

Expressions of the Incorporation of Guatemalans to the Nonformal Productive Structure in the Mexican Municipalities Bordering Guatemala

Expresiones de la incorporación de personas guatemaltecas a la estructura productiva no formal de los municipios mexicanos transfronterizos con Guatemala

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ABSTRACT

We address the trends in the incorporation of the Guatemalan workforce in the Mexico-Guatemala Cross-Border Region (MGCBR). Through quantitative methodology, 22 Mexican border municipalities are studied, and the microdata of the *2010 Population Census* and the *2015 Intercensal Survey* of INEGI are processed. It is observed that people of Guatemalan origin are initially engaged in agricultural activities, although due to the precarity in the Mexican countryside in the last decade, they have been linked mainly to nonformal activities and jobs in the service sector. The article provides empirical data to understand the phenomenon analyzed in the border municipalities as a whole. Even with the limitations of census sources, the study shows the relationship between job insecurity and the non-formal productive structures that prevail, as well as the economic and political-administrative asymmetries between the states in question.

Keywords: 1. regional migration, 2. nonformal productive structure, 3. employment, 4. Mexico-Guatemala Cross-Border Region (MGCBR).

RESUMEN

Se abordan las tendencias de la incorporación de la fuerza de trabajo guatemalteca en la Región Transfronteriza México-Guatemala (RTMG). Mediante una metodología cuantitativa, se estudia a los 22 municipios mexicanos fronterizos y se procesan los microdatos del Censo de Población 2010 y de la Encuesta Intercensal 2015 del Inegi. Se observa que las personas de origen guatemalteco se insertan inicialmente en actividades agropecuarias, aunque debido a la precarización del campo mexicano, en la última década se han insertado principalmente en actividades y empleos no formales del sector servicios. El artículo aporta datos empíricos para entender el fenómeno analizado en el conjunto de los municipios fronterizos. Aun con las limitaciones de las fuentes censales, el estudio muestra la relación entre la precariedad laboral y las estructuras productivas no formales que imperan, así como las asimetrías económicas y político-administrativas entre los estados en cuestión.

Palabras clave: 1. migración regional, 2. estructura productiva no formal, 3. empleo, 4. región transfronteriza México-Guatemala (RTMG).

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INTRODUCTION

One of the effects of formal and nonformal productive structures in a locality or region manifests as labor-based relationships between people and population groups in the territory. The capability to create growth and territorial development associates with the configuration of such structure, in which partake, at once, private and governmental agents from various jurisdictions that introduce financial, economic, and social capital, with the capacity of different social actors and various economic models.

At the Mexican border regions, these interactions express via the differences of the models and capabilities of public and private investments between the northern and southern borders. With capital and an economic model that promote maquila activities and the reinforcement of social programs to increase State presence and consolidate cities and urban settlements, the northern border contrasts with the little public investment and poor stimulus for private-sector investments in the territory of the southern border.

A useful notion that allows accounting for the way practices and interactions that take place in these regions relate with productive structures is that of cross-border region, which refers to the territory between states, in terms of continuities (networks, interactions) and political-administrative divisions between countries (Jessop, 2004). In our study area, the Mexico-Guatemala Cross-Border Region (MGCBR), these continuities are ethnical-cultural and familial, derived from entrepreneurial alliances, and even institutions other than the states—such as international or religious civil organizations—, which amalgamate with the economic and political-administrative disparity between these nation states (Limón Aguirre, 2010; Peña-Piña, Joaquín & Fábregas-Puig, 2015).

In MGCBR, there is scarce possibility of creating productive activities with greater added value and production linking; in this area, industrial activities are few and depend heavily on the agricultural sector, commercial activities and subsistence services. In like manner, urban zones are fragile and they neither consolidate nor establish integrations. These characteristics regularly stimulate population and consumption goods flows from social, economic, political, and environmental practices that articulate formal and nonformal structures in various manners, making room for cross-border processes among which distinguishable is the construction of the labor market that “relates a large number of people from Guatemala with the economy of southern Mexico” (Rivera Farfán, 2020, p. 22).

Even if they have limitations, studies on labor markets allow identifying formal and nonformal structures by means of demographic information reported in censuses and surveys. By retaking this sort of sources, the social structures linked to the production activities of the 22 municipalities in the cross-border area adjoining Guatemala are analytically contrasted. Stressing the productive vocation of the municipalities and subregions, the differences in the articulation of the population born in Guatemala in contrast with the Mexican and other populations are displayed with a view to establishing

whether the nonformal production structure keeps a relation with the flow of Guatemalan migrant population in that region.

The Production Structure and its Relation with Border Territories

The economic and social development of a region is linked to its economy's structure, which comprises the connected relevance of the various production branches and the institutional composition of agents, subjects and organized social clusters (Acemoglu, Johnson, & Robinson, 2008; Rodrik, Subramanian, & Trebbi, 2004), adding to the characteristics of the territory (Engerman, Sokoloff, Urquiola, & Acemoglu, 2002) and the economic approaches of governmental policies (Sachs & Warner, 1995).

The development processes associate with the multiple times tried Kaldor-Verdoorn law, which states that industrial production activities, especially manufacturing, trigger the economic growth of a region or a country (Kaldor, 1966); mainly those with the most technological composition, owing to the productive links of such economic branches with the rest of the production structure, i.e., industrial, primary sector, trade, and services. These structures, together with the institutional and social fabric (Hakansson & Johanson, 1993; Johannisson, 1995), may make room for endogenous development (Nelson, 1997) which transcends mere economic growth or development, if the development of capabilities of local actors is promoted (Sen, 2001), human and institutional resources are harnessed, and cultural, identity, and organizational aspects related with the generation of savings and investments are included so that they boost local technologic development (Boisier, 2003).

The heterogeneity and differences in the territories are produced in the intensity of a number of practices by the flows of capital that detonate development and their capacity to create a consistent social fabric, which is more likely to occur in large urban conglomerates and in areas close to the centers of power than in rural zones or in the regions along their borders.

In the areas furthest from the economic and social centers of power, there is preponderance of nonformal economic structures composed of small economic units, not articulated with one another on the territory; their characteristics are low technology, unskilled labor force, and low production, as well as carrying out traditional entrepreneurial practices (McLaughlin, 1989) in which the employer-employee relationship is rather familial—involve relatives, acquaintances or friends—and their workers are neither entitled to labor benefits nor social security. These practices are characterized by income flexibility, labor intensification, low use of technology and poor local regulation (Portes & Haller, 2004).

The production and service units that involve nonformal employment are usually classified as enterprises of self-employed people and those with nonformal employers which, for their part, may be hired by formal enterprises to reduce costs. The above makes

room for various sorts of relationships as in the first case survival is at stake, while in the latter, dependent exploitation processes occur.

It is an utterly heterogeneous and vast reality, which may include the participation of the illegal market of crime (smuggling, drugs and human trafficking) that nourishes the “miserableness” of unstable, transit social sectors on the territories (Bangasser, 2000). However, several authors difference the nonformal from the illegal, since the nonformal, unlike the illegal, —which entails preestablished systems of redress and audit— does not usually have its own protection systems proper to organized-crime economies (Portes & Haller, 2004).

The definition of this reality as nonformal economy or nonformal sector of the economy has been extremely discredited by critical economic perspectives such as popular (Roig, 2017) or social solidarity (Coraggio, 2011) economy, given that it makes the structural of unemployment in this financing capital phase invisible (Quijano, 1998), and does not allow understanding the new realities of the world of labor nor the socioeconomic, cultural, and political specificities and expressions that may take place in popular practices. Even if we agree with these statements (Gracia & Horbath Corredor, 2014), we retake here information from censuses and surveys to locate the expressions of the incorporation of Guatemalan population into the Mexican municipalities in the transborder region when nonformal structures prevail in the creation of infrastructure and services, activities and job posts in the labor market (Azuma & Grossman, 2002; Cervantes Niño, Gutiérrez Garza, & Palacios, 2008; Loayza & Sugawara, 2009; Portes & Haller, 2004), as well as the effects this has on regional economies, many of them associated to labor force mobility.

Taking in migrant labor force from Guatemala into the border municipalities in southern Mexico accompanies a process similar to that of rural-urban migration within the country that, together with the slow growth in the industrial sector (Tokman, 1995), was described by the theory of dual economy. The migration arrival flow and the settlement of migrant population in Mexican localities in MGCBR is not accompanied by capital to massively stimulate the installation of formal enterprises. On the contrary, the creation of small-size production units, specialized on the basis of lacks of the border in what is known as “flexible specialization”, multiplies (González, 2005; OIT, 2005): suppression of the protectionist regulation of the labor force to decrease social benefits and other labor costs, which fuels and reproduces poverty margins and stimulates marginalization (Horbath, 2004).

The incorporation into this sort of production establishments is not homogeneous in the entire MGCBR due to the labor and spatial segmentation that exists at the border line, and also due to the disparities between the regions of the country that render the border strip a polarized zone regarding development in other areas of the country, e.g., the central region, El Bajío and the norther border. This disparity is the product of globalization that generates regional inequality (Huesca Reynoso, 2005; Ochoa León, 2004) and favors the channels of

migration strips that direct and connect the flows of individuals, goods and natural resources toward Paso del Norte, on the other side of Rio Grande.

In MGCBR, the production structure does not offer good linking niches for migrant labor force. In this way, segmentation favors incorporation into precarious markets, slightly better structured within urban spheres in the region close to the Mexican Pacific such as Tapachula, as compared with localities close to the strip of the Yucatán Peninsula such as the municipalities of Calakmul and Candelaria.

With data from Inegi's censuses, it is possible to approach the evolution that the nonformal production structure has had, considering retail trade, street selling, freight and passenger transport by means of taxis and other means, repatriation services, domestic and sexual work, and other services provided by households with low or null capital investment and immediate benefits (Inegi, 2005). These measurements, which have improved in concepts and instruments (Inegi, 2004; Negrete Prieto, 2011), retake, from the labor perspective, the enrolment of laborers into the social security systems, and from the standpoint of production units, identify their registry in the fiscal and taxation system. It is worth mentioning that, from these sources, it is not possible to account for a well-documented and extremely extended phenomenon such as labor itinerancy. However, since our interest is not focused on migration flows themselves, but on the relationship between migrant population and production structures, we refer to the recent work coordinated by Rivera Farfán (2020), in which an exhaustive and updated reference is made to the studies on the topic.

STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

Delimitation of MGCBR and Cross-Border Mexican Municipalities

The southern border is created from a broad and diffuse territoriality (Ángeles Cruz, 2010). According to *Comisión de Asuntos Fronterizos Sur* [Commission for South Border Affairs], this border has a total extension of 1149 kilometers, of which 956 km correspond to the border with Guatemala, and 193 km, with Belize. The area in question is the border with Guatemala, with the departments of San Marcos, Huehuetenango, Quiché, and El Petén, which adjoin the Mexican states of Chiapas, Tabasco, and Campeche. The drawing of this border line dates back to 1823-1824, after the separation from Central America and the incorporation of Chiapas into the Mexican federation (Castillo, Toussaint, & Vázquez, 2006). This incorporation is legitimized in *Tratado sobre Límites entre México y Guatemala* [Treaty on the Limits between Mexico and Guatemala], on September 27, 1882 (SRE, 1930), in which the limits for both territories were agreed.

Historically, borders intend to reinforce a country's sovereignty and become a formal recognition space from the demarcation and delimitation of the boundaries. In the Mexican context, the delimitation of the southern border concurs with a "modern" Nation-State,

which among other things includes the law on colonization (De Vos, 2005), by virtue of which vast extensions of land became property of desalinizing firms, whose mission was to capitalize “backward” regions. This gave rise to mass migration and the intensification of interactions and cross-border contacts which acquired different connotations according to political events. The 1980 Guatemalan exodus originated by the extremely grave political situation of the country made the Mexican state conceive the idea of “national security” and to “reinforce surveillance mechanisms in the area, though no actual control was accomplished” (Kauffer, 2005, p. 10), which expressed as a number of features after the cooperation agreements derived from *Alianza para la Frontera México-Estados Unidos* [Alliance for the Mexico-United States Border] in 2002 (Emmerich, 2003). In this way, the modern/global logic that builds and dynamizes the transborder space is observed in dynamics such as the integration of neoliberal projects such as *Plan Puebla Panamá* [Mesoamerica Integration and Development Project] (Torres Torres & Gazca Zamora, 2004), drug trafficking networks or indigenous resistance (Barraza & Gracia, 2020).

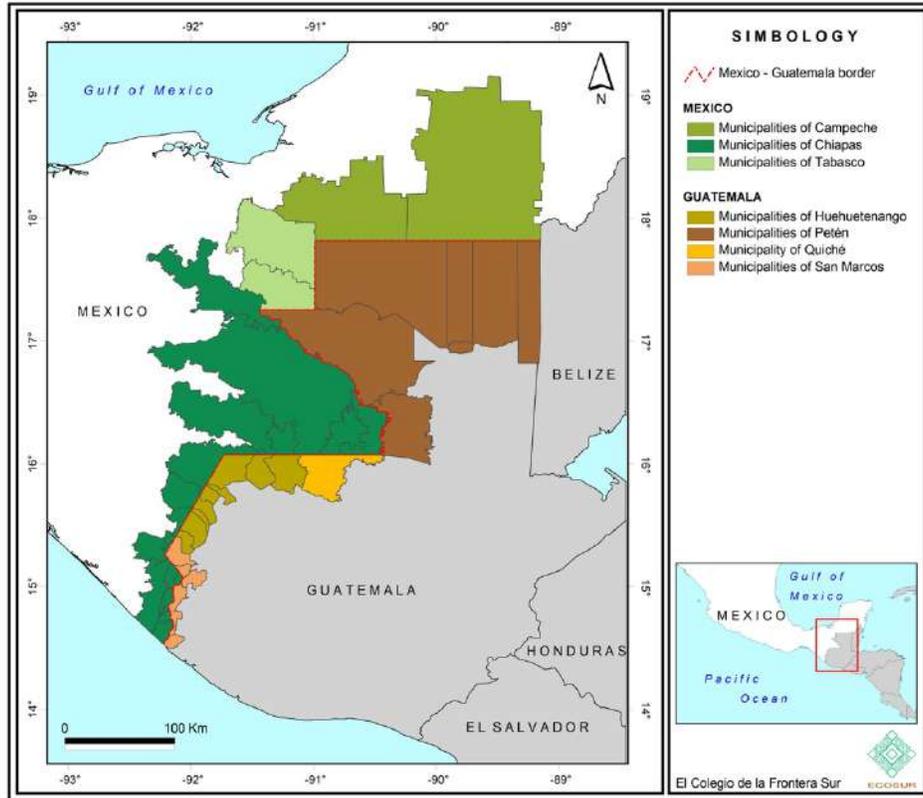
In Map 1, the geographic borders established in the international dividing line, which is straight in some sections, while in others, follows the Suchiate and Usumacinta Rivers or Sierra Madre de Chiapas, as well as the political division of these territories, with the Mexican states on one side, and the Guatemalan departments on the other; as a set, these are the border zone, which comprises 45 municipalities, 22 on Mexico’s side, and 23 on Guatemala’s.

On Mexico’s side, there are three border states: Chiapas, Tabasco, and Campeche, with a total of 152 municipalities, of which 22 are part of the borderline with Guatemala. The historic development of the 18 municipalities in the state of Chiapas is closely linked to that of Guatemala owing to their cultural characteristics and the long-term mobility dynamic, with rich ethnical and cultural diversity (Castillo & Toussaint, 2015).

The States of Campeche and Tabasco host two municipalities each, which are framed rather by a political-administrative border imposed by the governments than by a natural boundary. In the state of Chiapas, with a geographically rugged territory, the adjoining municipalities of Motozintla, Mazapa de Madero, Tuxtla Chico, Cacahoatán, and Unión Juárez are part of the prolongation of Sierra Madre de Chiapas. The last three, plus Suchiate, Frontera Hidalgo and Metapa are separated from Guatemala by Suchiate River. For their part, the municipalities of Palenque, Ocosingo, and Benemérito de las Américas are separated from Guatemala by Usumacinta and Negro (Chixoy) Rivers. The rest of the border municipalities is divided by landmarks that simulate an artificial straight line. The state of Campeche is separated from Guatemala by an artificial line in which El Petén tropical forest predominates. The municipalities of Candelaria and Calakmul are hard-to-reach populations with little population and limited communication means. In Tabasco, according to information gathered in Encuesta sobre Migración en la Frontera Sur de México, Emif Sur [Survey on Migration at the Southern Border of Mexico] (El Colegio de

la Frontera Norte et al., 2010), there exists an official border point on the municipality of Tenosique, with low demographic density and scarce means of communication.

Map 1. Border municipalities of Mexico and Guatemala



Source: Own elaboration based on data from *Secretaría de Planificación y Programación de la Presidencia de la República* [Secretariat of Planning and Programming of the Presidency of the Republic of Guatemala] (Segeplan, 2006) and *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía* [National Institute of Statistics and Geography] (Inegi, 2015).

The demographic dynamic in MGCBR is high and diverse. Information from Emif sur 2019 reports that the return migration flow (legal and deported individuals) amounted to 296 000 crossings from the US to Guatemala, traveling over Mexico, out of which 83 000 were Guatemalan from Quetzaltenango (10.7%) and, fundamentally from Huehuetenango (52.8%), and San Marcos (30.3%) (El Colegio de la Frontera Norte et al., 2020). In these two last departments, migration waves are closely related to coffee production due to the grave situation which between 2013 and 2016 forced pickers to look for employment in other areas and places (Dary & Gracia, 2020).

Methodology and Data Sources

We restricted the analysis exclusively to the Mexican area of the 22 municipalities in MGCBR and use microdata from Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010 [2010 Census on Population and Housing] and from Encuesta Intercensal 2015 [2015 Inter-Censal Survey], both produced by Inegi (2010, 2015). To do so, in these databases, the population that stated being born in Guatemala was selected; then, the border municipalities were selected (see Table 1) and with this filter, the special processing to design personalized tables were elaborated to display the total population distributed according to the *sex* variable, differencing if it was Guatemalan population.

With the information for 2010 and 2015, the demographic growth rates and the participation rates for Guatemalan population in the total population in each municipality were calculated for each year of the term. Another filter was applied to this selection, namely: labor age and economically active population, and more specifically, the population that reported being employed. Later on, the special processing of occupational position was carried out, always contrasting the Guatemalan population with the rest of MGCBR.

To enquire on the labor benefits the Guatemalan population had in the 22 Mexican municipalities, various questions from the census and the survey were used, homologating the labor benefits of year-end bonus, paid vacations, medical service, profit sharing, and *Sistema de Ahorro para el Retiro* [System for Retirement Savings] or *Administradora de Fondos para el Retiro* [Retirement Fund Manager].

Finally, the productive activities of the places and establishments into which Guatemalans integrated were revised and new variables were created to homologate the bases of Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010 (Inegi, 2010) and Encuesta Intercensal 2015. Data processing was carried out using the statistic software SPSS version 20, and the exit results were edited on Excel spreadsheets.

Table 1. Guatemalan population by sex in the Mexican municipalities of MGCBR

Border states and municipalities	Total population		Born in Guatemala						Rest		
			Man		Woman		Total				
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015	
Chiapas	Suchiate	35 609	38 797	1 565	1 469	1 968	1 545	3 533	3 014	32 076	35 783
	Frontera Hidalgo	12 272	14 416	153	237	167	239	320	476	11 952	13 940
	Metapa	4 918	5 743	38	100	58	96	96	196	4 822	5 547
	Tuxtla Chico	38 650	41 823	209	365	334	470	543	835	38 107	40 988
	Unión Juárez	14 101	15 350	115	107	66	90	181	197	13 920	15 153
	Cacahoatán	44 378	45 594	242	440	276	466	518	906	43 860	44 688
	Tapachula	319 567	348 156	3 011	3 618	4 348	4 871	7 359	8 489	312 208	339 667
	Motozintla	69 728	72 967	107	170	159	209	266	379	69 462	72 588
	Mazapa de Madero	7 967	7 769	38	31	34	57	72	88	7 895	7 681
	Amatenango de la Frontera	30 207	30 732	112	171	142	273	254	444	29 953	30 288
	Frontera Comalapa	67 712	73 436	695	844	865	980	1 560	1 824	66 152	71 612
	La Trinitaria	73 161	76 917	663	1 019	773	1 190	1 436	2 209	71 725	74 708
	Las Margaritas	111 323	122 821	0	234	0	232	0	466	111 323	122 355
	Maravilla Tenejapa	9 716	12 945	163	112	173	97	336	209	9 380	12 736
	Marqués de Comillas	10 639	11 444	87	65	115	63	202	128	10 437	11 316
	Benemérito de las Américas	15 714	20 193	180	282	136	373	316	655	15 398	19 538
	Ocosingo	197 073	218 893	74	56	112	60	186	116	196 887	218 777
Palenque	111 270	119 826	18	75	54	86	72	161	111 198	119 665	
Tabasco	Tenosique	59 259	59 814	38	35	72	44	110	79	59 149	59 735
	Balancán	56 323	60 516	0	46	17	39	17	85	56 306	60 431
Campeche	Calakmul	26 205	28 424	5	3	0	3	5	6	26 200	28 418
	Candelaria	40 323	43 879	8	97	0	106	8	203	40 315	43 676
	Total	1 356 115	1 470 455	7 521	9 576	9 869	11 589	17 390	21 165	1 338 725	1 449 290

Note: Data ordered from the Pacific to the Caribbean (Mexico).

Source: Own calculation based on special processing of microdata from Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010 and Encuesta Intercensal 2015 (Inegi, 2010, 2015).

THE NONFORMAL STRUCTURE IN OCCUPATION CHARACTERISTICS IN MGCBR

For 2010, the census defined 1 356 115 individuals located in the 22 Mexican municipalities in MGCBR; five years later, Encuesta Intercensal 2015 expressed a figure of 1 470 455 people, which is an increase of 8.43% of the population with an annual growth rate of 1.62%. There is a diversity of demographic sizes along the cluster of Mexican municipalities in MGCBR as well as demographic dynamics. From the Pacific toward the Caribbean, the municipalities that stand out due to their territorial extension are Tapachula, with about 350 000 inhabitants, followed by Las Margaritas, Ocosingo and Palenque, with between 100 000 and almost 200 000 inhabitants, all of them in the state of Chiapas.

However, in terms of demographic dynamic, the municipalities of Frontera Hidalgo and Metapa show demographic growths of more than 17% between 2010 and 2015, at rate of more than 3% a year; but the municipalities with the highest demographic growths were Maravilla Tenejapa and Benemérito de las Américas—33 and 28%, in five years, at a rate of more than 5% a year—. Mazapa de Madero, one of the smallest municipalities in MGCBR, has a demographic decrease of almost -2.5% within the term, at a rate of -0.5% a year.

In the municipalities with the highest demographic dynamics (Suchiate, Frontera Hidalgo, Metapa, Tapachula, Maravilla Tenejapa, and Benemérito de las Américas), there is heavier border transit and mobility at both sides, but with more intensity toward Mexico because of the transit of Guatemalans and Central Americans; though this is not the case in Mazapa de Madero, whose geographic location in Sierra de Chiapas makes access to the zone difficult. In 2010, a total of 13 390 individuals were counted, while in 2015, this figure reached 21 165, which accounted for a growth of 21.7%, at a rate of almost 4% a year.

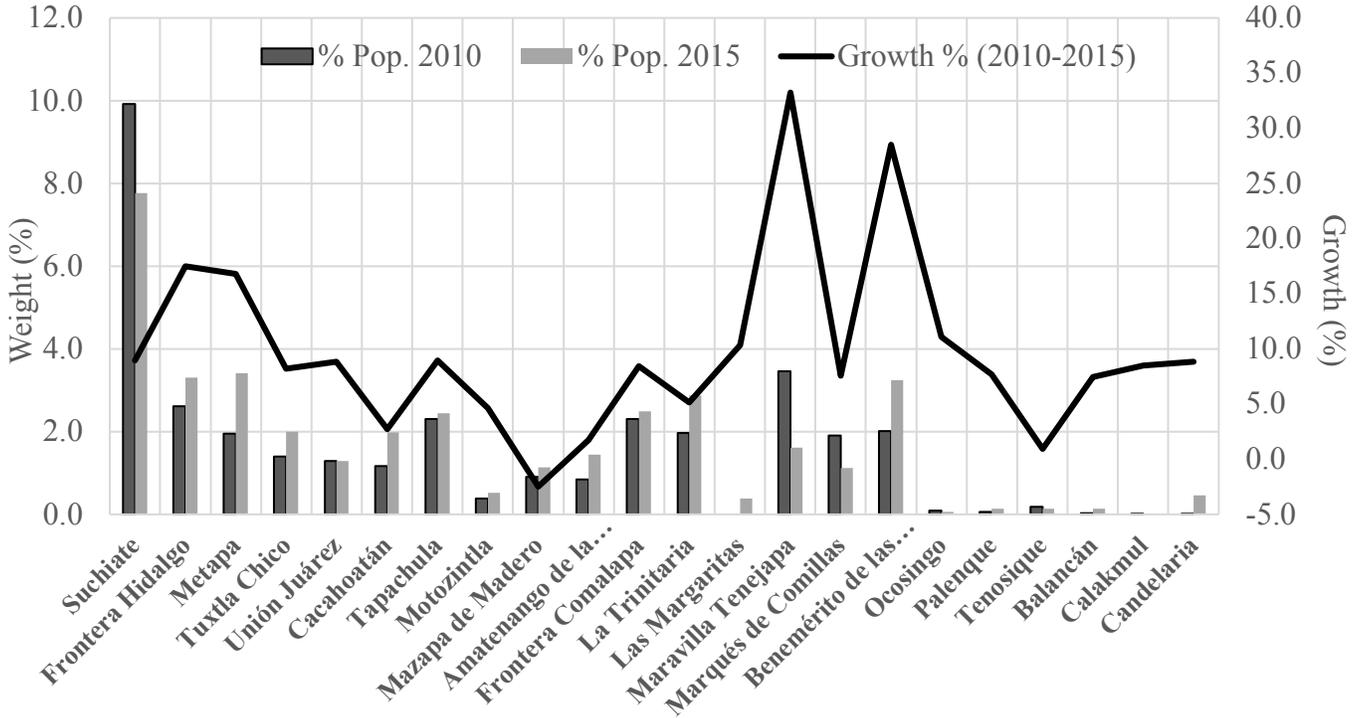
Owing to its size, Tapachula was still the municipality with the most Guatemalans on the Mexican side of MGCBR, with a population of 8 489 people in 2015, at a growth rate of almost 15.3% in the term, which means a rate of 2.8% a year; it is followed by the coastal municipality of Suchiate, with a population of 3 014 Guatemalans in 2015, but with a decrease of -14.7% over the five years, at a rate of -3.2% a year (graph 1 1), whereas in the municipalities of Frontera Comalapa and La Trinitaria (1 824 and 2 209 Guatemalans in 2015), growths of 17 and 54% were recorded, at annual growth rates of 3.1 and 8.6%, respectively.

The increase in the migration intensity of Guatemalans to La Trinitaria is also irradiated toward Las Margaritas, where in 2010 there were no reports of individuals of Guatemalan origin; however, in 2015 there were 466 people. Something similar takes place in Benemérito de las Américas and Palenque, Chiapas, in the municipality of Balancán, Tabasco, and in Candelaria, Campeche.

From the Mexican Pacific toward the Caribbean, it is noticed the way the intensity of the relative weight of the population born in Guatemala decreases in 2010 from the municipalities Suchiate, Frontera Hidalgo, Metapa, Unión Juárez, and Cacahoatán. Nevertheless, in 2015, in Suchiate, figures still decrease, while in almost all the municipalities of this cluster the proportion increases (see Graph 1). In Tapachula, the proportion is higher than in the previous municipalities and is still increasing due to the large migration flow in the area and in the following municipality of Motozintla, with a lower proportion of Guatemalans, which increases in 2015 as in the municipalities of Mazapa de Madero, Amatenango de la Frontera, Frontera Comalapa, La Trinitaria, and Las Margaritas; in these municipalities, the arrival of Guatemalans displaced by violence in their country took place, and the proportion dramatically increased, so did the growth rate

in five years: in Cacahoatán and Amatenango de la Frontera about 75%; in Motozintla, 42%; in La Trinitaria, about 54%; and, in Las Margaritas, there is Guatemalan population who was not there in 2010 (Table 2).

Graph 1. Relative weight of Guatemalan population and growth rate in the Mexican municipalities of GMCBR



Note: Data ordered from the Pacific to the Caribbean (Mexico).

Source: Own calculation based on special processing of microdata from Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010 and Encuesta Intercensal 2015 (Inegi, 2010, 2015).

Although proportions were high in the municipalities of Maravilla Tenejapa and Marqués de las Comillas in 2010, five years later there was a decrease in Guatemalan population with negative rates of about 37%; something similar occurs in Ocosingo. In the last two Chiapas' municipalities of Benemérito de las Américas and Palenque, proportions of Guatemalans are high, mainly for the former, and have increments of more than 100% over the period.

Table 2. Proportion of Guatemalan population and 2010-2015 growth rate
in the Mexican municipalities of MGCBR

Border states and municipalities	Total population born in Guatemala (%)		Growth 2010-2015 (%)		
	2010	2015	Total population	Born in Guatemala	
Chiapas	Suchiate	9.92	7.77	8.95	-14.69
	Frontera Hidalgo	2.61	3.3	17.47	48.75
	Metapa	1.95	3.41	16.78	104.17
	Tuxtla Chico	1.4	2	8.21	53.78
	Unión Juárez	1.28	1.28	8.86	8.84
	Cacahoatán	1.17	1.99	2.74	74.9
	Tapachula	2.3	2.44	8.95	15.36
	Motozintla	0.38	0.52	4.65	42.48
	Mazapa de Madero	0.9	1.13	-2.49	22.22
	Amatenango de la Frontera	0.84	1.44	1.74	74.8
	Frontera Comalapa	2.3	2.48	8.45	16.92
	La Trinitaria	1.96	2.87	5.13	53.83
	Las Margaritas		0.38	10.33	
	Maravilla Tenejapa	3.46	1.61	33.23	-37.8
	Marqués de Comillas	1.9	1.12	7.57	-36.63
	Benemérito de las Américas	2.01	3.24	28.5	107.28
	Tabasco	Ocosingo	0.09	0.05	11.07
Palenque		0.06	0.13	7.69	123.61
Tenosique		0.19	0.13	0.94	-28.18
Campeche	Balancán	0.03	0.14	7.44	400
	Calakmul	0.02	0.02	8.47	20
	Candelaria	0.02	0.46	8.82	2 437.5
	Total	1.28	1.44	8.43	21.71

Note: Data ordered from the Pacific to the Caribbean (Mexico).

Source: Own calculation based on special processing of microdata from Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010 and Encuesta Intercensal 2015 (Inegi, 2010, 2015).

In the state of Tabasco, it is noticed that the weight migration from Guatemalans who arrived in Tenosique via the pass El Ceibo from 2010 to 2015 has been losing dynamism, up to the point that in this municipality there is a decrease of -28.2% of the population born in Guatemala, whereas the neighboring municipality of Balancán records an increase in the proportion from an increase of 400% of Guatemalan population over the term, displaying a relocation of the migration dynamic that moves toward the north of MGCBR.

This phenomenon is also verified in Campeche's municipalities of Calakmul and Candelaria; the former, with very low population records, is a transit area toward the location of Guatemalans, whereas in the latter, proportions increase and a demographic growth of people born in Guatemala of more than 2 000% is noticed; that is, from 8 to 203 people (Tables 1 and 2).

Guatemalans' occupational position in MGCBR

In a listing with 466 occupation categories in Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010 for Mexico,³ there are at least five categories of nonformal activities that represent 4.7% of the total occupation, while such activities are linked to 23.65% of the Guatemalan labor force. In 2010, noticeable is the category “domestic workers”, an occupation that holds 13% of Guatemalan workers, being an activity carried out by between 97 and 99% women, Guatemalan, Mexican as well as Central American; these are followed by street sellers of miscellaneous articles and foods, which as a set account for 6.14% of the Guatemalans employed. While drivers of transport vehicles in bicycle, *taqueros* and fast-food preparers represent 2.5% of the population born in Guatemala (Table 3).

The second part of Table 3, which corresponds to information from Encuesta Intercensal 2015 for Mexico (Inegi, 2015), also presents the 18 most important occupation categories out of a listing of 163 categories of such survey, which hold 20.97% of employment in MGCBR in the 22 Mexican border municipalities and represent 42.21% of the occupations of Guatemalans. There are at least eight of them that may be identified as nonformal, reaching 2.11% of the total occupation and 11.7% of Guatemalan employment.

The main category of nonformal occupation in 2015 is still domestic workers, with the representation of 11.05% of Guatemalans regarding the total in the category; female participation prevails (more than 97%), not only Guatemalans, but also Mexican and Central Americans. It is followed by two categories: ambulant sellers of foods and others with Guatemalan participation of 7.97 and 3.36%, respectively, as well as that of porters with a proportion of 6.55%. The 18 categories of 2015 (Table 3) close with three nonformal occupation categories: drivers of bicycle and animal-driven transport, vehicle cleaners and guards, and laundry and dry-cleaning workers, with proportions of 6.95, 12.85, and 5.01% of Guatemalan workers, respectively.

³ The 18 main categories concentrate 61.08% of the Mexican municipal employment in MGCBR, and hold 78.04% of Guatemalans' employment (Inegi, 2010).

Table 3. Main occupations of Guatemalans in the Mexican municipalities of MGCBR

2010	Total	Born in Guatemala	(%)	2015	Total	Born in Guatemala	(%)
Total 466 occupation categories	444 662	9 031	2.03	Total 163 occupation categories	1 470 455	21 165	1.44
Workers in maize and bean cultivation	132 791	1 283	0.97	Workers in agricultural activities	147 698	3 088	2.09
Domestic workers	8 666	1 174	1.55	Domestic workers	10 832	1 197	11.05
Workers in coffee, cacao and tobacco cultivation	10 857	502	4.62	Workers in food and beverage preparation and service in establishments	16 246	747	4.60
Support personnel in agriculture	19 259	457	2.37	Food ambulant sellers	8 592	685	7.97
Masons, brick layers, and related	14 046	445	3.17	Builders and other workers in construction	15 115	477	3.16
Salespeople, dispatchers and clerks	14 764	341	2.31	Salesforces and telephone sellers	21 210	441	2.08
Workers in fruit growing	4 066	322	7.92	Supportive workers in agriculture	13 722	392	2.86
Workers in flower growing	7 945	305	3.84	Supportive workers in construction and plumbing	9 892	341	3.45
Ambulant sellers of miscellaneous articles (excluding foods)	4 689	283	6.04	Merchants in establishments	17 549	295	1.68
Other workers in agricultural activities not previously classified	11 704	272	2.32	Ambulant sellers (excluding food sales)	5 214	175	3.36
Food preparers and food street vendors	4 093	272	6.65	Porters	2 459	161	6.55
Merchants in establishments	19 830	242	1.22	Workers in the elaboration of foods, beverages and tobacco products	5 324	154	2.89
Waiters	1 949	230	11.80	Workers in livestock and breeding activities	6 968	149	2.14
Workers in activities related to agricultural produce	2 480	212	8.55	Supportive workers for industry	3 833	149	3.89
Drivers of vehicles of bicycle transport	1 755	212	12.08	Drivers of land transport with motor	18 933	142	0.75
<i>Taqueros</i> and fast-food preparers	1 678	195	11.62	Drivers of bicycle and animal-driven transport	1 655	115	6.95
Cooks	3 610	174	4.82	Vehicle washers and guards	887	114	12.85
Supportive workers in construction	7 417	127	1.71	Workers in laundry and dry cleaning	2 255	113	5.01

Source: Own calculation based on special processing of microdata from Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010 and Encuesta Intercensal 2015 (Inegi, 2010, 2015).

There is a persistence of nonformal occupations for Guatemalan population in MGCBR; in a 5-year term there were more nonformal categories among the main occupations in the region, creating a diversification of non-formality in which Guatemalan labor force found spaces to insert into.

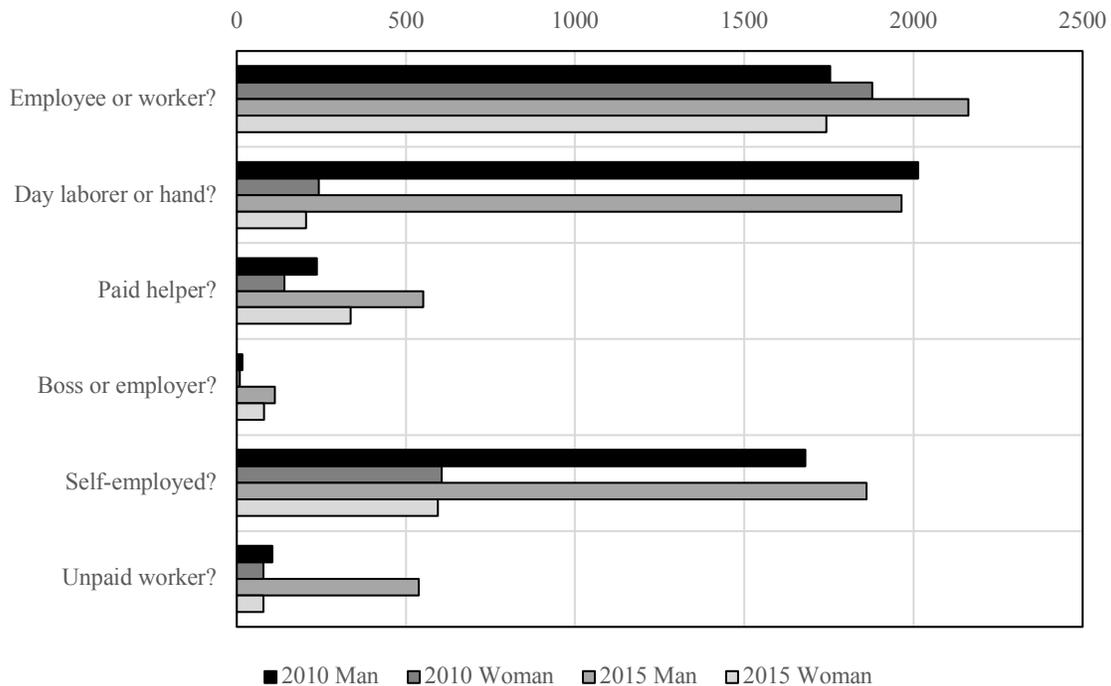
Table 4 shows that in MGCBR, 174 561 workers were self-employed in 2010, which means 40.2% of the total, and only 2 287 individuals, who accounted for 1.3%, were Guatemalans, while out of the 134 586 employees or manual workers (31% of the total), i.e., 3 633 people, 2.7%, were Guatemalan. Five years later, this relationship was the contrary, that is, the prevailing occupation was that of employee or manual worker, with 176 216 individuals, who accounted for 39.7% of the total workers, of which 3 905 people, i.e., 2.2%, were Guatemalan, while 116 007 self-employed workers, accounting for 26.1% of the total, of which 2 456 individuals, who represented 2.1%, were from Guatemala. This change from a labor market structure supported on self-employment to another based on employees or manual workers did not equally impact the Guatemalan labor force, for since 2010, the prevailing occupation position was already the latter. However, it is distinguishable that within five years their relative weight reduced 3.2% age points, going from 41.4 to 38.2%.

Table 4. Occupational position of Guatemalans and rest of laborers in MGCBR, 2010 and 2015

Occupation position and year	Guatemalan			Rest			Total			
	Man	Woman	Total	Man	Woman	Total	Man	Woman	Total	
Total	2010	5 807	2 958	8 765	317 646	107 018	424 664	323 453	109 976	433 429
	2015	7 192	3 034	10 226	328 835	103 929	432 764	336 027	106 963	442 990
Employee or worker?	2010	1 754	1 879	3 633	82 103	48 850	130 953	83 857	50 729	134 586
	2015	2 163	1 742	3 905	110 462	61 849	172 311	112 625	63 591	176 216
Day laborer or hand?	2010	2 014	243	2 257	46 141	2 562	48 703	48 155	2 805	50 960
	2015	1 964	204	2 168	42 842	1 271	44 113	44 806	1 475	46 281
Paid helper?	2010	236	141	377	11 440	3 517	14 957	11 676	3 658	15 334
	2015	552	336	888	13 217	4 892	18 109	13 769	5 228	18 997
Boss or employer?	2010	16	10	26	5 413	1 558	6 971	5 429	1568	6 997
	2015	112	80	192	7 118	3 129	10 247	7 230	3 209	10 439
Self-employed?	2010	1 681	606	2 287	137 539	34 735	172 274	139 220	35 341	174 561
	2015	1 862	594	2 456	85 756	27 795	113 551	87 618	28 389	116 007
Unpaid worker?	2010	106	79	185	35 010	15 796	50 806	35 116	15 875	50 991
	2015	539	78	617	69 440	4 993	74 433	69 979	5 071	75 050

Source: Own calculation based on special processing of microdata from Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010 and Encuesta Intercensal 2015 (Inegi, 2010, 2015).

Graph 2. Guatemalans employed in MGCBR, according to occupation position and sex, 2010 and 2015



Source: Own calculation based on special processing of microdata from Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010 and Encuesta Intercensal 2015 (Inegi, 2010, 2015).

Even i Table 4 shows that in 2010, there was a concentration of men in self-employment, while women in employees or manual workers, by 2015, male and female employment concentrate in this last among the entire population.

Graph 2 shows the participation of Guatemalan labor force according to sex and occupation position in both years, verifying that both men and women are mainly employees and manual workers, though male labor force prevails for day laborers or hands, also self-employment remains above women's participation.

Social benefits for Guatemalans at the municipalities bordering Guatemala

High participation in low-productivity activities is accompanied by scant entitlement to social benefits. In Table 5, it is noticed that few are the cases of Guatemalans who receive all the labor benefits established by the law. Their diversity is decisively important in the Mexican municipalities of MGCBR; in 2010, it is observed that the proportion of Guatemalans who had paid vacations was 25.42%, whereas for the rest (that is, Mexicans and other foreigners) such proportion was 38.06%.

In other sort of benefits, i.e., year-end bonus and medical services, proportions were lower, being 9.33 and 11.12% of Guatemalans, respectively; while the rest of the labor force in MGCBR entitled to these benefits was 33.91 and 30.50%, respectively. It may be thought that such phenomenon is exclusive for the Guatemalan population, nevertheless in Table 5, we can compare the figures for the Guatemalan population and the rest (Mexicans and other foreigners) who received social benefits.

Table 5. Social benefits for Guatemalan workers and the rest of the population in MGCBR, 2010 and 2015

Benefits	2010			2015		
	Guatemalan	Rest	Total	Guatemalan	Rest	Total
Year-end bonus	1 559	73 110	74 669	1 443	97 297	98 740
Paid vacation	681	57939	58 620	589	75 232	75 821
Medical service	567	64 480	65 047	567	79 005	79 572
Profit sharing	102	40 266	40 368	137	35934	36 071
SAR or Afore (retirement savings)	100	41 207	41 307	175	55 022	55 197
No social benefits	6 022	152409	158 431	6 786	206975	213 761
Total	8765	424 664	433 429	10 226	432 764	442 990

Source: Own calculation based on special processing of microdata from Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010 and Encuesta Intercensal 2015 (Inegi, 2010, 2015).

For 2010, it was registered that 6 022 Guatemalans did not receive any sort of social benefits, which accounted for 68.71% of the Guatemalan labor force in the Mexican municipalities of MGCBR. This proportion would grow five years later affecting 6 786 Guatemalans, increasing 12.68% regarding 2010, and accounting for 66.36% of the employed Guatemalans.

Despite the increase concentrated in nominal terms more than relative values, the phenomenon of reduction and loss of social benefits for the labor force in MGCBR seems to have intensified and generalized much more among non-Guatemalan population (Mexicans and other foreigners). In 2010, the employed population which had no benefits whatsoever was 152 409 people, who accounted for 35.89% of the total of non-Guatemalan employed. In 2015, the population with no benefits would reach 206 975 individuals, that is to say, there was an increase of 35.8% regarding 2010, they accounted for 47.83% of the non-Guatemalan employed population in the Mexican municipalities of MGCBR.

Production Activities of the Establishments Where Guatemalans in MGCBR Work

Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010 and Encuesta Intercensal 2015 (Inegi, 2010, 2015) show that the main activity of production units into which Guatemalan labor force inserted

was agriculture, with an estimated participation of 3 594 individuals born in Guatemala out of a total of 197 906 people in this activity, which accounted for 1.82% of the labor force in such activity and concentrating 39.8% of Guatemalan employment (Table 6). In 2015, agriculture was still the main activity for Guatemalan population, and in general the labor force in MGCBR. Although the total employed population in the sector would reduce to 162 348 people, the Guatemalan labor force increased to 3 706 individuals, which meant a participation of 2.28%; however, regarding the total of Guatemalans, it would be reduced to 35.52%. Some productive activities that may be catalogued as nonformal are at the top of the listing such as the second entry that in the two years was households with domestic employees, in which Guatemalans had a participation of 11.2% in 2010, which reduced to 8.87% in 2015 (Table 6).

Domestic service activity changed from 14.68% of the Guatemalan labor force in 2010 to 12.19% in 2015. Other nonformal production activities of production units in which there is important participation of Guatemalans are preparation of foods, beverages, and retail sale of groceries, foods, beverages, ice and tobacco, which increased their participation going from 8.43 and 3.92% of Guatemalan employment in 2010 to 8.72 and 3.47% in 2015, respectively. In like manner, there is high participation in ambulant trade activities such as selling groceries, foods, beverages, ice and tobacco with participation of Guatemalan labor force of more than 9% in both years, as well as ambulant sales of tools and hardware, adding to textile goods, fashion jewelry, clothing accessories, and footwear as new expressions and new non-formality niches for Guatemalans with participation of almost 64% in 2015 for the first entry (see Table 6).

Also noticeable are retail sale activities, mainly of textile goods, fashion jewelry, clothing accessories, and footwear, stationary, leisure and other personal use articles. From ambulant sale activities comes an establishing stage with the sale of internet services, printed catalogues, cable TV and similar, in which the worker does not walk the streets, but occupies parts of public spaces. However, this sort of occupation is temporary, unlike retail employments such as stores and fast food restaurants.

Table 6. Main activities of Guatemalans in municipalities in MGCBR

2010	Total	Born in Guatemala	(%)	2015	Total	Born in Guatemala	(%)
Total	444 662	9 031	2.03	Total	449 748	10 434	2.32
Agriculture	197 906	3 594	1.82	Agriculture	162 348	3 706	2.28
Household with domestic employees	11 837	1 326	11.20	Household with domestic employees	14 339	1 272	8.87
Services of food and beverage preparation	15 174	761	5.02	Services of food and beverage preparation	18 798	910	4.84
Retail sale of groceries, foods, beverages ice, and tobacco	20386	354	1.74	House construction	13 777	456	3.31
Breeding and harnessing of animals	10 879	326	3.00	Ambulant sales of groceries, drinks, ice, and tobacco	4 143	408	9.85
House construction	13 307	304	2.28	Retail sale of groceries, foods, beverages ice, and tobacco	20 803	362	1.74
Retail sale of fabrics, fashion jewelry, accessories, footwear	6 917	267	3.86	Services of preparation of foods and beverages by workers in ambulant units	4 260	303	7.11
Land passenger transport, except train	12 702	232	1.83	Food industry	7 657	262	3.42
Ambulant sale of groceries, drinks, ice, and tobacco	1 744	163	9.35	Services of automobile and truck repairation	6 671	260	3.90
Services of preparation of foods and beverages by workers in ambulant units	2 215	159	7.18	Masonry, domestic water and electricity works	8 703	238	2.73
Services of automobile and truck repairation	6 121	150	2.45	Breeding and harnessing of animals	9 491	202	2.13
Masonry, domestic water and electricity works	7 038	127	1.80	Land passenger transport, except train	14 686	202	1.38
Food industry	7 914	75	0.95	Wholesale of groceries, foods and beverages, ice, and tobacco	4 897	195	3.98
Insufficiently specified descriptions of the 23 rd sector activity subsector, construction	2 142	73	3.41	Retail of fabrics, fashion jewelry, accessories, footwear	5 786	193	3.34
Wholesale of groceries, foods and beverages, ice, and tobacco	2 725	64	2.35	Personal services	3 289	134	4.07
Construction of civil engineering works	2 491	62	2.49	Furniture, mattress, and blind fabrication	3 092	95	3.07
Cleaning, installation and green areas maintenance services	2 167	61	2.81	Wholesale of agricultural, forestry, industry and waste-treatment base materials	3 766	93	2.47

Source: Own calculation based on special processing of microdata from Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010 and Encuesta Intercensal 2015 (Inegi, 2010, 2015).

To these activities also add Guatemalans who work in automobile and truck repairing and maintenance services, masonry, domestic water systems, electricity works and outdoor works and building and residential construction. Out of all these activities, 25 account for more than 98% of the Guatemalan labor force which, subtracting agriculture, reaches 58.68% in 2010 and 62.65% in 2015, showing the relevance of nonformal production activities as a space of Guatemalans in MGCBR.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The estimations of Guatemalan population incorporated into MGCBR between 2010 and 2015 show the heterogeneity of human settlements in the entire border strip, with the diversity of economic and social development. Being a widely diverse region, the high proportion of large-size localities is noticed, which range from intermediate cities with 100 000 to 300 000 inhabitants such as Tapachula, Las Margaritas, and Ocosingo in Chiapas, to localities in small municipalities such as Metapa, Mazapa de Madero, Maravilla de Tenejapa, and Marqués de Comillas, also in Chiapas, with fewer than 10 000 inhabitants. Such populations have a great dynamism of demographic mobility, as well as goods and natural resources which evince the insertion of Guatemalan migration flows into MGCBR.

The attraction of such settlements for the Guatemalan population who travels and lives in those localities is high and is linked to social historic processes of security and violence they live in their places of origin. From these processes, it is recognized the increase in the arrival of Guatemalan population to municipalities such as Frontera Hidalgo and Metapa, as well as Las Margaritas, Maravilla Tenejapa, and Benemérito de las Américas, whose proportions surpass two digits of demographic growth in five years.

The structure of the settlements where Guatemalan population lives is highly precarious for they mainly choose small cities and localities with little diversity of activities, always prevailing those of the agricultural sector, together with construction industry occupations. Also, there is high tertiarization of the economy based on trade and services, whose formalization is low and nourishes the nonformal production structure in such places.

In this scenario, the arrival of Guatemalan population in MGCBR enables the broadening of non-formality that continually reproduces heavy exploitation and precariousness in the municipalities comprised in the area on the Mexican side. This is explained by the structural asymmetries the states in question have, which makes the conditions into which they insert preferable over those they can access in their places of origin.

Domestic workers, ambulant sellers, preparers of fast food, drivers of bicycle and animal-driven transport, waste and recyclable material pickers are the main nonformal occupations for the Guatemalan labor force. Despite that in the area there is high participation of self-employment, Guatemalans arrive to be employees or manual workers, though with very low labor benefits and poorly paid, they also work as hands or day laborers under very precarious labor conditions, which make them part of the population

mass that can be exploited by local entrepreneurs, even by Guatemalans who have been living in these places for longer.

Adding to low wages, labor conditions as regards social benefits decreed by law the Guatemalan population receives are much lower than for the rest of the population (Mexicans and other foreigners). If among Mexicans and other aliens the absence of benefits reaches a third of the labor force, among Guatemalans this proportion accounts for more than two thirds, moreover if there are benefits they only receive year-end bonus.

According to recent studies, such characteristics are not questioned and do not seem to generate visible conflicts for they are very naturalized for employees and employers, and also official agencies in Mexico and Guatemala (Rivera Farfán & Wilson González, 2020).

This labor precariousness is also verified from the production activities of the establishments into which Guatemalans insert in MGCBR.⁴ Besides agriculture, it was found that households with domestic employees, services of food and beverage preparation, residential construction, retail and ambulant sales of groceries, foods, beverages and tobacco are the establishments where this labor force hires.

The nonformal structure in MGCBR that stimulates the flow of people, goods and natural resources is verified by the establishment of businesses such as fast food restaurants which sell alcoholic drinks. The insertion of Guatemalan population into such places matches the precariousness they have to resort to for subsistence, in which they take heavily exploited job posts with high physical exposure that compromises their health, in the face of the poor production conditions offered in the strip both countries share.

The results seem to evince an extension of the Kaldor-Verdoorn law as regards the precarious production chain and the social fabric of family and social networks within a context of high poverty and low technologic composition. It is a production structure whose differences between Mexico and Guatemala remind of the initial settlements at the northern border before the arrival of maquiladoras, with asymmetries and production heterogeneity on the territory, where Mexican precariousness jostled at the border of the United States, inserting into production that intensively used unskilled labor force.

Translation: Luis Cejudo-Espinosa.

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⁴ The agricultural sector is its par excellence natural niche and also because of its historical linkage in the places of origin.

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