read nor write. She was violently arrested in her community El Ahorcado, municipality of Pedro Escobedo

[12] https://www.valoresreligiosos.com.ar/Noticias/la-historia-del-hombre-que-entierra-a-los-migrantes-que-se-lleva-el-mar-10617.

[13] https://edition.cnn.com/2016/02/01/europe/lesbos-islanders-migrants-nobel-peace-prize/index.html.

[14] Cf. González Miranda, José Luis. *Hospitalidad popular frente a los muros de hoy*. Agenda Latinoamericana 2022, p. 230-231 http://archivosagenda.org/es/hospitalidad-popular-frente-a-los-muros-de-hoy.

[15] https://centroprodh.org.mx/2021/10/05/dona-conchi-defensora-de-migrantes/.

(Querétaro), in 2005, accused of violation of the General Population Law and sentenced to 6 years in prison for helping migrants with food and water. She was accused of being involved in human trafficking but her neighbors knew this was not true. Two years later an amparo lawsuit was filed by lawyers from the *"Agustín Pro Juárez" Human Rights Center* and at the same time an international campaign was launched in her defense. After two and a half years in prison, his innocence was proven.16 The most important thing is that as a result of his case, the Supreme Court ruled in 2008 that it is not a crime to house or transport undocumented persons if there is no economic purpose. In 2011, the new Migration Law was passed with this great novelty: no prosecution for aiding migrants.

Cedric Herrou, a French farmer near the Italian border, is another case we can mention. He helps migrants and his house is a center open to all. He had several trials with sentences against him, but he appealed until his case reached the Constitutional Court, which ruled that Cedric not only has not committed a crime, but that by helping migrants he is putting into practice the principle of fraternity of the Constitution.17 A principle that, unlike freedom and equality, had never been used before.

It is important to share where this fraternity leads us, towards which objective we, the organizations supporting migrants, are moving. That is why we end with a third section which is a necessary reflection for a topic such as Advocacy, because if we want to "transform" we will have to know what and for what.

3 What we dream

Not all of us who support migrants have a single proposal for the future, be it legal, political or utopian. We refer to the future of humanity and of migration as a phenomenon that unifies humankind into a single human family.

[16]https://www.jornada.com.mx/2007/03/09/index.php?section=estados&article=032n1est.

[17] https://www.france24.com/es/20180607-cedric-herrou-migracion-fraternidad-francia https://es.euronews.com/2018/07/06/-la-fraternidad-no-es-delito-.

A world with WALLS	A world with BORDERS but no walls	Towards a world WITHOUT BORDERS
Donald Trump and countries like Poland, Hungary…	United Nations, Democrats (USA), Europe...	Popular and migrant organizations. Ecuador and Bolivia (in 2018)
SLOGANS *"America first"* USA departed from Global Pacts and the UN Human Rights Commission.	*"Regular, orderly and safe migrations"* Who regulates and orders? The States. Civil society does not participate or only observes (does not decide).	"*Free transit*. Free circulation. Process to universal citizenship after becoming regional citizens (European, Andean, etc. passports).
Approaches. Strategies *Hypocritical approach* (They need migrants, but undocumented, so they don't demand their rights) Walls Militarization Racism	*Security approach* Irregular migration: no rights? Internal displacement due to violence (not recognized by States). They do care about victims of trafficking and vulnerable: NNA, women... to link "migration" with crimes (trafficking and smuggling). Forced migration is not recognized Migrants Pact is apart from the Refugee Pact.	*Human rights approach* Against the causes: change of economic structures (capitalism), political (tutelary and corrupt democracies) and cultural (fear of migrants, xenophobia). Climate refugees A single approach: forced migration + refugees
Regard migrants: Migrant = delinquent	Undocumented migration is not a crime (only an administrative offense) but they detain. They need euphemisms: they do not call it "detention" but "retention".	No one is illegal and therefore cannot be detained if he does not commit a crime.
Did not sign the 2018	Yes: Covenants but **not binding** (States not obliged to comply). **Follow-up** to the Covenants: IOM (migrants) and UNHCR (refugees). IOM became part of the UN system (previously it was not).	Yes Covenants and with a **binding part** to be fulfilled by all (but it did not come out). The proposal to **reform the IOM** to a tripartite structure similar to the ILO (workers, employers and States in decision-making bodies), to include migrant organizations, did not succeed.
		

In 2018, with the prospect of the Global Compacts for Migration that were to be negotiated and signed at the end of that year, different proposals were mobilized that we can group into three large blocks of countries.

The supremacists of the first column want a walled world. The progressives of the second column call for orderly, regular and safe migration, what Eduardo Domenech (National University of Cordoba) called here the day before yesterday the *Technocratic Mantra*. Those in the third column - the World Conference for a World Without Walls Towards Universal Citizenship - do not want walls, but neither want borders. They ask for free transit. We can say that progressives want a world without walls, but with secure borders (secure for them, not for migrants). Third parties could be called "radicals" but it is not utopian because what they ask for is already done by many countries in Europe (European passport) and in America (Andean passport).

From the Christian point of view, Pope Francis has become a world leader in the migratory issue, from his identity as the son and grandson of migrants. Those in the second and third columns have used him as a banner and those in the first column have him as an enemy. To understand his positioning we can refer to the political parties' concepts of "minimum program" and "maximum program". The minimum program must be based on human dignity and the maximum program on fraternity. The minimum program can be the "20 Points" that the Vatican proposed in 2018 before the Global Covenants, based on good practices of the Church in different parts of the world. The maximum program is to walk towards universal fraternity concretized not only socially and culturally, but also politically. Since the Second Vatican Council this concept of fraternity has been rescued by all the popes, beginning with Paul VI in *Ecclesiam suam*, Benedict XVI in *Caritas in Veritate* (chapter 3), and John Paul II: "Migrants are the advance guard of peoples on the way to universal fraternity" (Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 1987). Pope Francis is the one who has most insisted on this concept: "Do not be afraid to walk the paths of Fraternity in a world where so many walls continue to be built out of fear of the other" (Pope Francis, April 30, 2021).

Building “one human family”, - a concept widely used in the social education of the Church and similar to that of “universal fraternity” - is the main task of advocacy. That is why the testimonies of ordinary people who, like Carmelita Torres or Ricardo Cano, have been opening gaps of fraternity in the walls of fear and hatred, are the examples to follow in an advocacy where the protagonism is theirs, of those who build “a world without walls” (minimum program) towards “a world without frontiers” (maximum program). Effective proximity as an advocacy strategy implies transforming with them, with migrants and with people who help them fraternally, responding to God’s question to Cain: “Where is your brother?

2

ADVOCACY IN CURRENT FORCED MIGRATION CONTEXTS
Experience from the Jesuit Refugee Service Latin America and the Caribbean (JRS LAC)

Oscar Javier Calderón
Daniel Restrepo

Rosalía[1], began her journey in 2018 from Catia, an important popular neighborhood in Caracas, Venezuela. She crossed the country, trying to settle in several intermediate cities in Venezuela, but failed to find stability and economic security. She crossed to Colombia, then Ecuador, Peru and finally Chile. In each place she stayed for a while and did not get enough protection to reach a level of security and rootedness. In Chile she requested refuge, but was denied, she lived the height of the pandemic there, even reaching street situations, she had no access to medical treatment, and the answer to her request was to seek a regularization mechanism by way of a visa, something impossible for her, due to the difficulties in obtaining a passport, and the high charges to get a visa. Things became very complicated in Chile and in June 2021, she decided to set out on foot from Santiago, together with a group of Haitians she

[1] Name changed for security reasons. You can read the full story in the Venezuelan Human Mobility Report IV-Caminantes y retornados: Ilusión y decepción. July 1 to September 30, 2021. Article: "Un pueblo sin piernas, pero que camina. Available at: https://bonga.unisimon.edu.co/handle/20.500.12442/9523.

met in her last job there. They crossed Peru and Ecuador, passed the Colombian Pacific Andean until they reached the Colombian-Panamanian border. She crossed Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala. I met her in Mexico in September 2021 requesting refuge.

How to characterize Rosalia's situation, which is repeated and repeated by millions of people in the region: Refugee? Internally displaced? Economic migrant? The causes are increasingly diffuse, but in the end there is a common variable, to protect life in danger, due to the crisis of democracy, the ecological crisis, unconventional generalized violence (outside a classic armed conflict), which in the case of Latin America is high, and where most of the homicides in the world are concentrated. It is evident that there is a mismatch between the framework of understanding, needs and legal-political response to the reality experienced by people forced to flee in the continent, and that the classic categories of refugee-migrant are not able to explain the reality they live, their needs and the frameworks of response. A conceptual and legal wall is being built in the region, excluding millions of people, leaving them unprotected and disregarding their rights.

1 Migratory situation

The current migration context in Latin America and the Caribbean poses the need to build a transnational, multi-scale advocacy strategy from the voices of migrants, *de facto* refugees and displaced persons. Although the factors for understanding the current challenges facing the region are diverse, here are some reflections on this context, which are important for the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service for Latin America and the Caribbean – JRS LAC.

First, in the region there is a high vulnerability of refugees, migrants and displaced persons who seek to transform their contexts and vulnerabilities from their capacity for agency and resilience.

Second, there is an expansion and naturalization of a culture of individualism, xenophobia, discrimination and racism; however,

there are traits of hospitality, reconciliation initiatives involving refugees *de facto*, migrants and displaced persons, and communities of origin, transit and reception.

Finally, there is a high concern for the strengthening of regressive militarization and securitization policies that have generated lack of protection and/or increase the vulnerabilities of this population; also, border crossings are a territory where these protection risks are most evident. Based on this, JRS LAC believes that national, regional and global advocacy networks are necessary spaces of positioning and common work for the transformation of these cultural and institutional practices.

2 JRS LAC and objectives

Faced with these context-specific realities, JRS LAC has been constituted as a service (Ministry) of the Society of Jesus inspired by the humanistic values of the Gospel (faith, hope and compassion), aligned with the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP) of the Society of Jesus and the priorities of the Conference of Provincials of Latin America and the Caribbean - CPAL. We have operations in several countries and locations: four national offices: Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador; and we develop projects and programs in conjunction with the Jesuit Migrant Services in Haiti, Brazil and Peru, and other works of the Society of Jesus.

In this regard, the mission of JRS is to accompany, serve and defend migrant, refugees *de facto* and forcibly displaced people, with emphasis on border areas from a perspective of comprehensive protection and reconciliation. Therefore, its objectives for these populations are: i) to receive dignified treatment, protection and information in the places of origin, transit and reception, managing to develop capacities to reconfigure their life projects and integrate properly; ii) to have significant experiences of hospitality and fair relations in the process of coexistence, convivence and communion for reconciliation; iii) to have governance systems that favor their integration and protection based on respect for human rights and, in turn, to participate in these scenarios with their own voice.

3 Advocacy Work Methodology

The identity and institutional commitments of JRS LAC seek to respond to the transformation and change of the context through specific strategies and processes; one of them is the Advocacy and Communication Process. Therefore, we want to share some reflections on the work of JRS LAC in terms of advocacy, bringing with it strategies, successes and challenges.

3.1 Strategies that promote advocacy success

As we have already mentioned, our institutional Process-Strategy is Advocacy and Communication. In this sense, we consider them equally important and complementary. Communicate advocating and make advocacy communicating, seen and work strategically, can contribute to better transformations of various kinds and at different levels for the benefit and protection of the people we serve and accompany.

To carry out this relationship, one of the criteria from which we serve is "to be where others are not", which invites us to develop actions in those territories where there are many needs of people and families in situations of refuge, displacement and migration, and where there is no accompaniment by non-governmental organizations, international cooperation or the church itself. This translates into "advocacy on issues that are strategic but invisible and little addressed in decision-making spaces".

On the other hand, one of the central strategies has been the cross-border screening and monitoring processes, which aim to identify the protection gaps to which migrants, refugees and displaced people in Latin America and the Caribbean are exposed and subjected. A noteworthy example is the survey conducted with indigenous communities[2] in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, entitled: Life and territories in movement, which seeks to go beyond those investigations that address their human mobility processes from the lenses of forced displacement and refuge, causing humanitarian

2 Investigación Vida y territorios en Movimiento, marzo 2023. Available at: https://lac.jrs.net/vidasyterritorios/.

organizations to respond to their needs from nationalist frameworks, with borders that are nonexistent for these communities and restrictive according to their own law. In response to this, JRS LAC, together with JRS Ecuador, SJM Peru and the Instituto Pensar of the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogota have conducted research with 10 indigenous communities and their human mobility processes and have as one of their objectives, by 2023, to create spaces for dialogue and discussion on this issue with decision makers.

Taking into account these invisibilities, we propose a framework of common understanding in which the conceptual and practical perspectives and positions of JRS LAC are presented. Some references we rely on are: *de facto* refuge, reconciliation-comprehensive protection and the so-called triple nexus. Regarding *de facto* refugee status, we argue that a person does not acquire refugee status clearly when the administrative status is conferred by the States, but from the moment the applicant experiences the situation triggering the refugee's movement: the moment in which people suffer uprooting or are forced to migrate; on reconciliation, we understand and propose it as a way of proceeding to reach contexts of coexistence in the region and, finally; we propose the triple nexus of Humanitarian Action - Development and Peace Building since we evidence that humanitarian action alone, or in itself, does not solve the situation of people.

We are also aware that this framework of common understanding that guides our actions of communicative advocacy and promoting communication cannot be carried out in isolation. We need political, community, social and ecclesial networks to put our suggestions on the table of decision-makers and, in parallel, to promote advocacy at the micro and meso levels among people in migration situations and the communities of transit and permanence existing in Latin America.

These strategies have brought about some successes in our advocacy and communication work. In the first place, they have allowed us to actively listen to refugees, migrants and forcibly displaced people in order to position those needs that are not visible and, at the same time, to seek political spaces for this population to

participate; in this sense, we do not believe that our objective is to "give them a voice" but to open spaces for their voices, practices, life experiences and demands to be heard and attended to. Secondly, having a common framework of understanding has allowed the different organizations to know the political positioning of JRS LAC, to situate us from a differentiating perspective in the midst of traditional discourses and frameworks of international cooperation, and thus, we continue to open possibilities of meeting, dialogue and articulation for the joint construction of strategies that arise from listening to the realities of the people we accompany.

3.2 Obstacles from the organization's daily life

We recognize that there are macro-structural factors that are present and condition our work of accompanying, serving and defending, we would like to share some of the obstacles that we have been able to identify from the daily life of the organization.

A first obstacle has been the difficulty to prioritize and position the key issues that occur in migration issues in the region. This is also because the migratory reality has such diverse circumstances that from the office, we are not able to reach everything, causing that it is not possible to make communicative advocacy and promoting communication on some key issues at the regional level. Faced with this challenge, we believe that focusing on the strategic framework and the framework of common understanding of JRS LAC we can recognize the issues with which we are not able to take action, which allows us to promote networking to build bridges with civil society organizations, international cooperation and ecclesiastical organizations that can position these issues.

On the other hand, being an office that covers 4 countries in the region, it has been an obstacle to build a regional agenda that goes beyond the often-diverse interests of each country. In other words, even the nationalist vision of migration permeates our national and territorial teams. In view of this, it is pertinent to carry out pedagogical processes on the transnationalization of migrations and the need to seek perspectives as a region, a perspective in

which the global and local aspects of migrations are united, which we call a glocal positioning.

The last obstacle has been the permanent rotation of the advocacy and communication teams, which has caused the strategies to slow down, and some changes related to the profile of the people who assume the positions. This is also related to some difficulties in the articulation of agendas with other countries and/or the scarcity of resources from international cooperation to finance these roles within the organization.

In conclusion, advocacy and communication strategies in Latin America and the Caribbean are called to position those issues that are invisible from a transnational, collaborative perspective and from the perspective of those who are forced to migrate or move, recognizing that migratory realities challenge us daily and invite us to seek innovative alternatives to build a region where we live fair, equitable, hospitable and reconciled relationships. An invitation in this sense is to join efforts to propose a concentrated advocacy action from civil society, states and academia in view of the 40th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration (December 2024), which is undoubtedly an opportune scenario to go together in the search for greater protection guarantees for refugees, migrants and forcibly displaced persons in the region, this would be a good fruit of this Conference: Who are thinking about the same opportunity? How can we go together in this?

3

RESISTANCE STRATEGIES OF THE COLLECTIVE OF YOUNG CENTRAL AMERICAN MIGRANTS OF THE CARAVAN AND ACCOMPLICES CONTRA VIENTO Y MAREA, EL COMEDOR COMUNITARIO

Devi Machete

Introduction

The dissident neighborhood collective of the Caravan of young Central American migrants and complicit organizers, Contra Viento Y Marea, El Comedor Comunitario (CVM or "El comedor") represents excellence in autonomous migrant projects in the northern border region of Mexico. We are a collective that embodies the magnificence of Latin America. We represent the ingenuity of migrants/refugees, and the beauty of the resilient, kind and humble people of the Northern Zone. We are the depth of love in the time of covid. We are the creativity of a street musician's guitar playing in the central plaza. We are the happiness in the smile of a little girl learning to read her first book. We are strong as the axe of the farmer harvesting the crop of his grandparents' land. We are the light of the lantern shining in the deep darkness

of migrant/refugee detention prisons. We are the hope that leads refugees to cross entire countries and pierce borders to fulfill their dreams and obtain a better life.

Based on the lands of the indigenous Kumeyaay people known mostly as Tijuana, the community project fights daily with and for the migrant, refugee, deportee, asylum seeker and anyone who is not supported by a government, regardless of their country of origin. Our collective organizes the community using strategies of mutual aid, direct action, transnational solidarity, and radical pedagogy. We distribute free meals and clothing to those in need, but we also provide care, information, and training for people to improve their quality of life and assert their rights. The project's mission is to strengthen and organize the people so that together we have the power to change the world and eliminate the environment of poverty and extreme violence in which we live, starting with our community of migrants, refugees and deportees in the Northern Zone.

Our vision and praxis that drives the way we organize is derived from the principles of the international anti-imperialist, anti-fascist and feminist movement called 'Abolition of Borders.' Currently, borders are imaginary lines designated by governments (i.e. they do not occur naturally) where they concentrate their military force to defend them with brutality and total impunity. The posture of the movement to abolish borders and of us includes, first: the abolition of all borders, the total rejection of the violent policies of governments that criminalize people in the context of mobility only for having an irregular migratory status. For example, advocating for the right to move freely from one country to another without state approval, opposing forced detention, deportation, the application of advanced technology to monitor and/or trap migrants, the use of government institutions, the military, and/or the police to hunt migrants.

Second: nurturing the community by exercising collective care techniques. We have created a space where people in the neighborhood can eat together, talk, learn/teach each other, relax without drinking alcohol, organize and support each other. We employ restorative justice practices to resolve personal and group

conflicts peacefully. We take a holistic (taking into account body, mind, and soul) and intersectional (considering race, gender, sexual orientation, age, disabilities, economic class, and other factors as a whole, not just looking at one aspect of a person's identity) approach to carefully encourage the well-being of each person who comes to us.

Our collective found its political identity in the abolition of borders from the moment we were formed. The fact that the project was born out of the Central American migrant caravan and continues to honor that great legacy to this day makes us distinct. From the day we started in a warehouse located near the Benito Juarez sports stadium in the Zona Norte, we have had to fight against repression and abuse of the law. In the space where we are located now, also in the Zona Norte, we must continue to fight the economic, political and social conditions in which we live and the people we serve live. We remain stationed in this neighborhood near the Chaparral international bridge, visibly militarized, violent and impoverished because many migrants and vulnerable people live and pass through here who urgently need our services, such as the prepared food program. The simple act of cooking and distributing plates of free, dignified hot food every day helps keep people from going hungry as they search for work or try to punch through the border. Our mutual aid projects focus on alleviating poverty and having an immediate impact on the community. We don't spend time just making token gestures of solidarity, but take direct action that concretely intervenes in the real lives of people in the neighborhood who are suffering terribly right now.

To sustain all of our free programs for the public and especially targeted for the most vulnerable, we work together with a wide network of collectives, student groups, universities, civil associations and other radical organizations that promote our abolitionist values. If you have a similar mission, we invite you to collaborate on the basis of (transnational) solidarity to better serve our communities and strengthen the abolitionist movement.

1 Origin of the Collective and Resistance Strategies

In modern history dozens of migrant caravans have emerged from Central America heading to the United States on foot, but so far only one caravan has made it all the way to the last border separating Mexico from its final destination. The migrants called this caravan, "Contra Viento Y Marea". When it landed in Tijuana in late November 2018, the city was not prepared to receive the 5,000 exhausted travelers. Although they had plenty of warnings signaling the caravan's imminent arrival, at the last minute the city council chaotically designated the Benito Juarez sports complex in Zona Norte (located parallel to the U.S. border wall near the El Chaparral international bridge) to temporarily house the caravan's migrants, even though it was not large enough to accommodate everyone. Thousands of migrants were sleeping on the streets, in parks and in shelters that were already full.

During this time, a large warehouse was rented a few meters from the Benito Juarez complex where 500 migrants set up their tents and managed autonomously to operate a kitchen, a donation center and other essential functions. Although most of the migrants had no previous experience in community organizing, they were able to self-manage quickly and impressively. They held regular popular assemblies to discuss and make important decisions. Everyone was welcome to come, participate and speak. The migrants selected a president to represent them with the local authorities. They also chose a spokesperson who could communicate with the media. Using a mutual aid strategy, they formed several teams to provide crucial services to the bodega residents. For example, they put together an unarmed security team that patrolled the space especially at night. Given the proximity to the Zona Centro and the international bridge, residents had access to the free medical clinics and legal services located in the area, plus they could go to look for work at the restaurants and many businesses nearby. Civil associations, groups, and well-wishers from across the border easily brought donations of clothing, food, and humanitarian aid. The migrants called this warehouse, just like the caravan, Contra Viento Y Marea (Against Wind and Tide).

Within a month of the migrants occupying the bodega, municipal officials began trying to shut down the site and move all the migrants from the Zona Norte/Zona Centro to "el Barretal", an entertainment center parked super far from downtown, almost outside the city. El Barretal was designated as a shelter for the caravan migrants by the municipality but was actually functioning as an open-air prison. It was completely fenced off and people were not allowed to enter or leave whenever they wanted. It was very unsafe for families with children, single women, people with disabilities, older adults, those who identify as LGBTQ and other vulnerable people. Food was scarce and terrible. Migrants did not have access to free medical and legal services from the center. Donations of food, clothing and tents were not distributed. The situation was so dire that many adults and even children slept on the freezing floor and were easily sickened.

The stark contrast between the conditions at the Barretal and the Contra Viento Y Marea warehouse were an embarrassment to the Tijuana municipality. How was it possible that the Central American migrants in the caravan could take better care of themselves without resources or funds, and yet the authorities (local, but also state, and federal) who had everything failed spectacularly to provide the bare minimum? Instead of mitigating things in El Barretal, they became totally determined to shut down the bodega as quickly as possible.

The local government began using tactics of persuasion and repression to make life impossible for the bodega inhabitants. They removed the portable toilets placed outside the entrance. They would not allow those who left the bodega for any reason to re-enter, not even to pick up their belongings. Families with children were asked to leave, arguing that it was unsanitary and dangerous to live there. As soon as the children were no longer there, it was thought that they would come in with force majeure to remove everyone. Several times a day they sent the municipal police to harass the residents, search for illicit substances and ended up arresting several young people without justification. Tensions escalated severely the day after Christmas.

At 2:00 a.m., at least 100 armed police in anti-riot gear arrived at the bodega ready to forcibly remove the residents and close the

bodega permanently. With only minutes to react, the migrants, led by the youth, alerted the community, made a plan and implemented it effectively. They took a non-violent direct action strategy that worked perfectly to repel the attack without a single person being arrested or injured that morning. They tied the gates shut with chains and cunningly barred the police from entering. After a while, the police withdrew in humiliation realizing that they spent thousands of pesos on this operation, and even with all their resources, equipment and training they could not defeat the well-organized caravan migrants sheltering there. This victory represents a significant achievement in the formidable resistance mounted by the caravan migrants in Tijuana. Those same young leaders initiated and some still run our Contra Viento Y Marea collective today. This is how we came to inherit the name Contra Viento Y Marea which represents the only caravan that arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border from Honduras and El Salvador, in addition to the spectacular original warehouse that was self-managed by Central American migrants predominantly youth who successfully played resilient strategies of direct action, and mutual aid.

2 Contra Viento Y Marea's Organizational Strategies

All of the supplies and services we provide at Contra Viento Y Marea, El Comedor Comunitario are free because the people most in need cannot afford to pay. Every week we hand out 1,000 nutritious and delicious meals with dignity. Since covid arrived, we serve outside a free medical clinic called "Resistencia en Salud" a few blocks from the comedor. In addition, we have a donation center on the roof of the comedor; two warehouses that we set up to store and organize donations. We collect and offer clothing, shoes, essentials such as diapers and backpacks, hygiene products, and basic medicines for adults, youth, children and babies of all genders. We hold medical and acupuncture clinics in the space with the transnational solidarity of the organizations Alianza para la Salud de los y las Refugiados (they are the same as the medical clinic where we serve food; it is a local group with transnational

volunteers), and Acupuncturists Without Borders (based in the United States, but working in several countries).

Beyond that we have a small urban garden on the kitchen roof where we harvest herbs, spices (oregano, thyme, rosemary, mint, basil and lavender), and a few organic vegetables (tomatoes, onions, and chilies) to use in the kitchen. One of the new projects we have incorporated is the rescue, rehabilitation and care of street animals, mostly cats, but also a few dogs, chickens, and even pigeons. We feed them, give them anti-flea medication, anti-parasite medication, treat their wounds and in some cases take them to the vet to cure them and sometimes spay or neuter them. We joke that we also have a "soup kitchen for cats and dogs." On a daily basis, we bring food to the animals that people bring to our meals, as well as throw rice to the pigeons that arrive there.

To nourish the souls and minds of the people, this past summer we launched a new community pedagogy project called the Escuela Libre y Laboratorio de Arte (ELLA or "The free school"). The goal of the free school is best encapsulated by its motto, "Free Education For Liberation!" The workshops we held were primarily to help people continue to learn to think by themselves. We had only introductory subjects as varied as Zen meditation and Aikido (Japanese martial art that teaches self-defense with a method of "purification" of the body to complement meditation), photography, healthy eating techniques, urban gardening with medicinal plants, rap/hip hop and art classes. The results of this initial pilot version were extremely positive. We will undoubtedly continue giving workshops next summer.

Essentially, the canteen projects were chosen by the volunteers in consultation with the community that receives the grants. Basically we do the work that the volunteers want and can contribute in conjunction with what the neighborhood community tells us they need. Many of those who participate as members of the collective came initially to ask for assistance and joined after they liked how we operate. Contra Viento Y Marea is different because it is organized on the basis of friendship, not coercion. All volunteers want to be here and are not pressured to attend or participate. Internally, CVM operates in a horizontal manner,

without a single leader or board of directors because all the people who do the work are the leaders who make decisions together, based on a democratic consensus model. Decisions are made by vote after discussion among those present. It allows us to make decisions quickly and adapt to the most serious challenges easily. For example, at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, we had to reorganize all projects to incorporate extensive sanitation measures. It took us 2 weeks to re-orient everything and reopen.

The vision that guides our *modus operandi* is derived from the transnational movement to abolish borders. The first objective of the movement is to abolish the blood business that is borders. Borders are business because anti-migrant policies produce exorbitant profits for governmental and non-governmental actors, as well as arms companies, sophisticated technology such as drones, jails and prisons called "detention centers".

In reality, many see migrants/refugees as opportunities to enrich themselves. Clearly, heavy-handed policies favor organized crime because they run very lucrative human smuggling networks. When there are no legal and accessible ways to migrate, the cartels welcome more migrants who pay "coyotes" (human smuggling agents) high fees to cross borders. They also use migrants as "donkeys" to transport illicit substances across the most inhospitable terrain. The most vulnerable migrants who cannot pay are traded for help in crossing borders. As the number of refugees fleeing the violence and poverty caused by cartels, gangs and governments increases, the numbers of kidnappings, extortion, torture, murder and all human rights violations grow exponentially wherever refugees transit.

Aside from organized crime, businesses and governments, there are non-profit organizations and foundations that are dedicated to providing humanitarian aid but still receive capital for every migrant they come in contact with. In reality, they do not want forced migration to end because they would lose most of their funds. These civil associations are not radical (they do not want to uproot the problems that produce refugees/migrants). Rather, they are part of the status quo. They are not interested in actually helping migrants. Their main concern is to collect numbers and data that

so many served to prove to their donors that they are working. They currently profit from the border business by exploiting the vulnerability of migrants. In contrast, our collective is radical, i.e. we reject the idea of simply serving the migrant/refugee community, but also fighting for social change, against borders and the social, political and economic conditions that drive people to migrate.

Contra Viento Y Marea's approach goes beyond fighting to destroy borders, but simultaneously rebuild new systems for living and migrating in harmony with each other, and with nature. The second goal of the abolitionist movement is to create an egalitarian society on strong pillars of human rights. Fundamentally, the right to migrate with dignity is protected as well as the right to have all basic needs met free of charge. The millions of dollars that governments now use to repress and criminalize migrants can be reinvested in social programs of nutritious food, medical care, free housing and education. Our project is a microcosm of this new society in which we dream of living.

Conclusion

In this community in the Northern Zone, where we hear gunshots and run-ins, a paradise could be built. What is mostly needed to change our community is organization. Only when we are organized will we be able to obtain the funds and resources essential to lift ourselves out of poverty because we will accumulate the power to defeat the Machiavellian systems that keep us in misery. To get organized we all require a few key ingredients. We need to be strong, united, and committed. Contra Viento Y Marea, El Comedor Comunitario exists to self-manage the community towards a utopia where there is no hunger, poverty, ignorance, violence, and borders. We fight to end all forms of discrimination (immigration status, racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.). Each of us was born to be free, not to be slaves of a capitalist, heteropatriarchal, imperialist system. We all have something we lack and something we can contribute. Everyone is an expert in something and inexperienced in something else. We don't ask you to give what you don't have. Give what you can. It is enough if we all pitch in. If you see yourself

reflected in our movement, struggle and values, join us. Let's walk together towards personal, community and societal liberation. We don't need courage. We need you.

4

COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING AMONG CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FORCED MIGRATION PHENOMENON

Conrado Zepeda, SJ

Introduction to the phenomenon and the collaboration between organizations

The phenomenon of forced migration, both in Mexico and in other parts of the world, is of a magnitude and complexity that no entity, whether international, governmental, civil society or ecclesiastical, can comprehensively deal with. Each year, the numbers of refugee applications and forced migrants reach record levels in the Americas region. In this context, it is imperative to recognize that our isolated actions are insufficient and that we need to collaborate with other organizations that share a critical and committed attitude in the defense of human rights.

If our priority is the relevant attention to forced mixed migratory flows, we will always be ready to collaborate with other organizations that have a critical and political attitude of service and that maintain the fundamental respect for the human rights of every human person and of everything created.

Therefore, it is clearly necessary and urgent that other organizations arrive and that we form networks with them to attend to the greatest number of people in forced migration.

Now we will see some figures that will help us to approach and understand the complexity of the aforementioned, although no one has an exact x-ray of what is happening, since in the migration phenomenon in Mexico has no official record of entries and exits of forced migrants, but we approach these approximations through the official numbers offered by the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the official records of the Migration Policy Unit of the Mexican Government's Ministry of the Interior (UPM), among other sources.

1 Facts and figures on the forced migration phenomenon

Refugee applicants

In Mexico, the numbers of refugee applicants are shocking. In 2022, 118,400 applications were registered, placing the country as the third destination with the most asylum requests in the world. By May 2023, the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid (COMAR) anticipates that this number could increase to 140,000, possibly placing it in first place worldwide by the end of the same year.

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Therefore, it is clearly necessary and urgent that other organizations arrive and that we form networks with them to attend to the greatest number of people in forced migration.

Detentions in Mexico

Detentions of migrants in Mexico have also reached record numbers, with 444,439 detained in 2022, despite the Mexican government's claims of a welcoming migration policy, and a Mexican military general's assertion proves it: "The Armed Forces have carried out operational activities on the southern border that have as their main objective to stop all migration" (General, Luis Crescencio, Secretary of National Defense. NYT, August 27, 2021)[1].

U.S. detentions and deportations to Mexico

U.S. border detentions[2] have also increased significantly, with more than 2.76 million arrests of undocumented migrants in the 2022 school year[3]. Deportations from the U.S. to Mexico totaled 196,300 in 2022, however, these figures may understate the magnitude of the problem, as CPB's announcement is far from the numbers of deportations to Mexico. The numbers are still record numbers that show a forced migration phenomenon increasing with each passing year.

Deaths, Disappearances and Organized Crime

The presence of organized crime in the forced migration phenomenon aggravates the situation, with notorious cases of missing and murdered migrants in places such as Ciudad Miguel Aleman, Tamaulipas, San Fernando Massacre in 2010, Cadereyta Massacre, in 2012, Camargo Massacre in 2021 and the great migrant accident where 53 migrants died in Chiapa de Corzo, Chiapas in 2021. In addition, kidnappings and extortion have been reported in Mexico, where hundreds of migrants are used for illicit purposes.

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[1] Available at: https://www.latimes.com/espanol/eeuu/articulo/2021-08-27/el-ejercito-mexicano-tiene-como-objetivo-detener-toda-la-migracion.

[2] U.S. CBP speaks of "encounters," meaning that a person may have been arrested once or twice or three times, but even then the numbers are still in record numbers.

[3] Available at: https://www.telemundo.com/noticias/noticias-telemundo/inmigracion/nuevo-record-de-cruces-fronterizos-hubo-276-millones-de-detenciones-de-rcna53571.

The reality of the deaths and disappearances in Mexico is lacerating and once again the numbers do not reflect the reality that many forced migrants tell from their own voices, although the reality that some Mexican organizations affirm is that there are more than 300 thousand missing and more than 100 thousand murdered Mexican citizens in recent years; overlapping this reality to the reality of migratory flows where there is greater vulnerability and irregularity, the figures could be more serious than what is reported. At least 698 deaths and/or disappearances and 752 survivors have been reported in the region, according to data from the Missing Migrant Project of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

In the 2014 - July 2019 period, 1,729 records were identified in which there were 1,998 deaths of migrants. Of these, 1,270 were registered in the United States; 662 in Mexican territory and 66 in northern Central America[4].

In 2022, at least 2,925 people died on the southern border of the European Union, according to data collected through the Missing Migrants Project of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Ten migrants have been reported missing and located by Beta Groups, according to the UPMRIP of the INM, a sign that this reality exists.

Forty-three migrants have been reported missing and unaccounted for (33) and located (10), according to the CNB's RNPDNO.

There are 700 deaths reported by CBP between January and March 2023.

[4] Rutas. Estudios sobre Movilidad y Migración Internacional, año 1, número 2, abril-junio de 2020. Coordinación del Centro de Estudios Migratorios/Unidad de Política Migratoria, Registro e identidad de Personas/Subsecretaría de Derechos Humano, Población y Migración/Secretaría de Gobernación.

Kidnappings and extortion in Mexico

From January 1 to December 28, 2022, the National Migration Institute (INM) identified 746,695 irregular foreigners in safe houses, warehouses, trailer boxes and hotels, among other places. It would be necessary to know the approximate number of other safe houses where hundreds of migrants are still being held against their will and used for the sex trade, organ trafficking, forced labor and production and transportation of illegal drugs.

Migrant caravans

Migrant caravans in Central America and Mexico have emerged as a form of collective protection against violence and organized crime along migration routes. These caravans, which consist of large groups of migrants, including entire families, women, children and the elderly, are a testimony to growing poverty, violence and exclusion in the regions of origin and transit, there are three fundamental characteristics to consider a migrant caravan: 1) The displacement is carried out by land, they are the poorest of the poor, as they do not have the resources to move; 2) It is done in considerable groups, in numbers of hundreds and thousands, even reaching up to more than 20 thousand; 3) and they have emerged from calls made through social networks, particularly Facebook.

Displacement due to environmental injustices

Climate change is also contributing to forced migration, as rising sea levels, floods, droughts and environmental devastation force people to move. "Development" projects such as the Tren Maya and the Transisthmian Corridor have significant environmental impacts.

In 2021, 16 out of 32 Mexican states reported droughts in 100% of the country's municipalities, 75% of the country.

Rising sea levels will affect coastal cities and weather events will wreak havoc in the south.

Internal displacement

In addition to cross-border migration, internal displacement within Mexico is on the rise, further exacerbating the vulnerability of thousands of people. Insecurity and crime have led many people to change their residence for fear of being murdered, tortured and raped for economic gain.

Another factor is the increase in internal displacement, aggravating the situation of people in mobility. For example, on the border between Mexico and the United States, both international migrants and internally displaced Mexicans are also registered in shelters in the area. In Mexico 281,373 households (approx. 911,914 people) relocated due to crime in 2020 (ENVIPE). 36,682 displaced persons are reported as of October 2021 (CMDPDH).

From January 2019 to July 2022 alone, at least 52% of the cases of massive internal forced displacement have occurred in Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero. If those in Michoacán are also considered, the figure rises to 65%, according to CMDPDDH figures.

Importance and benefits of networking among organizations

First conclusion

In this context, collaboration and networking among civil society organizations become essential. No single organization can address the complexity of forced migration on its own. Networking offers a number of advantages, such as the possibility of sharing resources and knowledge, amplifying the demands of people in situations of forced migration, and reducing conflicts between organizations and defending against attacks on advocates for the work they do.

Challenges and constraints to networking

What makes networking so difficult?

Forming networks, however, also presents challenges, such as the need to put migrants at the center of actions, overcoming the protagonism of individual organizations. It is also essential to address political differences and positions on the work of attention and denunciation of human rights violations. Networking not only enriches the perspective, but also contributes to more effective and coherent action.

What makes networking difficult happens when we do not put migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons, deportees, expellees, etc. at the center, and put our protagonism and desire to appear in isolation.

Our work in dealing with forced migration flows is becoming increasingly difficult because we are criminalized, either by some government agents or by organized crime, among others.

Disputes over different political perspectives continue to hinder our networking activities. Some consider that we must have a critical dialogue with the government, others deny it, and still others are totally submissive. For some, the issue is that the work should be merely to attend to basic needs and not to denounce human rights violations against migrants and refugees.

Naivety and good will are not enough to have a more effective work. Not understanding a whole network of political, social, economic, historical and religious positions, all of them given in a plurality of actors and experiences, positions us in a reductionist approach.

Example of existing networks

What benefits can be gained by belonging to the "Networks"?

Examples of existing networks that enhance and interrelate the advocacy work with migrants and refugees that strengthen our

activities include the Jesuit Network with Migrants LAC-CANA, CLAMOR, CLAR, REDODEM, GTPM, Franciscan Network, Root Causes Network, the Scalabrinians Sisters Network, Scalabrinians Fathers Network, the Human Mobility Dimension Network of the Bishops' Conference, among others.

Networking strengthens the advocacy work and helps to build new narratives, which in turn reduces the possibility of conflict and favors reconciliation in a fragmented and unjust world.

Networking enables us to draw on resources from other organizations that we need for our work. In networking for advocacy, you can amplify the real demands emanating from the needs and cries of people in forced migration.

A clear example of networking is the Centro Scalabriniano de Estudos Migratórios (CSEM), where several organizations come together to do coordinated work towards a common goal: to understand forced migration in a complex way and to give us guidelines for relevant actions.

The sincere and transparent interaction between organizations helps us to refine clear political positions and build a collective truth to position ourselves in a better way, since reality is complex, and we lack diverse visions to try to understand this complexity.

We cannot think individually, we need each other. By networking, we are setting an example in the real and possible construction of new human relationships. Networking helps us to build new narratives.

Networking, directly or indirectly, reduces and prevents conflicts; it helps to strengthen our work and reduce the possibility of attacks; it helps us to build a better future together.

Furthermore, networking promotes reconciliation in a fragmented and unjust world with common stakeholders. Reconciliation has as its ultimate goal the creation of just relationships at all levels (with oneself, with others, with nature and with the various sources of life or meaning), that is, to reweave the relationships and links that armed conflict and violence have destroyed; in such a way that it becomes possible for those who were previously at odds to live together.

Conclusions: Need for effective networking

In conclusion, the magnitude of the forced migration phenomenon demands effective collaboration among civil society organizations. Networks are a mechanism to address this complex reality in a more comprehensive manner. Recognizing migrants as the focus of our work is essential for successful joint action. Networking and collaboration are essential to respond to the growing crisis of forced migration and build a more just and reconciled future.

The phenomenon of forced migration in the Americas and around the world is complex and so large that no single organization can address it. Every year there are record numbers of forced migrants on the move and record numbers of asylum seekers. Conditions in the countries of origin, transit and reception continue to be increasingly adverse, generating greater vulnerability, disease and death.

After recognizing the seriousness of the situation of forced migrations and that the phenomenon is so large and complex, we can affirm that no one, neither governments, nor social or church organizations, have the capacity to address the serious situation that exists in forced migrations and it is necessary and urgent a more intense link between the various organizations that deal with the phenomenon of forced migration and thus generate more networks that respond to this reality every day.

If forced migrants are at the center of our activities and heart, it is necessary to work interrelated with other organizations that seek a common consent. Proof of this necessary collective effectiveness are the many existing networks. There is a great need for reconciliation as a factor of respect, collective work and construction of increasingly articulated work and narratives. The more quarreled and disjointed, the less effective and less likely to respond to the greater number of people in a situation of forced migration.

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5

THE RIGHT TO DEFEND RIGHTS:

Scalabrinianas misión con migrantes y refugiados (SMR)

Lidia Mara Silva de Souza, mscs

For over 10 years, Scalabrinianas Mision con Migrantes y Refugiados - SMR has identified the need to assist migrants and refugees human rights defenders.

For SMR, human rights defenders are all those who provide services in shelters, houses, dining halls and other places of assistance to migrants and refugees.

1 The Human Rights Advocates Accompaniment Program

Since 2018, SMR has been developing an Accompaniment Program for Human Rights Advocates that begins with an on-site visit to each space that requests accompaniment. A security diagnosis is made and all the needs of the space are assessed, mainly considering that it is a safe place for both the people in mobility and for the staff providing their services.

It is part of the accompaniment model of this Program to support the development and implementation of a security plan, provide security equipment such as camera systems, manual

metal detectors, panic buttons, video intercom and infrastructure improvement with the placement of fences, lighting, among others.

Special attention has been paid to the mental health and self-care of the staff of the assistance centers during the last two years.

Humanitarian aid and assistance to vulnerable people is a spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically exhausting task. This is because, in addition to the stress of not having sufficient human and financial resources, the feeling of helplessness in the face of so much injustice, suffering and pain deeply affects the overall health of the servants.

2 Criminalization of people in solidarity

In addition to the above mentioned, there are other realities that put the life and integrity of defenders at risk.

The Program's experience has shown that risks for defending the rights of people in mobility can come from governmental institutions as well as from public security forces and organized crime.

There are many testimonies of defenders who are intimidated, threatened, persecuted and even suffered an attempt on their lives for denouncing injustices against the population in mobility and demanding that governments at all levels guarantee the life and dignity of migrants and refugees in Mexico.

Currently there are several migrant houses that are providing their services partially or have had to close their doors due to threats from organized crime that insists on entering the assistance spaces to charge extortion from inside the houses.

In one of the migrant homes in the Southern part of the country, recently, while giving a self-care workshop to the work team, they were asked: What is the greatest fear you have at the moment? And all of them unanimously answered: that the "narcos" will invade the house at any moment.

In addition to being concerned and busy all the time in obtaining funds to pay for utilities, employees, food, medicines,

clothes and everything necessary to assist people in mobility, they also have to be looking for security strategies for both the people in mobility and their work team.

In many parts of the country, the municipal and federal police and the National Guard, instead of representing security, are a synonym of risk.

Several places of assistance confirm that the personnel of public security institutions and of the National Institute of Migration - INM arrive demanding to be let in for monitoring and revisions, but without any legal authority to do so.

The abuse of authority against people in mobility and those who defend them is becoming more and more common and there are no safe channels for denunciation, investigation and punishment to which they can be picked up.

The criminalization of migrants is automatically the criminalization of those who advocate for them.

There is a rhetoric used by officials of different governmental and public security institutions that accuse the personnel of the assistance centers of being collaborators of human smuggling networks.

This rhetoric, this discourse against human rights defenders has spread to such an extent that in some places the local population has demonstrated and even assaulted the staff for demanding the closure of the assistance spaces.

The media

The media play an important role in how the passage through Mexico of almost one million foreigners annually, many of them in an irregular manner, is understood and felt.

There are media that present the reality of migrants by reporting the difficult situations that force them to migrate, but there are other media that present migrants as a danger that threatens the security of the population.

Incorrect information has led part of the population to treat migrants with contempt, discrimination and xenophobia. However, even along the migratory routes there are many generous people who welcome and offer their fraternal help to their brothers and sisters who are on their way.

Solidarity with those in solidarity

It is essential to value, support and accompany all the human rights defenders in all parts of the world who are donating their lives for the good of the most vulnerable people.

To the thousands of people who are rendering their charitable service in aid spaces, under bridges, on train tracks and in many other places, thank you for your courage and dedication.

These people who wear themselves out so that others may have a better life are the testimony that it is necessary to go out of the comfort zone, to go to the existential peripheries, as Pope Francis says, to find in the other a brother, a sister who needs help.

May Saint John Baptista Scalabrini, Father of Migrants, intercede for all migrants and refugees and, in a very special way, ask God for faith, hope and joy for all people who are light and his presence of love in the world of human mobility.

6

ORGANIZED CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE PROMOTION OF THE PROTAGONISM OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES
A migrant perspective

Mary Isabel Salgado

Migration is a natural and inalienable right,
is a safety valve that establishes the balance
between wealth and productive power.
(Saint John Baptista Scalabrini, Father and Apostle of Migrants, 1904).

My name is Mary Isabel Salgado Perez, I am 47 years old, Honduran, returned migrant with physical disability, currently president of the Board of Directors of the National Commission of Support to the Returned Migrant with Physical Sisability (CONAMIREDIS) in Honduras.

Central American background in a context of poverty and structural violence that forces migration

Honduras, a Central American country, has been characterized, over the last three decades, as a country of origin of intra-regional

and international migration, of transit and increasingly with the increase of returned and deported population.

The migration issue is very latent among children, adolescents, young people and adults and its main triggers have been various factors, such as: socioeconomic conditions, insecurity and violence, followed by lack of employment, family reunification, the problem of land ownership, and environmental problems due to climate variability, especially hurricanes Mitch 1998, Eta and Iota 2020.

In between 2014 and 2020, studies on migration showed that the main reason for migration is the lack of employment, with a percentage of 82%, followed by violence and human or citizen insecurity, in the sense that they feel persecuted by some kind of clandestine group, gangs, drug trafficking, among others[1].

Migrant trajectory: causes, dangers, victim of human trafficking, kidnapping, sexual exploitation

I am part of this percentage. I decided to migrate given the lack of opportunities, unemployment, the high cost of the basic food basket, insecurity and violence, which did not allow me to be in peace, due to my place of residence, which was the territory of organized crime.

What I wanted most was to give my children a better future, my goal was to reach the challenging American dream, but it was not so, in the migratory route I found a lot of pain, anguish and suffering, being a victim of human trafficking and having been kidnapped, but the most tragic thing for my life was to lose my legs.

I left Honduras on January 5, 2007, with a group of five people, acquaintances from the same neighborhood where I lived, there were days, hours of anxiety that I traveled through the borders of Guatemala and Mexico, but upon entering Mexican territory I thanked God because I felt the hope that I was going to reach my dream of reaching the United States.

[1] Authors' own elaboration based on data from ERIC Reflection, Research and Communication Team, 2012 to 2020.

I was on the train tracks, I had been deceived by some people who offered me a temporary job so I could pick up some money and move forward on the road, but it was not so. I was sold to a bar, being a victim of trafficking, I lived a hell, but I was able to escape with the help of other people.

I went back to the train tracks, I was hiding while the train was passing, until I managed to board the train, I was always afraid of the train, but it was the only way to move forward since I had no papers[2] or money to travel by bus.

On March 17 of the same year, in the city of Orizaba Veracruz, Mexico, minutes before the accident, the migrants who were on board the train, began to spread the word that ahead was a checkpoint, that they had to jump off the train immediately to avoid being caught by Immigration Control and returned to their country of origin. In that moment of confusion, seeing all the people jumping off, I decided to jump; when I started to descend the steps of the pipe I slipped and fell, the train amputated both my legs immediately.

My recovery in Mexico was painful and slow, after 21 days I was discharged. I had to be hospitalized again to undergo surgery in the city of Tapachula, where I suffered a heart attack... My return to Honduras was by land on May 13, 2007, with the support of the Jesús El Buen Pastor shelter in Tapachula, southern Mexico.

Returning home was a great challenge. I was thinking about how to announce to my family that I was returning and with my dream cut short and now without my two legs. I had to find the strength to face life, at that time I had my five small children to feed and think for them.

The importance of actively participating in civil society organizations that seek to respond to so many basic, urgent needs - CONAMIREDIS, Women's Network.

It was through a journalist who published my story in a local newspaper that I learned about the Pastoral de Movilidad

[2] Papers are legal documents.

Humana - PMH in Honduras and its work to accompany returning migrants with physical disabilities who suffered an accident along the migratory route. The Pastoral is the only organization in Honduras that is looking after returned migrants with disabilities, being financially supported with resources from other national and international organizations, but at the moment there is no financial resources.

In 2009 the Pastoral founded the Comisión Nacional de Migrantes Retornados con Discapacidad Física (National Commission of Returned Migrants with Physical Disabilities) (CONAMIREDIS), a nationwide organization, formed by the migrants themselves. I am currently the president of the Board of Directors of this commission, in addition to being part of the Administration Commission, I was trained as a facilitator for the implementation of the program "Woman, you are not alone" of the Catholic Relief Service (CRS), through the methodology of support groups for women victims of violence.

In November of last year, the Women's Network was established with the objective of supporting women survivors of the consequences of forced migration to advocate and, strengthened, gain access to our rights. Returning migrant women with disabilities, from rural areas, humble women, participate in this network. The Network is configured as a space where the history of each one of them is respected and rescued, in order to empower them, being the protagonist of their lives and their families.

Contributions, recommendations, shortcomings, criticisms... topics for discussion

I leave registered here, a topic that we should think about together, which is of utmost importance: the mental health of people in mobility.

Returning to my country of origin with a physical disability was a great challenge, I had to live a process of readaptation and resignification of my own life and my family. The psychological effects that one experiences along the way are innumerable and

there are few organizations that provide direct, personal and continuous attention. Thank God I found in the Pastoral very good professionals, psychologists who accompanied me and supported me in times of crisis and difficulties.

We as women carry many worries with our children, with the support of the family, the fears, the risks involved in the migratory route, both personally when a family member or friend decides to migrate. In addition to being daughters of a patriarchal, macho culture, rooted in all kinds of violence, we need psychological support in a process of inner healing, to improve ourselves and help so many other women who live the same.

As a collective of migrants, we are in the process of forming the legal status of CONAMIREDIS, with the aim of promoting and organizing migrant returnees with physical disabilities, for self-support, in the knowledge and defense of their rights, being ourselves the protagonists of our own history. It is a long process of *institutional strengthening* that all support is welcome, we want to strengthen the articulation network with other organizations. In this sense, I reiterate the difficulty of financing, through projects or specific aid to the population of returned migrants with physical disabilities.

The lack of support for *physical health* is immense; there are many returned migrants who arrive with amputations, spinal cord/brain injuries, chronically ill... with many needs. Access to public health is precarious and does not provide answers to basic needs, both on arrival and in the follow-up of physical health treatments.

Opportunities for social and labor reinsertion of returned migrants as a way to support oneself and the family and re-migrate

Through the actions of the Pastoral de Movilidad Humana many people have been supported, but there are still many of us who do not have the means to earn our daily bread.

I emphasize that through the PMH and another organization I was able to carry out *self-support groups for women* with physical

disabilities and caregivers of migrants with disabilities in a process of self-knowledge and inner healing, in order to strengthen us and help other women to empower themselves, feeling that we are not alone and more enlightened on the issue of Women's Human Rights.

Nothing but thanks for this space for discussion and advocacy in the attempt to rescue what was taken away from us: to claim for the right to live with dignity and to be able to realize our dreams as human beings.

7

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND BORDER NETWORKING
The ASCALA Organization

Maria Eugenia Vazquez, mscs

1 Migration Background in the Dominican Republic

The situation of Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic has worsened in recent years due to the strengthening of an anti-Haitian policy reflected in the different measures taken by the government: construction of the border fence; paralyzing the naturalization processes of the descendants of Haitian migrants registered in Law 169-14; massive deportations; persecution and impediment of entry into the country for pregnant women; cancellation of the visa for Haitian migrants and the renewal of the residence or work permit for Haitian migrants in the National Direction of Migration. Migrants who have been residing in the country for more than 10 years, among them we mention pensioned senior citizens whose residency has expired and whose pension payments were cancelled, and religious men and women of Haitian nationality.

Based on the results of the National Immigrant Survey-2017 the total number of immigrants in Dominican Republic is 570,933 (ENI 2012-524,632, an increase of 46,300) representing 5.6% of the total population of the country. Haitian immigrants are 497,825.

After Haiti, the highest percentage of immigrants come from Venezuela, the United States, Spain, Italy, and others. This shows that the number of immigrants is not as high as what the media or conservative sectors of society portray, creating an imaginary that Haitian migrants are a danger to the country.

A growing presence of Venezuelan immigrants is confirmed over the years. Between 2012 and 2017 it multiplied by seven, going from 3,435 immigrants in 2012 to 25,872 in 2017. Situation that led the government to implement the Plan for the Normalization of Venezuelans (PNV). On January 19, 2021, the Dominican Government approved a resolution that allows access to the migratory category of non-resident, to Venezuelans who regularly entered the country between January 2014 and March 2020.

Regarding the treatment and situation of Haitian migrants, it is very different from that of Venezuelan migrants. The lack of attention to Haitian migrants for any type of renewal process or regularization application places them at risk of constant deportation, preventing them from working and having enough to survive in the country. It is a very difficult situation to face, it increases malnutrition, places pregnant women in a risky situation who do not attend medical control, giving birth many times at home. There is a great demand to cover basic needs and their human dignity is threatened by the inhumane treatment they receive.

2 Descendants of Haitian immigrants in the Dominican Republic

According to the ENI 2017 (National Immigrant Survey), the immigrant descendant population numbered 277,046 people (2.7% of the Dominican population), 91% descendants of Haitian immigrants and 9% from other countries. For the most part they live in the bateyes, in inhumane conditions, without basic necessities assured, constantly at imminent risk of being deported. Young people with a lot of potential cannot do anything, follow a normal life, finish their studies or enter a university. Those who get formal jobs have to quit when they are asked to open a bank account to pay

their salary or because of the risk of being deported on their way to work. This situation is transmitted to the children who are born and cannot be declared in a timely manner because the mother does not have a document, or it is expired.

The implementation of Constitutional Court Ruling 168-13 creates an imminent risk on the right to nationality of the descendants of Haitian migrants born in the Dominican Republic between 1929 and 2007. Through the pressure of social and International Organizations, the State created Law 169-14, a law that establishes a special regime for persons born in the national territory irregularly registered in the Dominican Civil Registry and on naturalization. Law 169-14 establishes and defines groups A and B. By August 2020, of the 61,198 beneficiaries of literal A of the first article of the Law, 26,102 persons had accessed their identity cards and electoral cards, which confirm their Dominican nationality.

However, "by July 2020, of the 7,147 beneficiaries of literal B of the first article of the Law, whose cases had been approved, 1,829 persons had presented their naturalization request. Then Decree 262-20 (July 2020) was issued, authorizing the naturalization of 749 beneficiaries of this group. Finally, Decree 297-21 (April 2021) was issued, authorizing the naturalization of 50 persons. However, none of them have yet been able to obtain documents proving their nationality, and the vast majority of Group B beneficiaries who were granted identity documents for foreigners and permanent residence permits are still waiting to be naturalized, and have expired documents with no administrative possibility of renewal".[1]

3 Mission of the Asociación Scalabriniana al Servicio de la Movilidad Humana (ASCALA) in the Dominican Republic

ASCALA is a non-governmental organization committed to the promotion and advocacy of human rights, empowerment, personal and social development. Founded on October[1], 2004, with headquarters in the Municipality of Consuelo, belonging to the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles Borromeo

[1] Cf. https://www.acnur.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/6226bd2c4.pdf.

Scalabrinianas, it is recognized as an institution that deals with the Defense of Human Rights with dedication and reliability, generating social impact. It operates in the bateyes of the eastern and northern region of the Dominican Republic promoting actions that seek to improve the living conditions of migrants and their descendants.

The organization's mission is the "Promotion of integral human development, defense of the rights of migrants and Dominicans in vulnerable situations". In order to respond to the current context of the communities and the different populations it serves, five strategic axes of work have been selected: Legal Advice (Labor Law, Right to Identity, Migratory Window), Local Development, Education and Social Service.

4 Weaving networks

Labor is seen as essential to generate any possibility of social change. Although there is a very large universe of actors, it is necessary to distinguish those with whom it is necessary to work, those who are indispensable. It is important to start at the base and with the migrants, which is why ASCALA seeks to involve the protagonists themselves, who are the migrants. As a result, community leaders, community presidents, churches, and community organizations can be found. The social network is something that is woven continuously, we need to become aware of these networks, who the actors are and how we can expand these networks in order to have a greater impact.

In networking, the methodology used is the identification of actors and their qualification, according to priorities in action. A fundamental factor is to establish communication channels, map the terrain and see what is possible and what needs to be strengthened. In this map of actors, community leaders, people with political influence, and private and public institutions are fundamental to generate allies and institutional precedents that open the doors to migrants, including them in basic services and influencing public policies.

These are considered to be important elements for networking:

- Mapping the key actors and the cause.

- Consider common advocacy actions to address certain issues and reach consensus on actions.
- To use communication media.
- To think about actions at a binational level, e.g. the cross-border Dialogue Table, networks of religious congregations.
- Documentalize cases of human rights violations.

5 Sharing the Community Network experience with Haitian Migrants

The Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters in the Dominican Republic have always sought to weave networks, participating in different spaces, strengthening alliances in order to have an impact and generate structural changes. These processes of collective construction are not easy. In some areas of civil society or the Church, there is a lack of collective consensus and dialogue, and competition and individual interests are a challenge that jeopardizes advocacy and networking. There are also external factors that can influence the destruction of networks, such as the politicization of these spaces.

One of the most significant experiences from ASCALA is the community network generated with the migrants themselves and their descendants through community meetings and the use of the media. The network of migrants formed has different objectives, firstly empowerment, knowing their rights and highlighting their protagonism.

In order to generate these spaces, meetings of young leaders of the communities, identification of ministers and presidents of the neighborhood councils are carried out, forming a network of communication and action with different communities. The objective is communication, support in case of humanitarian need, legal assistance. In cases of deportations, monitoring the presence of immigration agents, to warn migrants of the location and possible detention of a known migrant in order to prevent deportation. As well as denouncing abuses and detentions of pregnant women and minors.

In addition to this, ASCALA supports the union of agricultural workers in the sugar industry through training and legal advice. These workers seek to improve working conditions in the sugar cane cutting industry by using the complaint mechanisms created by the companies, which often do not work. The union is a group of workers that does not seek the interests of the company, a situation that occurs with company unions created by the company itself; what this particular union seeks is to look out for the interests of the workers.

This has been growing and helps the community to be conscious and aware of the current situation suffered by migrants living in their communities. By doing so, we become responsible for each other, extending the bond of community solidarity. There are problems that sometimes happen, but they are ignored and no one gets involved, talking and becoming aware of the situation helps to discern and have a more active attitude in the community. This is very important because this generates an active community, a social conscience where the commitment is extended generating a church strong in output.

6 The challenges of networking

There are several challenges, and although the existing means of communication should favor the formation of alliances and networks, this is often not the case. There is a tendency to disperse, losing the sense of the cause, widening the view and, above all, losing the focus of the main thing. In this way, by dispersing, the network weakens and loses strength. In this way, civil society organizations increasingly lose legitimacy. This is due to the lack of social organization on their part, there is a lot of individualism and everyone wants to shine alone, generating competition, the struggle for prominence and not for a common cause.

In order to understand where the focus is, why and for what we need to unite we must understand what is happening, the context, the concrete facts that destroy the dignity of the person. In this way we need to be inserted in the reality, accompany the migrants, systematize and document the cases of human rights violations.

To conclude we need to understand the roles of the different actors, the Church, International organizations and Civil Society. What are the interests and which may not always be the same, yet there are some actions that can benefit all of them. Networking is of utmost importance; we cannot be or think of ourselves alone in order to discover the Kingdom of God in social and political relations.

8

SCALABRINIAN MISSION ECUADOR
The incidence

Cindy Tatiana López Ascuntar

Civil Society Organizations organize to influence and build a more equitable world for everyone. One of our struggles specifically as organizations that defend the rights of the population in human mobility is to deconstruct the discriminatory and differential system, promoting the protection and effective exercise of rights. To achieve what is proposed, it is important and fundamental to know the various ways in which we can generate political action, by making our demands visible and, above all, generating impact.

When we talk about political incidence we refer to a political action directed at the State and other political actors to achieve a reaction, that is, achieve changes in policies to influence the formulation, implementation and monitoring of public policies.

Demanding compliance with rights is one of the objectives of civil society organizations, but it is also vitally important to identify the responsibility of each group and evaluate the social meaning of their actions. We must mention that when talking about incidence it is not essential to relate it to confrontation, but also to be seen as a position of critical observation, but above all that it has a focus and a purposeful nature, since one of the lessons learned has been that it is less exhausting and with greater results are found in the proactive incidence than the reactive one.

The impact of the incidence is seen to grow when the organization of rights holders or claimants is strengthened so that they themselves manage and demand from the State the access and full exercise of their rights, through the constitution of networks, among others.

One of the most important considerations is that incidence must be a planned process that raises proposals and establishes strategies through a plan that allows generating a reaction (re-action), that is, always executing actions in search of changes.

Incidence is a fundamental element for the formulation of public policy and that this does not constitute an issue of regression of rights or is unconstitutional, but at the same time, if there is a policy that is considered an attack on the protection of rights, it can be reviewed, reformed or repealed, and finally contributes to the monitoring and observance of the implementation of public policies.

The approach to advocacy with concerted and planned strategies and with clear objectives has allowed us to generate the promulgation of national and local regulations for access and guarantee of rights and services, which protect migrants and refugees.

One of the most important reasons for influencing is that it allows us to strengthen the holders or claimants of rights and for them to exercise a real role, enabling spaces for the effective exercise of rights where they are and play the role of true actors with social and political recognition.

And that decision makers internalize and recognize the right to migrate and be clear that no human being can be considered illegal, that no one can be discriminated against due to their immigration status, that they assume responsibility for the State adopting affirmative action measures to promote real equality in favor of those who are in a situation of inequality.

And ask yourself, is it possible to build a selective human rights policy? That is, a policy that protects human rights for some and excludes others?

The impact will allow us to have regulations that enshrine the Human Right to migrate and apply inclusion policies that avoid

discrimination from all its dimensions, and that are formulated under the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

The effectiveness of the impact, apart from the prior analysis, construction of the plan, and the establishment of strategies, will depend on knowing and understanding the processes of how political decisions are made, identifying spaces, rights, institutions and allies, that is, identify opportunities and limitations.

We must keep in mind that not everything is as easy as following a recipe book, along the way we also find limitations and difficulties in being able to make an impact and these are prejudices, regulations and discrimination, consecutive changes of authorities, tabloid press that provokes directed thoughts and generation of stigmatism. It is no secret to anyone that these types of circumstances generate public opinion, and this plays a fundamental role in advocacy processes.

Among the key and essential factors for advocacy is having a structured advocacy plan; which must be built in a planned and participatory manner and that considers various elements such as the identified problems that are sought to be resolved and these have been prioritized, identifying the decision-making processes and mechanisms, the power map or identification of influential actors, the context and reality, the capabilities and limitations of the organization and the support that each of the initiatives has.

Furthermore, this plan must have the appropriate strategies that generate the necessary impact to obtain a response and results, and we cannot forget the continuous and permanent evaluation and monitoring process.

It is vital that from the beginning we have committed actors, with an active role that promotes the initiatives and strategies and that they are always part of the collective analysis or debate.

Communication, message and proposal are key since this will generate and motivate opinion; therefore, it must contribute to the resolution of the problem, which promotes the formation and strengthening of alliances, which is viable and feasible and, above all, which promotes the mobilization of those demanding rights.

For our proposal to have sufficient and necessary foundation, it is important to have updated and reliable information. It is important to consider that this information, figures, data do not lose the human experiences or the face of migration. We must have clear, precise and detailed information that argues and support what we want to show and what we seek to achieve.

We cannot leave aside analyzing the spaces and channels where our proposals are approved since with this we can know who has the decision-making power and the processes with which decisions are made and the time that we must consider, these factors will help us to implement, define and design the most appropriate and effective strategies.

In the formulation, design and implementation of our strategies, it is important to propose them in accordance with the need for conviction and persuasion that we need, aimed at the effective achievement of our objectives. Therefore, it is important to take into account the interests and motivations that we have identified in our power map or in the review of our influential actors, the existing political situation and the scenarios in terms of opportunities and limitations.

Each of the strategies that have been proposed must have activities that will have to be executed within each strategy such as lobbying, organization, awareness, media management, mobilization, among others that are proposed according to the context and objectives. These activities specified in each strategy must be supported by the result, with their respective indicators and resources to make it effective.

Finally, it is necessary to take into account monitoring, evaluation and permanent follow-up, this factor will allow us to identify the impact, alteration, reaction or transformation that we have achieved after implementation, that is, if we achieve policies, laws, behaviors, decisions, affirmative changes.

This evaluation is of permanent temporality since this allows us to identify results obtained, the causes that have contributed to success or not and, if applicable, propose changes to improve practice and strengthen political advocacy initiatives. It is necessary

to consider flexibility to change since eventualities will arise that were not considered and are unexpected and will require a response or formulation of new strategies to achieve the initially set objectives.

9

ORGANIZED CIVIL SOCIETY IN PROMOTING THE PROTAGONISM OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES
A view from the members of the SCO: Scalabrinian Mission in Ecuador

Leda do Reis, mscs

1 Brief migration context of Ecuador

UNHCR estimates that in Ecuador there are around 545 thousand people of interest (refugees, asylum seekers, returned refugees, internally displaced people and stateless people) of which around 21% of the population is concentrated on the Northern border, approximately 112 thousand people.

The four provinces in the North of the country (Esmeraldas, Carchi, Imbabura, Sucumbíos) have a long history of being the main entry point for Colombians fleeing violence and seeking asylum, and this accompanied by a history of protection and access to services and rights and this made the Northern border to be considered a leader in the reception, protection and integration of refugees. Despite these historic achievements, since 2018 with the arrival of more than 500,000 Venezuelans through the Northern border region, everyone has been tested and their capacity has been pushed to the limit:

- Humanitarian actors have multiplied in the area, but the needs have exceeded the available resources;
- The increase in discrimination, xenophobia and aporophobia hindered the access to decent housing, job opportunities and service coverage;
- Due to COVID-19, this situation is further aggravated, and for many migrants and refugees, hurdles to social and economic inclusion continue to exist.

2 Migration and criminalization

In Latin America there are policies that criminalize migration. Migrants are not criminals, but victims of forced migration. There is a universal condition of those who migrate forcibly and who live in contexts of poverty, vulnerability and various types of exploitation. Criminalization begins in the country of origin and worsens in transit and in destination countries.

Discrimination and xenophobia against migrants not only come from States, but also from society. This is evident in the lack of job security and in unfair payments despite having documents. It is also important to mention that the same thing happens in access to the health and education system.

3 Work carried out by the Scalabrinian Sisters

The Congregation of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters arrived in Ecuador in 1992 and during this period, we worked based on an agreement with the Ecuadorian Episcopal Conference and was in charge of directing the Pro-Refugee Committee. In 1994, the Episcopal Conference created the Department of Human Mobility Pastoral – PMH as a separate entity from the Pro-Refugee Committee. With this, migration and refuge begin to be made visible through the incorporation of Migrant and Refugee Day in the month of September.

Due to some changes within the Caritas Social Pastoral, the Scalabrinian Sisters disassociate themselves from the Ecuadorian Episcopal Conference and decide to continue developing actions in favor of the population in human mobility as their own mission. In 2010, therefore, the Scalabrinian Mission in Ecuador was born and the resources for its execution were secured.

As a Mission, activities are prioritized in the five provinces of the country: Esmeraldas, Carchi, Imbabura, Sucumbíos and Pichincha, and it works with expanded local teams to continue responding to the demand of the refugee population.

Today the Mission is still present in these same territories, and we also expanded our actions to the province of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas.

Our objective is "To build an inclusive society that respects diversities, welcomes, promotes, defends and encourages the exercise of the rights of all, with the participation of people, organizations and spaces of articulation linked to human mobility".

As a Mission, we develop many activities, in which we define through areas of actions:

At *Human Promotion* we develop humanitarian actions through 2 shelters in which we serve families who have recently arrived in the country, providing temporary accommodation, food services, psychosocial support, legal assistance and information on how to access education, health and other services that newcomers need.

In addition, in coordination with the Red Clamor, several humanitarian aid initiatives are carried out, guidance is offered on the different aid institutions to which people in human mobility can turn in case of need.

Another focus of action is *Accompaniment with Children and Youth*. Since 2015, girls, boys, adolescents and young people have been served through the "Youth without borders united for peace" Program. The area works on the development of support networks through four lines of action: training, communication and promotion, organizational strengthening and sociocultural self-management, with the aim of building a culture of peace and,

on the other hand, guaranteeing access and permanence in the educational system.

In 2011, the Scalabrinian Mission began the *Livelihood* Program with the objective of supporting and improving the living conditions of families in human mobility-refuge in vulnerable urban and rural situations through the generation of entrepreneurship, self-employment, income, organizational processes and incidence framed in the social and solidarity economy approach. The program has been working on the construction of organizational spaces through groups made up of the migrant population and the local community that allow the expression and exercise of the agency of this group.

Since the creation of the program, there are around 4,550 direct beneficiaries and 18,200 indirect beneficiaries through: Self-Savings and Loans Groups (GAAP); Access to microcredit; Technical training.

Finally, the *Legal-Political Incidence*. Since the beginning, the Scalabrinian Mission has been carrying out advocacy at the territorial and national level for the exercise of human rights through public policies and at the same time supporting the participation and agency of people in situations of human mobility and refuge.

Critical issues regarding the protection of migrants and refugees:

- There are significant gaps between the statements of national regulations and their practical application, to protect the rights of migrants. The tension between the human rights perspective and the paradigms of sovereignty and security of the State is notorious.
- Despite several advances and good practices that cannot be ignored and rather we welcome these processes, it is also real that there are protection gaps such as rejections at the border, delivery of notifications of voluntary departures and initiation of deportation processes, request for documents and requirements that cannot be met by forcing people to resort to irregular migration channels.

- In Ecuador, after more than a year of the executive's pronouncement to begin an extraordinary regularization process, on June 1, 2022, decree 436 was issued, which stipulates the beginning of a regularization process through the granting of the VIRTHE visa for citizens of Venezuelan nationality, which, although it is true, constitutes an advance for the regularity of several citizens. However, it is selective process: a) Only those who have a regular entry to the country can access it, that is, to through immigration control points; b) There is an issue of criminalization and discretion in terms of stipulating that one of the requirements is not to be considered a threat or risk to public security and the structure of the state.
- Some regulations continue to be restrictive in terms of their application and regarding the exercise of rights and are also far from being a response to the complexities of migratory flows and rather designed to respond in the short term.
- The mechanisms for entry and regularization place requirements and deadlines that ignore due process, because there is discretion in the application of the mechanisms and regulations by public servants.
- The responses have not been regional and unilateral; decisions have put people seeking to enter or transit between countries at risk, particularly children and adolescents and their families.
- The dimensions and complexity of migratory flows exceed the capacities and resources that States, civil society organizations, and international organizations have to respond.
- There are very few capacities to house the Venezuelan population in vulnerable situations in adequate spaces that comply with minimum standards and security and protection protocols, leading people to be homeless.

- There is no coordination between the different levels of government, non-governmental organizations and humanitarian actors for the implementation of safe spaces.
- The care protocols in humanitarian crises are not effective, or are not even being implemented; particularly with regard to groups in vulnerable situations (unaccompanied children or children separated from their parents/ guardians).

Regarding special protection, discrimination and exercise of rights, human trafficking and migrant smuggling and coordination, we can mention, among others, the following critical nodes:

- There is no exact data on people in an irregular situation, or disaggregated data in general, that would allow for the design of specific policies and responses, especially for priority attention groups such as children and adolescents, older adults, people with disabilities, pregnant women, among others.
- Exacerbation of different forms of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, carried out especially against girls, adolescent and adult women.
- There are practices of transactional sex for services and food, placing women in a particularly defenseless situation, and threatening their integrity and physical and mental health.
- Children and adolescents and women are at risk of forced recruitment by the different irregular armed groups associated with the Colombian conflict, in border areas.
- Full access and permanence of children and adolescents in public educational systems is not being guaranteed, based on discretionary actions and discrimination.
- Binational coordination responses to specifically assist and protect unaccompanied children and adolescents separated from their parents who are traveling between countries to achieve reunification with their family are scarce and we could say almost non-existent.

- The pressure on scarce public services generates tension towards the Venezuelan population and exacerbates discriminatory attitudes and xenophobia.
- Venezuelan people are blamed for the economic crises and impoverishment of the receiving country.
- There is an excess of information from the media, which is not always adequate and positive, about the presence of Venezuelans in the region, which feeds negative public opinion and the stereotypes that weigh on Venezuelans at this time.
- Although the constitution and other laws stipulate that migrants and refugees are allowed access to health and education, the actions of public agents are discretionary and discriminatory in the provision of these public services.
- Restrictive immigration policies prevent the Venezuelan population from working in a dignified manner.
- Labor exploitation, unfair work, and dismissals from stable jobs are common, based on the irregular status of the population of employable age.
- There is a proliferation of fraudulent lodging and shelter services, transportation, and job offers, especially at the borders, as mechanisms to recruit Venezuelan people to be victims of trafficking, and which are not being investigated.
- Trafficking networks are taking advantage of the situation of lack of protection of Venezuelans, and the condition of irregularity to which restrictive immigration policies push them.
- The presence in border areas of children and adolescents unaccompanied or separated from their parents places them at risk of being captured by human trafficking and migrant smuggling networks.
- Lack of mechanisms and spaces for the participation of the Venezuelan population in human mobility and particularly of those who require protection in the design and definition of the proposed strategies.

Final considerations

The model of humanity that we have created has caused inequality. Equality is relational. It goes through relationships.

Consider that the migrant is equal, not inferior. Migration does not make them inferior; it makes them vulnerable, but not inferior.

We must humanize humanity. Fear often makes us inhuman.

"It is not just about migrants, but about human beings" (Pope Francis).

10

MIGRATIONS IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF BRAZIL
Pastoral Care of Migrants in the Diocese of Roraima

Terezinha Santin, mscs

I am Terezinha, a Scalabrinian Missionary Sister, daughter of migrants, who over time was forced to migrate due to neoliberal capitalist policies. Policies Saskia Sassen states when she talks about advanced capitalism in the 21st century, characterized by export megaprojects, extractivism and the worst effects of the brutality of the globalizing system, which expels entire populations from their territories, leaving an impact that sociologist refers to "Tierra Muerta". I was among these populations with my family.

I have 38 years of Consecrated Religious Life and mission alongside migrants and refugees. Currently, I am in the coordination of the Pastoral Care of Migrants in the Diocese of Roraima and in the animation of the articulation of services to migrants and refugees, which adds up to 18 or more entities connected to the Diocese in this mission.

1 Migration history: where am I?

The social and political context of Roraima reproduces the main contradictions of the national situation: Traditional families of politicians continue to lead political life in the State and corruption continues to compromise political representatives in this entity.

Here I explain two initiatives of regression in the guarantee of fundamental rights:

Initiatives contrary to the territorial rights of indigenous peoples. The forced migration of indigenous and coastal people to cities is part of the ruralization process, socio-environmental conflicts and the lack of settlement policies, beyond the conquest of the demarcation of indigenous territories or the creation of Sustainable Development reserves (Marcia de Oliveira, 2016).

The lack of articulation in public policies between the different municipalities of the state. This is evidenced in the precarious performance of public authorities in addressing migration (shelters, *Operação Acolhida*, Agencies), especially to the thousands of Venezuelans who arrived and continue to arrive since 2017, not to mention Bolivians, Haitians and Cubans.

The Catholic Church of Roraima assumes, in its pastoral plan from 2017 to today, as a top priority, the challenge of listening to the cry of the land and the cry of the people, in renewed action with indigenous peoples, migrants and small farmers, riverine and urban world.

It is in this context that I briefly describe the profile of migration where I live and work, and the action of the Migrant Pastoral.

2 Migration profile in recent years

For a long time, we have known that there are a series of causes that operate simultaneously in the different types of violence that generate migration, such as poverty, job insecurity, unemployment, corruption, impunity and political persecution.

In the case of migration from Venezuela, we can make a profile distinction to illustrate the deepening of this situation, as

well as the power of resistance and resilience of this part of the migrant population.

The first contingents of Venezuelan migrants arrived between 2017-2018. They were families with high income and higher education: doctors, nurses, lawyers, teachers, engineers, etc.

During the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, even with the border closed, the migratory contingent continued to enter through alternative routes. With a different profile, single women with children and single people stood out.

Starting in 2021, with the partial and then total opening of the border, another profile of Venezuelan migration is distinguished, grandmothers accompanying minor grandchildren, people with serious illnesses, pregnant women, the elderly and the disabled.

Furthermore, among Venezuelans, one of the affected populations are indigenous peoples. Different ethnic groups such as Warao, Kariña, Pemones, among others, arrive in Boa Vista and stay in the same camp. Alternatively, they stay in spontaneous squats and on the streets of the city.

In the description of the migratory profile of this border, we cannot fail to report the Haitian migration. Between the years 2014 to 2016, decreasing the number since 2018, had the highest influx, through the border of English Guyana. They had this border as a crossing, to continue their journey, heading to another state.

Finally, another recent migratory contingent, from the year 2023, are Cubans. A very specific Cuban population is entering through the Guyanese border, mostly doctors and other professionals. Also those with tickets to other states in Brazil.

Added to this profile, in a smaller number, are other nationalities such as Bolivians or Peruvians.

3 What are migrants looking for?

Even taking into account the diversity of profiles and migratory projects, we can highlight some general patterns that characterize the demand for migrants arriving in Roraima. In general, they look for

- basic services: health, food, housing;
- school for their children;
- work and to send remittances, to help those who stay in their country of origin;
- recognition of qualifications for better employment.

4 Current reality in numbers

Currently, 300 to 700 people enter daily through the Pacaraima border. Around 66 thousand people live in 7 shelters of Operation Reception. 1,889 people in Boa Vista are living in squats, squares, bus stations; 2,193 in Pacaraima are living in public spaces, tents or are homeless.

With respect to *Operação Acolhida*, 91,952 people were redirected to other states: Santa Catarina, Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo, 81% in social and family gatherings, as well as in shelters in churches or helped among themselves, friends, family and supportive people.

More than 20 thousand people are living in precarious places, paying exorbitant rents, 600 *reais* for a small 2x3 room, without windows, with more than 10 people, surviving on daily jobs, despite all this, fighting for dignity.

5 Our attention

As civil society we are involved in the process of creating the State Committee for Migrants and Refugees, with the participation of migrants.

As an Articulation of Services for Migrants and Refugees, we seek political advocacy strategies in defense of fundamental rights and migration policies.

We participate in the Protection, Advocacy, Education, Documentation and Unsheltered Population workgroups.

As a Diocese, in the Pastoral Care of Migrants we reaffirm our commitment to welcome, protect, promote and integrate indigenous peoples and migrants.

As an academic space, we seek to investigate the reality of migration, the inclusion of migrants in the university space and the recognition of their degrees.

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11

CIVIL SOCIETY FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES AND THEIR RIGHT TO HAVE RIGHTS
Bienvenu Shelter

Jean-Marie Kuzituka Did'ho

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matt 25:35).

1 The migratory reality of Johannesburg

South Africa stands out for the significant number of immigrants (about 4 million people), which represents 7% of the population. It should be noted that in 2005 this percentage was 2.8%. South Africa has stood out, on the one hand, for the reception of refugees – according to the UNHCR report (2020), there are about 89,000 at the end of 2019 – on the other hand, there are numerous xenophobic demonstrations, with acts of violence against foreigners. A large proportion of these refugees and asylum seekers live in the poorer outskirts of Johannesburg with limited access to socio-economic survival opportunities, exposed to high risks of violence, xenophobia, and crime, in addition to many difficulties in access to health services, education and documentation.

Despite very difficult conditions, Johannesburg remains the major destination in the Southern African region for migrants and

refugees, continuing to arrive in large numbers. Johannesburg is seen to be the City of Gold which will provide migrants with new opportunities and financial stability.

Johannesburg has many migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants, many of which have come specially from South Africa neighbouring countries to find a better life and security for their children. Unfortunately, many mothers and their children are now stateless due to having no documentation which makes life even more difficult in accessing health, education and employment.

The number of women arriving at the Bienvenu Shelter are mainly from the DRC and Zimbabwe. Most have been victims of torture or sexual violence – those from Zimbabwe at the hands of security forces and youth militia, and those from DRC at the hands of armed rebels or soldiers.

2 Bienvenu Shelter's action

Bienvenu Shelter is located in Bertrams, a district in the inner city of Johannesburg. It is a community composed of migrants, mired in poverty where resources are scant and access to basic needs are a challenge. It is also characterized by high crime rates, fuelled by drug use and a culture of violence.

The Bienvenu Shelter was established on 23 March 2001 and this initiative marks a path of dedication and commitment of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo – Scalabrinians.

The Bienvenu Shelter adopts and reflects on the mission / charism of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters: to serve in the perspective of 'being a migrant with migrants', with special priority and attention to those who go through situations of greater vulnerability, protecting and promoting their dignity, their human rights and promoting their protagonism.

Bienvenu Shelter provides:

- **Safe and secure accommodation for women and their children ensuring their basic needs are met** which include health care, counselling, psychosocial and psychiatric assistance. During their stay, women are encouraged to attend professional training courses and empowerment programs to enable them to gain skills which will further generate income for when they are ready to leave the shelter. We work closely promoting dignity, cultural diversity and social cohesion and ensure victims of torture and trafficking in persons receive the care and protection they need. *During 2021 Bienvenu Shelter served 156 mothers and their children with safe and secure accommodation.*
- **- Mother Assunta Training Centre – Empowerment Programs –** These courses provide training skills in order to empower the most vulnerable migrants and refugee women from the shelter and the surrounding community. We provide courses for a three-month period in basic and advanced sewing, baking, beauty - nails, makeup and hairdressing. Training also includes assistance in setting up business and what is required to do so. Upon completion of the course and ongoing assessments from the teachers, students graduate and receive a certificate and also receive a start-up kit which enables them to immediately generate income. These include, sewing machines, ovens, nail lamps and basic make up kits.

Throughout 2021, skills training activities were provided to 274 students all of which graduated. 217 of these students were provided with business start-up kits.

- **Outreach Program –** The outreach program has been a part of Bienvenu Shelter from the beginning, supporting vulnerable people within the local community. This project was initially an informal project which relied wholly on donations received.

Over the years and due to the increase in unemployment, poverty, vigilante movements and the global pandemic, the outreach program has grown significantly. We support ex-residents (ladies who left the shelter) and families in the local community with blankets, clothes, transportation to hospital and accessing health care. Daily bread is also provided along with veggies and food parcels on a regular basis.

During the Pandemic, many ex-residents were suffering as they could not use their skills to generate income due to lockdowns and more patrolling of police and soldiers. They were given notice to evict their rooms as they could not keep up with monthly rent. We were so grateful to receive specific funding to support ex-residents to remain in their homes of safety and not been thrown out to live on the streets.

We work closely with and in collaboration with the Archdiocesan of Johannesburg – Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees Department to support migrants and refugees in vulnerable situations specifically with the outreach program.

Throughout 2021 an assistance was provided to 11,868 ex-residents, families and the most vulnerable people within the local community.

3 Some challenges that civil society faces in dealing with migrants

- **Documentation** – Refugees and migrants have been rendered irregular due to the Dept of Home Affairs decision to close various branches across the country, causing increased vulnerability and harassment from Law enforcements.
- **Discrimination** – Government interventions, narratives and systems that were used to mitigate the harsh socio-economic impact were somewhat exclusionary.
- **Access to Healthcare** – A major challenge for non-nationals in South Africa, contrary to international law and

Human Rights. Non-nationals are charged extortionate amounts to open files and be treated.

- **Statelessness at birth** – Children born undocumented non-nationals in South Africa are at high risk of being rendered stateless as they have no identity. This needs to be addressed as it increases the stock of undocumented non-nationals across generations and over time, compounding and sustaining the challenges South Africa faces regarding this demographic.
- **Data** – There is a challenge in inaccurate data on who is where in South Africa for moving populations. This makes it difficult for government to know where to find non-nationals for policy intervention purposes.
- **Future proofing protocols** – The EVDS system will need to be updated for future pandemics as foreign ID numbers were experiencing challenges in trying to register on the system.
- **Policy Review** – There are no specific policies tailored to the needs of the most vulnerable, e.g. persons with a physical/learning disability, women and children.
- **Unemployment** – The socio-economic devastation caused by the pandemic has been very severe. With the hard lock down adopted by South Africa to control the spread of the virus, unemployment hit an all-time high of 35.5%, and 65.5% for the youth. Approximately 2.3 million households reported child hunger as of April/May 2021, with 20 million South Africans going to bed without food. This number does not take into consideration migrants and refugees also selling informally as such numbers have not been addressed on any data base systems due to the migrants regularly being on the move.

- With the impact of **Operation Dudula,** an organization that came together to take strong action to deal with high numbers of illegal immigrants and to put pressure on Government to send them back home, this has had a huge

effect on migrants and refugee livelihoods. Informal selling in which families were able to earn an income suddenly was halted and operation Dudula has been on the streets taking all persons goods, forcing them off the streets in fear of them being deported.

- **Limited Funding** – During Covid-19, Government introduced an Emergency Grant of R350.00 per household in order to support them during the pandemic. This grant was never opened up to any migrant or refugee person. No funding can be sought in order to re-start, maintain and survive in South Africa to those who have left devastation in their country of origin. The only means of survival is that of small peace work (domestic, selling, cleaning cars) where even then migrants and refugees are abused financially.

4 Two testimonies

Story of Susan from Swaziland[1]

Susan has 4 children aged 10, 7, 4 and 3 years. She left Swaziland due to her family passing and for better opportunities for her husband to find work. She came to South Africa with her husband and children in 2009 and restarted their lives in Mpumalanga. After three years they re-located to Johannesburg as there were more opportunities for business in carpentry, her husband's trade.

Suddenly in 2019, Susan's husband suddenly passed away and she no longer had the financial means to support herself or her children. All family members had no documentation and therefore the children were also not able to access school.

Susan shared her struggles with a lady whom she was helping to clean her house. She referred Susan and her children to a shelter in Benoni on 15 September 2020. Unfortunately, their stay was short as the shelter could not accommodate them due to having no

[1] The name has been changed for confidentiality purposes.

documentation. They arrived at the Bienvenu Shelter on 3 October 2020.

Susan and her children could not speak the English Language and the first priority was for the mother to attend English classes. Her children were enrolled in school and creche, and also attended the homework support group at the shelter. After a few weeks, Susan was fortunate to find a small job cooking and selling food. This gave her the opportunity to save her money when she was residing at the shelter.

Susan and her children were discharged from the shelter in August 2021 as the mother was self-sustainable. Bienvenu Shelter offered her work as a cleaner and later on as after care support for the creche. She is provided with a stipend monthly which enables her to be independent and stand on her own once again.

The money Susan managed to save during her stay at the shelter has also provided her with the means of setting up a small business during the weekends, selling peanuts, popcorn and eggs. This additional money pays for her children's school fees.

5 Story of A. from South Sudan

A. is originally from South Sudan. She was merely 20 years old on admission to the Bienvenu Shelter in 2018. When she was 16 years old, her father an army general at that time, forced her to marry a man whom she did not know, and whom was a lot older than her.

The man paid dowry of 120 cattle and had demanded his matrimonial rights. As the client refused, her father used his power as an army general to have four soldiers kidnap her and put her in isolation until she would agree to marry. As she resisted, she was regularly beaten, tortured and deprived of food to the point where she was hospitalized.

A. managed to escape and fled to Johannesburg in fear that the perpetrators may find her, kidnap her and kill her. She was referred by Pastoral Care for Refugees Department – Archdiocese of Johannesburg, and resided at the Bienvenu shelter for two years.

Here she was able to learn basic life skills, she had never cooked or cleaned before. She graduated from a sewing course and received weekly counselling sessions.

A. is now fully self-sustainable and has been working in a restaurant since leaving the shelter. She continues to be supported in dealing with her trauma and humanitarian assistance and regularly visits staff and management at the shelter.

12

VIOLENCE AGAINST MIGRANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Buti Tlhagale, o.m.i.

1 Nelson Mandela's oath

When South Africans hurl insults and inflict violence on migrants, when they strip migrants of their belongings and set alight their businesses, they recklessly go against the solemn oath of Nelson Mandela, the revered father of post-apartheid South Africa. Nelson Mandela made an oath that "never again shall a human being be oppressed by another human being". This oath was proclaimed by Mandela on behalf of the New South African nation. He and many other leaders paid dearly. They sacrificed their lives so that South Africans might embrace freedom and walk tall among the nations. Mandela is an iconic symbol of peace. This symbol is inextricably associated with the nation of South Africa.

He was the incarnation of the hope that South Africans would triumph against all the odds. Inflicting pain on migrants and refugees is a tragic betrayal of the sacred oath he made on behalf of the people of South Africa. He bequeathed South Africans the values of human dignity, reconciliation, peace, freedom and hospitality. It is hardly 25 years since his death, yet South Africans already trample his legacy underfoot and make a spectacle of themselves. The on-looking nations are no longer impressed.

2 Afrophobia and memory loss

If the unwarranted violent attacks on migrants and refugees are not brought to a halt, South Africans run the risk of becoming like the oppressors of the apartheid era. The apartheid system brutalised people. It stripped them of their dignity, humiliated them and inculcated a sense of self-hate. Indigenous people were physically segregated and declared foreigners in their own country of birth. This treatment entrenched feelings of revengefulness and bitterness amongst the oppressed. At the launching of the 70's Group (April 2019) the former President of South Africa, Kgalema Motlanthe recalled a visit of Ali Mazrui immediately after the celebration of Democracy (1994). He said Mazrui prophetically warned that now that South Africa is free, South Africans should be careful not to become villains themselves. Hardly 25 years have passed, some of us South Africans do to our African fellow migrants what our former oppressors used to do to us. South Africans considered their former oppressors as monsters. Today we have become those very monsters. In meting out violence against African migrants we show open hatred. Such hatred against others impairs the dignity of the other and unfortunately reveals the brokenness of the South Africans themselves. The shameless physical attacks on migrants and refugees on spurious allegations that they have robbed South Africans of their jobs is simply disgraceful.

South Africans are put to shame by the migrants who simply show a superior quality of self-restraint in the face of such blatant provocation. A conclusion could be drawn that South Africans who indulge in xenophobia have simply not healed from the wounds of the apartheid era. They are still hurting and are now taking out their anger on their fellow Africans. The apartheid ghosts are ubiquitous. The pillaging and looting of the belongings of the migrants are unashamedly done by the youth while the adults stand by gloating. They received the stolen goods unashamedly into their homes with a misguided sense of triumphant satisfaction. The absence of a consciousness of guilt will continue to undermine the moral fabric of the South African society.

3 The hardening of attitudes

The skirmishes between migrants and locals happen intermittently at various places. They are unplanned. At times they happen on the back of a service delivery protest over the lack of clean water, electricity, housing, pit-toilets, schools etc. On such occasions the anger and frustration of the local people at government's empty promises have tended to engulf migrants who live in the same neighbourhood as the protestors. These sporadic confrontations if they go on unchecked, are likely to set up a bad precedent. They hurt people who are involved in them, deeply. They are likely to lead to the hardening of attitudes between locals and migrants. Migrants who are currently the victims will one day seek to retaliate. It is not as if they have taken out an insurance for personal injury or for the loss of their belongings. Whatever they suffer or lose in the unplanned attacks is lost for good. Because these are mob attacks, very few people get arrested, if at all. The victims do not get to see justice being done. They then carry on with their lives burdened with the memory that they have been unjustifiably attacked. They now also have to entertain the fear that such attacks may erupt again in the future.

4 The anti-foreigner sentiment

The xenophobic attacks reached a point where members of the diplomatic corps felt it necessary to request an explanation from the Minister of Foreign Affairs. As representatives of the African countries in South Africa, they could no longer stand by while their compatriots are being attacked by local people for no apparent reason. The attacks on migrants cannot just be reduced to hooliganism. These attacks are patently fuelled by anti-foreigner sentiment. Hooliganism under these circumstances is an expression of the anti-foreigner sentiment. If these attacks continue unabated, tension between South Africa and other African countries will begin to show. Foreign governments expect the South African government to quell and diffuse the inchoate tensions brought about by the xenophobic attacks. They expect the government to

protect all foreign nationals who live in South Africa. The migrants themselves expect to be treated with dignity, respect and equality. They do not need to be reminded time and again that they are outsiders.

5 The Dudula movement

A new anti-foreigner movement called *Dudula* (meaning: push them out) has been forged in a cauldron of an anti-foreigner sentiment. This movement is currently trying to spread its presence (or venom) around the country. Some of its followers have stood guard at hospitals and schools in order to prevent migrants without identity documents from accessing medical help or foreign students from entering school premises. This movement is clearly driven by an intense dislike for migrants. What it does is that it poisons the social environment by constantly bringing up the issue of undocumented foreign nationals who should be deported instead of regularising the stay in South Africa. Besides, the *Dudula* movement has no mandate to be harassing migrants about their identity documents. They are not an adjunct arm of the South African police. The police ought to be calling *Dudula* into order. But *Dudula* is given a free reign to harass migrants.

6 The contribution of migrants

Migrants from Lesotho, Malawi and Mozambique have been involved in the mining sector for decades even though they do not have much to show for it. Migrants bring skills into the economy. Those who run businesses provide employment even to the local people. Many are involved in the informal sector of the economy. The contribution of migrants to the economy is significant. But they also contribute in other ways. Migrants bring along with them the passion to succeed, industriousness, cultural diversity, and sense of openness to the world as opposed to a narrow inward-looking nationalism and isolationism. Migrants display a rich cultural diversity in a form of customs, traditions, fashion, music and the arts.

They are the bearers of the new religious movements which have swept South Africans off their feet. Religious movements by virtue of their mission are destined to promote unity, peace, solidarity, compassion and hospitality. These virtues are the basic building blocks of Christian living. Besides, many members of the new religious movement or churches, are migrants themselves. They, therefore, have a vested interest in forging peaceful relationships with local people. Finally, migrants demonstrate a strong virtue of courage to cross borders and to explore new possibilities in order to enhance their lives.

Migrants and asylum seekers demand that their dignity as human beings be recognized, and that they be accorded the respect given to all persons. They frown upon being considered as foreigners or outsiders who deserve to be harassed, intimidated, punished and even threatened with deportation. Their desire is to be given a chance to find new opportunities and to live peacefully with their neighbours. If confrontations continue to dominate the relationships of migrants and the local people, South Africa should not be surprised one day when South Africans who live in different African countries are singled out, attacked or victimised because of the intolerance and resentment shown to migrants in South Africa. A fallout between South Africa and other African countries can only have disastrous consequences, hence the urgent need to dissipate tensions whenever they appear in the different communities.

7 An appeal to youth

Young people have invariably been always in the forefront of the struggle for justice. The youth of 1976 hastened the advent of democracy in South Africa. The Economic Freedom Fighters, a political party of young people, is a thorn in the flesh of the African National Congress. The Fees Must Fall movement of university students twisted the arm of President Zuma to authorise free university education for certain categories of students. The unplanned intermittent attacks on migrants and refugees are reprehensible acts of injustice. Such attacks are aimed at excluding and stigmatising migrants. Where then are the charismatic young people who would

take the side of the oppressed migrants. In fairness, the leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters has consistently advocated a united Africa. He maintains that there should be no discrimination against migrants who wish to settle in South Africa. But there is a need for more prophetic voices especially at a time when support and solidarity would make a significant difference. The virtue of hospitality amongst South Africans is at present a scarce resource. They do not take kindly to Africans who share their skin colour. The ruling party has a maxim: "Batho pele" (people first). Migrants are also human beings (batho) who deserve to be treated with courtesy and respect. Therefore, the ruling party by virtue of its motto should be the ones in the forefront, in defence of the dignity of migrants and refugees. Otherwise, their motto will simply sound like "a gong booming or a cymbal clashing" (1Cor 13.1).

Concluding Observations

The oath of Nelson Mandela that "never again shall a human being be oppressed by another human being", will continue to haunt South Africans who remember how despicably they were treated during the apartheid era. They also earnestly prayed that their offspring should never experience the same treatment they endured in the past. There is therefore a moral imperative for South Africans to wipe the slate of their horrors of the past clean. They have been tested through fire. They now have the golden opportunity to show the world how human beings can be forgiving, warm, welcoming and hospitable to strangers.

APENDICES

1

OPPRESSION OR LIBERATION? THE FUNCTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN MIGRATION MANAGEMENT
Observer

Tanja Kleibl

During the last two days, we have heard a broad spectrum of academic analyses and views alongside human rights-based approaches to migration as well as migration management, in particular migration regularization. Each panel has furthermore embedded their debates in one or another way into the role of civil society within the aforementioned quite bipolar perspectives on migration. Whilst the views about migration processes, including their causes and effects, might have differed, the understanding of civil society's role was in almost all cases a positive one. Its role was either linked to protecting human rights of migrants or providing the services that the state is not able or willing to guarantee. If I am not wrong, there were only one or two self-critical reflection, which asked the question why so little has been achieved in terms of improving migrants well-being, why politics and regulations are becoming more and more oppressive, even though more and more NGOs, the supposedly key or mainstream civil society actor, are operating in growing numbers within humanitarian zones surrounding in particular the so called North-South boundaries, as

it is the case here in Tijuana, but also, in Greece or Italy, countries closer to my country of origin, which is Germany.

Indeed, I believe these North-South boundaries, in a globalized world, are more in our heads than in the real world, having in mind that the so-called Global South can increasingly be found in the Global North, in the form of mal nutrition of migrants, in particular babies and young children, in migration hot spots or new forms of modern slavery in agricultural fields, e.g. in Southern Europe. Here "*politics of deterrence*" accurately summarize the goal and principles behind the Western or Northern management of the so called 'refugee crisis'. From the moment, for example, the EU – Turkey deal was struck, it became evident that the intention was to indirectly present to prospective migrants a plethora of reasons for them not to reach any destinations in Europe. From the dangers of the perilous journey to the Mediterranean Sea, to the extremely long periods of waiting in atrocious prison-like facilities and the insensitive and often biased asylum-granting processes, refugees are confronted with life-threatening conditions whose aim is to bend their will or desire to move.

This line of argumentation was initially confronted with scepticism, as it appeared heavily influenced by political radicalism, but in the light of continuous developments in the 'refugee crisis', it inevitably led to being widely accepted and documented in academic analyses (Vedsted-Hansen, 1999; Mountz. 2011; Oliver, 2017; Xypolytas, 2018, 2019), as we have also shared during the last two days, in particular today in the morning. The tragic combination of obstacles and dangers imposed on mobile people has resulted in countless dead and traumatized migrants in the past 8 years around the EU external borders and as much as I understand from migrants talking about the own life trajectories, as well here in Mexico or Latin America more widely. And although the results have often shocked the world, official political discourse in the Global North is flagrantly persistent on a rhetoric of human rights and European values, often canalized through the modern concept of civil society and its preferred actor, the humanitarian NGO.

However, this deterrent migration policy proved immensely unsuccessful, as one of the colleagues argued on Tuesday in a

humble and self-critical manner. Not only did it not deter people from attempting to cross European or US borders, it also led to an unprecedented legitimation crisis in the Global North (Carrera *et al*, 2019), as the cloaked rhetoric of benevolence stood naked in its malice in the light of migrants' misery and despair. The official response to this development, however, was to further the authoritarian character of migration policy and disregard the legitimation crisis or even try to appease it with subtle – and yet ever present – xenophobic and neo-colonial arguments that could create a Global North consensus on the necessity of this type of migration control (Schinkel, 2017).

There are certain key changes in the everyday practices of refugee management that manifest this further authoritarian swift. *Firstly*, the illegal pushbacks and deportations into which a diversity of actors are involved. Reports from human rights-based NGOs and media networks suggest that thousands of refugees have been illegally sent back in the past couple of years at the EU external borders and massive deportations happened during the US Obama administration, and often in a manner, that is clearly and unashamedly putting migrants' lives in extreme danger (Fallon, 2020; McKernan, 2021).

Secondly, there is a clear tendency to utilize closed refugee camps alongside the European borders and I have heard from the head of the migration office here in Tijuana, that camps here in Tijuana have quite different standards whilst nationally regulated camps seem to replace the previous more "open" living arrangements. Furthermore, the outbreak of COVID-19, as was also mentioned during the conference, provided with a much needed and exonerated narrative of public health, which can legitimize detention, even though the latter has been the most crucial aspect of migration policy since 2015.

1 The role of civil society in migration management

After very shortly establishing the goals of global – although obviously Northern led - migration policy and its dynamic character, it becomes obvious that the task of presenting and possibly evaluating the role of civil society organizations in refugee management is anything but straightforward. Indeed, I was pretty much surprised how much consensus and how little critique we have heard about this issue during the conference so far. Once entering the field, one can easily see the non-harmonious coexistence of different approaches from service delivery NGOs to more radical political activism (Munteanu and Barron 2021). These approaches are informed by both institutional as well as personal NGO worker and political activists' characteristics that are also linked to the political project of conceptualizing civil society in a specific, consensus-orientated, rather than, conflictual, manner. There are essentially two opposing poles that form a continuum within which civil society organizations and individuals position themselves knowingly or otherwise. At the one end of the continuum, one sees a more or less uncritical adoption of global migration policy, which in itself can take two forms. Either the alignment with the goals and principles of policy or the passive acceptance of it combined with an effort to maximize the benefits for the "clients" / refugees. At the other end, we see a conscious effort to support refugees by effectively monitoring, questioning and undermining migration policy and management.

The position within this continuum although, is not necessarily static, as different developments can affect individual and organizational decisions. More importantly, as migration policy moves towards the extreme form of official de-prioritization of human rights and authoritarian disciplining, it becomes increasingly difficult for actors to situate themselves in these – often sought after – middle positions of the continuum. The result is an increasingly bipolar and divided outlook on the role of civil society in the 'refugee crisis' as well as on the ethical aspects of this involvement.

These two poles indeed represent tremendously different approaches and are not as easy reconcilable as it, at least this is my observation, has been presented in some of the panels of this conference. In the microcosm of the field, such as hotspots in the Greek borderline or around the border here in Tijuana, they manifest themselves in a variety of ways. In an institutional setting, looking at civil society, we see a considerable rise in the active engagement of NGOs whose sole goal is the monitoring of human rights violations in the context of refugee management. People working within these organizations are in the frontline of providing protection from the workings of refugee management. On the other end, various NGOs, are operating inside and outside the new camps trying to maximize their "clients'" benefits within the migration framework.

So, if in 2021 even a casual observer can be confronted with this radically divided approach of civil society organizations, two questions seem to rise that I wish to address with my observation: Firstly, what would be the specific and decisive difference that led to this division and encampment? Secondly, informed by Antonio Gramsci's concept of civil society, Paolo Freire's liberation pedagogy as referred to during one of – at least for me – really inspiring presentations of the conference and Franz Fanon's thoughts of the role of academia, what do we feel should the function and role of civil society be in the near future?

In trying to answer that question, it is important to dispense with the various peripheral aspects of refugee management and civil society and focus on this one feature that seems to define all others. This feature is the conscious effort to depoliticize the refugee experience and co-opt civil society into a supposedly Western value-based and regulating migration management system. Since 2015, when the reality of the permanent need for mobility for hundreds of thousands of people kicked into Europe, the management of the issue has been profoundly political. This is not related simply to governments' decisions for dealing with the situation but to the conscious exercise of power over the refugee population, which takes place in zones of exception where the "common sense" of European human dignity seems to be somehow switched-off. In its

entirety, refugee management is made up of different disciplining mechanisms that are there to inform migrants of their social position in European societies. At the same time, each of these mechanisms is concealed through a veil of bureaucracy or the utilization of science in order to present itself as a non-threatening practical necessity.

Looking at victimization, an issue we discussed for quite a while in the working group I joined yesterday, one needs to be rather careful as to avoid belittling the tremendously difficult conditions and situations migrants must endure both presently as well as in their recent past. Having said that, the portrayal of the refugee as a passive victim, especially on the basis of what has occurred in the country of origin, is based on an ideologically loaded set of assumptions.

In order to close my reflection, I would now like to formulate my last observation and argument, which is indeed about the role of education and academia in migration management.

Inter-ethnic solidarity necessitates work of an educational nature to contribute towards improving the situation. Providing effective anti-racist education, predicted on an understanding of colonialism and neo-colonialism, and grounded in both cultural understanding and political economy, is one of the greatest challenges facing those committed to a socialist, anti-neoliberal politics in the Mediterranean and elsewhere. This work is broadly educational as was the work which Gramsci was engaged when attempting to generate revolutionary working-class consciousness in this country (Mayo, 2016, p. 144).

This quote, according to my understanding, circumscribes quite well what education programmes with and for refugees affected by the postcolonial 'refugee crisis' should be about. Undoubtedly, as academics that are part of the organic crisis, we should and must consider the work of popular political educators such as Antonio Gramsci, Paolo Freire as well as Franz Fanon as pathways to new consciousness that opens up opportunities and the need to focus with refugees on the structures of oppression, which produce and reproduce social, political and economic exclusion. All three

popular writers and political activists have hugely criticized how the Western intellectual has contributed to this oppression through aligning himself or herself with the hegemonic capitalist system. In their own ways and life periods, they have furthermore made substantial contributions to a new understanding of "philosophy of praxis" that takes the worldviews of the subaltern as the starting point for transformative action with the various oppressed social groups, which were at the centre of their pedagogical interests.

Since, in particular the work of Freire (1970) designated to the "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", serves as a foundation of ideas for strategic political civil society action (Mayo, 2020). However, the role of the intellectual and how it relates to praxis, how he or she gets to understand the multitude of problems which refugees face, refers back to the thus far mentioned scholars and political thinkers. As part of Paolo Freire's pedagogy of liberation, people are essentially considered as the experts about and protagonists of their own lives; hence, the alienating technical clinical case orientated role of the social workers is seen as redundant. As for Gramsci, it is the exploration and progressive modification of the "common sense" which aliments peoples' understanding of their own life worlds and opportunities, alongside their historical and geographical conditions is crucial. The ethical substance of a society must be measured in terms of the extent to which all its members enjoy substantial freedoms or, using Hannah Arendt's (1951) thoughts, which are more attuned to refugees' trajectories, the right to have rights, which provides access to a political community.

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2

PROMOTING LIFE AT THE BORDERS
Advocacy of civil society in the protagonism of migrants and refugees and their right to have rights. Observer

Iliana Martínez Hernández Mejía

After a period of extraordinary "paralysis" in global mobility, the movement of people seeks to get back on track. Thousands of people around the world encounter -new and old- strategies of containment and violent reaction (death policies) by states. The extreme control that was experienced in the pandemic seems to have suited the states' projects well.

The Conference "Promoting life at the borders" recovers a physical space for collective meeting to dialogue, share and rethink the realities faced from the borders and territories of various regions of the world. Given the immigration policies that states implement in an increasingly coordinated manner, the importance of establishing bridges, collaborations and alliances between migrant organizations, civil society and committed academia, to counteract these walls, becomes evident.

In the midst of torrential rains and lightning, the three-day meeting in Tijuana generated a great number of ideas, reflections, dialogues and knowledge. I accumulated multiple sheets of paper

with notes and ideas that I would like to share, however, this text must be brief, so I tried to organize my ideas under three headings. The first two synthesize reflections on the organization of the event and the complex context that was shared. The third one recovers some critical practices and reflections, which I found very useful to keep in mind in the work from and with the Organizations.

1 About the organization

In recent years, more attention has been paid to the issue of caregiving and the role of women in this area. Observing this element in the Conference, I noticed that most of the organizers and those who offered their work to assist those of us who participated in the Conference were women. Women who, with great professionalism and congruence, carried out their work with a great sense of welcome and hospitality. This reminded me of what I have seen in many of the organizations and shelters that serve migrants in Mexico. It is common to find religious or community leaders at the front, but much of the humanitarian action and the daily work that energizes the works, is carried out by women, religious and lay, often as volunteers. Therefore, my sincere recognition to the Scalabrinian Sisters and all the companions who make this work possible.

2 About the context

One of the topics of concern and where many discussions focused were borders. These are seen as spaces where everything becomes more complex, where rights are disputed, violated and defended. Over the last few years, I have seen how the borders of Mexico manifest phenomena that will later occur in the interior of the country. They are a space that teaches us many things, in a certain way, they go ahead.

However, more and more often, the question arises: where do they start? With the wall that delimits the territory of Mexico and the United States on the horizon of the conference headquarters,

my question may have an obvious answer. However, upon hearing about the new US guidelines for applying the right to asylum, the processing centers throughout Latin America, platforms like *CPB One* and the collaboration of states (and sometimes international organizations) in implementing extraterritorial immigration policies (the globalization of immigration control), I think the question makes sense. Have the borders moved? Where should we be observing, documenting, influencing? How to access these digital and physical filters?

Below, I point out two of the many discussions/reflections that arose on several occasions. Although no action was concluded, it was clear that these are common concerns that arise in various regions and that ways to address these challenges will continue to be sought.

The tension/dispute between providing urgent humanitarianism and how such care presents the risk of becoming a strategy *of movement disciplining* and regional control. Various questions arise: do these actions become humanitarian control? To what extent do they replace State actions? Should we supply them and/or demand that they fulfill their task? And in this same field of dispute, criticism and concern are present regarding another fundamental actor, the imbalance of forces and the power exercised by international organizations as opposed to that of migrants or civil society. The mapping of actors and the analysis of correlations has more and more elements to pay attention to and making decisions has more implications.

With respect to the challenge of the fight for rights and integration in host communities (temporary, permanent, forced), in the face of the hostile and repressive context, should we settle for mediocre actions by states to provide access to rights? One of the participants questioned, are regularization programs really relief policies? How to advance demands towards real access to rights? In addition, with respect to host communities, especially precarious ones, how can we weave alliances between populations, to advance the fight for access to rights for all, regardless of origin and condition?

Questions that will undoubtedly find answers in the following years because the dizzying movement of the context demands it.

3 About and for migrant organizations, civil society and allies

This was the part of the conference that motivates me the most and never ceases to surprise me, in the face of an increasingly hostile context, people in various regions of the world resist, search, and propose.

From what was shared, I organized some practices into four groups: struggles, strategies, lessons, and criticism/self-criticism. For reasons of space, I do not develop the elements; they are more a list of inspiring ideas that can be used to continue the work from various trenches.

4 Migrant struggles

The mutual support that occurs between migrant communities. Examples were shared from the powerful networks of the Haitian diaspora with Haitian people who have recently migrated, to projects in Tijuana promoted by migrants who welcome and share information with other mobile groups.

- Migrant community confronting and demanding rights. Letters to UNHCR headquarters in Geneva, denouncing situations in refugee camps; Venezuelan population making counterproposals to improve care programs for themselves.
- Organizing in complicated contexts. Caravans, women's networks, cooperatives, community kitchens, care spaces, self-help groups, networks of people with disabilities, among others. The testimony of Mary, from CONAMIREDIS of Honduras, showed the tenacity that is required to achieve this.
- Intersectionality of resistance in mobility. Native peoples

on the move, LGBTTIQ+ population, feminist groups, anti-racist groups, youth groups, people with disabilities, among others.

5 Strategies – emphasis

How and where they are looking when doing their work

In a complex context, participants shared numerous examples of projects that are implemented incorporating multiple elements. Cases from organizations working at the neighborhood level in South Africa to Senegalese migrant collectives that carry out transnational legislative advocacy from Argentina were discussed. These are some of the elements taken into account when implementing their actions/strategies:

Multilevel:

- Local-national-regional-global | Transnational, translocal.
- Context | individual – collective
- Split temporality | urgent – medium – long term
- Intersectoral:
- Community/collectives/migrant diasporas + CSOs + Academia | OIs, Government, companies.
- Intersectional (as noted above in the profiles of the struggles).

3 + 2 Lessons

The first three were shared by Dylan, who works in the border area of El Paso (USA) /Cd. Juárez (MX), and I allowed myself to add two more that were mentioned throughout the entire Conference.

- Work rooted in the local.
- (Re)learn to collaborate. Leaving room to collaborate, for the unexpected. We are in the same fight; add, not compete.

- Less prominence and more organization. Do not detract from the path, the process is important.
- Put people at the center.
- Prioritize the opinion of migrants.

6 Criticism/self-criticism

Rarely is it possible to share the achievements and failures of work from a more self-critical perspective. This requires humility. Here I point out some ideas that were generated in this vein:

- Sharing failures in projects is a good practice, valuable learning from mistakes that have been made previously.
- Promote spaces for reconciliation and healing between organizations. Valid for all, but emphasis was placed on church organizations.
- How can we have a more active church that is more committed to the works and projects that are already being promoted?
- How can we continue to promote reflections on the gender issue among our work spaces?

Faced with an overwhelming and complex panorama, in the final reflections of the meeting, Natasha invited us to ask ourselves, with what commitments do we leave here? Personally, this conference left me with the desire to continue sharing and thinking together about the challenges that lie ahead. It confirmed to me how valuable, enriching and challenging networking and intersectoral work is, how urgent it is to put migrants at the center and to be able to build together with them. It is not always easy, we do not always succeed, but we keep trying.

3

HISTORY OF CSEM INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

Carmen Lussi

1. The holding of international conferences is part of the strategy of the CSEM – Centro Scalabriniano de Estudos Migratórios from Brasília to carry out the mission of "promoting, producing and disseminating scientific and interdisciplinary knowledge on migrations, forced displacements and similar processes, in a perspective of respect and prophetic promotion of human dignity and the protagonism of migrants and refugees, towards a more equitable world, where no one is a foreigner".

Since 2017, we have been in this participatory and multilateral process of interaction, construction and exchange of knowledge, which had a strong first moment in the first Conference, held in December 2018 in the city of Johannesburg, South Africa, and a second stage in March 2023, at the Universidad Iberoamericana de Tijuana, Mexico. In both events, the CSEM has strategic alliances with Organizations of the Congregation of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters in the different countries involved, as well as related entities and partners that support, such as Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart – Germany, Misereor and Adveniat.

2. The CSEM international conferences are held as an opportunity for meetings, exchange of experiences and systematization. They also promote opportunities to share practices and knowledge. They are events that disseminate information and action strategies around

migration and refuge, which we like to identify as the "world of human mobility". The Conferences are strategically organized to promote interaction, dialogue and even coexistence between subjects and organizations that act committed to issues and services, orientation and work experiences with migrants and refugees. In addition to the contribution of professionals and organizations in this process, the active and purposeful participation of migrant and refugee men and women is essential.

3. The perspective adopted for these events considers human mobility from a positive and decisive perspective, which understands it as a resource that people and towns have in their trajectories, which can help face the challenges of their respective realities and local contexts, without forgetting risks and problems that human mobility can bring. The same read-out recognizes the subjects involved in situations of human mobility as protagonists of their trajectories, actors with the capacity for self-determination and citizens who enrich themselves and their groups, despite and through the paths of population displacement. Therefore, we highlight the importance of the reciprocally fruitful relationship between academic surveys and direct action with migrants and refugees, since direct action in service and advocacy can nuance investigations, while reflection and deepening can make joint action more incisive in favor of subjects in situations of mobility and in the institutional and sociopolitical contexts that interact with migrants and refugees (See Introduction to the book of the I Conference). We consider a triple presence of privileged participants in this process, at the same time and interacting:

a) researchers from the academic context;

b) agents who act committed to the cause of human mobility, together with the

c) migrant and refugee protagonists and other categories of people in mobility, such as returnees, deportees, for example.

4. The theme of the First Conference brought to Johannesburg service, attention to direct care, in particular, with a privileged focus

on border situations. On the occasion, results of research carried out by CSEM and alliances were presented, between Angola and Congo, between South Africa and Mozambique, between Mexico and the United States and in Italy.

The debate was enriched with the experiences presented at the Event and site visits, as well as spaces for communication and debate between the participants, coming from more than 10 countries, with the participation of 70 people, and its implementation had a significant impact on the local and international media. The texts produced for the event are available for free download on the CSEM website, in Portuguese and English.

The Final Document of the First Conference stressed: "We recognize and honor the resilience, autonomy, diversity and courage of migrants and refugees, especially in light of the adversities that prevail in the world. We emphasize and understand that people on the move contribute immensely and in various ways to human progress and fraternity. /.../. We value the diverse forms of people's presence in motion that enrich human life, especially through interactions that deepen the understanding of humanity" (Wildner, 2019, p. 188)[1].

5. For the II Conference, we invited researchers, professionals and organizations that work in contexts and with people in situations of human mobility, as well as leaders and organizations of migrants/refugees to continue and expand the reflections and collaboration that started or received in the first event. The theme of the II Conference, focused on promoting advocacy in defense of the protagonism of migrants and refugees and their topics of interest and need.

The Conference, through the process of elaboration and dissemination of the results, including the printed and digital publication of the studies elaborated on the occasion of the Event, as well as the commitment and the network articulations that the Conference favors, wanted strengthen the capacity of

[1] WILDNER, Marlene (Org.). Rebuilding lifes at the borders. Challenges in dealing with migrants and refugees. Brasilia: CSEM, 2019. Available at: Chttps://www.csem.org.br/livros/rebuilding-lives-at-the-borders-challenges-in-dealing-with-migrants-and-refugees-2-2/.

migrant refugees and civil society to influence and contribute to the objectives to which we are committed. Consequently, yes, it is an event of speeches and studies, but also of commitment and strengthening of action strategies and of the capacity to achieve results in our efforts and in our dedication to the Cause.

OPEN LETTER

As an assembly of the II International Conference "Promoting Life at the Borders" organized by Scalabrinian Center for Migration Studies (CSEM), with more than 100 participants and almost 1,000 virtual attendees from 20 countries in Latin America, Africa and Europe. We openly expressed reflections, points and recommendations around "the incidence of civil society in the protagonism of migrants and refugees and their right to have rights". This collective effort held in the city of Tijuana, Mexico, from March 21 to 23, 2023, continues, expands and pushes forward what was discussed at the First conference held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in December 2018. Considering the devastating effects of the pandemic, as well as the most recent armed conflicts and other geopolitical dynamics, during the II Conference we analyzed and discussed the situation of contemporary global and regional migration. Based on multiple migrant voices, as well as the experiences of organized civil society organizations, the contributions of academics and the work of other expert institutions, after emphasizing the case of the African continent and continuing with the Latin American case, we highlighted the following conceptual and practical challenges:

The "right to migrate" or the "right to free transit" have been overshadowed by the emphasis of States and governments on "ordering, securitizing or securitizing and regularizing" migration, prioritizing a punitive, crisis and emergency approach that affects both the dignity and human rights of the most vulnerable people in mobility, such as women and children. It is also an approach that

has contributed to the criminalization of human rights defenders in the field of migration, especially in border areas.

Borders and migratory controls have not only been reinforced, hardened or militarized and technologized, but have multiplied, excluding and hindering departure, transit, return, as well as arrival or settlement, also affecting the transnational links of millions of human beings who have decided to leave their communities of origin due to multiple factors and structural and historical causes.

In this context, we can observe that racialization and xenophobia are on the rise, where nationality emerges as a new category of inequality, presenting intersections with aporophobia, sexualization, anti-immigration policies and, specifically, with institutionalized racism and xenophobia. This multiple violence calls into question who are the legitimate members of the political community.

Migratory and people profiles in contexts of forced mobility have become more complex, more heterogeneous and diverse in their socio-demographic, cultural, political and economic, ethnic and racial characteristics, remaining invisible and excluded by exceeding or belonging to more than one administrative, discursive or analytical category.

Access to the rights of migrants and refugees should be promoted by recognizing their contributions, diversity, wealth and the contributions they bring with them to multiple aspects of the societies with which they interact; therefore, governments at all levels should promote policies of hospitality and the construction of effective, affective, supportive, fraternal and inclusive citizenships that transcend borders.

It is essential to continue strengthening the articulations and networking of civil society organizations that welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants and refugees from the local level, based on diversity and human dignity, particularly in the face of more hostile, racist, xenophobic and insecure contexts.

The strategies of struggle and collective resistance led by migrants and the organizations that support them must be strengthened and expanded in order to transform the most

aggressive migration policies that promote inequality, exclusion, separation of families and, in wide terms, the systematic violation of human rights and the death of those who pursue a dream or seek to save their lives.

During these three days of rich interactions, we had the opportunity to deepen our knowledge of the multiple approaches and interactions that the stakeholders present - migrant collectives, civil society organizations and academics - establish with international migration based on their personal and professional experiences, in order to broaden and reaffirm our understanding of the complexity, dynamism and multifaceted dimension of the migration phenomenon. The conference's innovative programming allowed us to share experiences and lessons learned; to build alliances and partnerships; and to celebrate our mutually empowering, supportive and complementary actions. We were called to strengthen our understandings, reaffirm our commitments and seek to develop ever more innovative and supportive actions, both in the short and long term, based on the demands presented by and implemented with migrant and refugee communities.

The historical and fundamental role of civil society in the welcoming, protection and integration of migrant communities should be made visible and celebrated. It is the members of this civil society who are the first to offer humanitarian responses, to make the necessary denunciations, to know on a daily basis the trajectories and expectations, to situate themselves in the territories where they live and to produce data and knowledge on migratory phenomena. This organizational capacity must be taken into account in interactions with other stakeholders, especially and strategically with international organizations when building partnerships. In addition to promoting the mission and values of the organizations, the signing or agreement of projects can contribute to the development of medium and long term actions such as institutional strengthening and historical memory, which we need so much.

We reaffirm our commitment to strengthen and develop strategies and competencies in the defense of the right to migrate at

the transnational, national and subnational levels, both in existing forums and in those that need to be created. The networking based on similarities and organic possibilities, as well as cooperation with academia in the generating of data and the participation of migrant collectives are fundamental tools in this work front. The welcome and hospitality in Tijuana allowed us to celebrate encounters and reunions, our struggles, small achievements, utopias and every heart called to defend the human right to migrate. The self-care of people who provide care and assistance to migrant and refugee populations has emerged as a point of attention in the debate, as well as the need for self-reflection on what can be improved, for example, to give more support to self-representation movements of migrant collectives.

It is important that the Civil Society can get back to the close and community work, where conditioning factors are observed with respect to the reality of International Cooperation, which in turn begin to reproduce modern visions of work and do not contemplate the place of spirituality.

As a first action within the communities of faith, we consider that the migratory reality must be present in the formation of leadership and in general in all the processes related to the actions of transformation of reality, since from there is born the vision of the reflection of migration as a social fact that affects us and invites us to be promoters of an integral vision of the human being.

Finally, it should be taken into consideration that Civil Society Organizations should take into accounts that the migratory reality is part of the political and cultural factual events of each country, therefore, they should consider that their actions be comprehensive and with inclusive and participatory visions in general, both for the population directly affected, as well as for the people living in the welcoming and receiving territories. We will continue to transgress the mortal structures and always promote life at all frontiers and beyond them.

Tijuana, Mexico, March 23rd, 2023

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