

## **The Intersections of Transnational and Internal Indigenous Migration: Gender, Kinship, and Care**

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The topic of international migration is controversial and widely discussed across the world. Numerous scholars have studied the lives of migrants and their families, as well as the motivations behind migration. In the context of Mexico-United States relations, migration has also come to be one of the main issues discussed by politics and the general public. Mexican migration to the US has been mostly discussed in relation to labor supply and to economic disparities between the two countries. However, focusing exclusively on international migration has obscured the relationship between internal and international migrations. In the particular case of Mexico this is particularly significant in terms of male and female migrants. In addition, migrants' trajectories are not only shaped by economic factors but also by emotional and affective factors. In my dissertation I explore the ways in which gender, family, and care relationships not only connect internal and international migration but shape migratory trajectories. In my dissertation I study how men and women migrate differently in the town of Zegache, Oaxaca. I argue that internal and international migrations are connected through gender, kinship, and care relationships.

Zegache is located in the Central Valleys of Oaxaca, in southern Mexico. The state of Oaxaca, which is home to at least sixteen indigenous ethnolinguistic groups, is the Mexican state with highest ethnic diversity, and it is also one of the poorest states in Mexico (along with Guerrero and Chiapas). The economy of Zegache could be described as "mixed" because it combines subsistence agriculture and remittances sent from other parts of Mexico and from the United States (especially Oregon and California). Numerous scholars have analyzed the change in migration movements that followed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and that significantly increased transnational migration from agricultural communities like Zegache; however, the histories of male and female migrants from Zegache is not exhausted by looking at transnational migration. Transnational migration, at least in the case of Zegache, has to be studied in relation to internal migratory movements that are not often analyzed in connection to transnational migration. Exploring this connection between transnational and internal migrations forefronts gender roles and how they influence migratory movements.

My research consisted of ethnographic participant-observation and interviews with people from Zegache in Oaxaca, Mexico City, and in Oregon. In Zegache, it was not

uncommon to find families who simultaneously had male relatives living in Oregon and female relatives living in Mexico City. This divergence in migration trajectories has to be understood in relation to kinship and care roles that see women's main responsibilities as care providers, while men are seen as "breadwinners". Therefore, women's migration to Mexico City is thought of as a temporal solution (since women are expected to return to take care of their parents, or to marry) and as a spatial solution (since moving back and forth Mexico City is less time consuming, less risky, and less dangerous than moving to the US) to the economic pressures faced by families in Zegache. Women's migration to Mexico City started since the 1950's, during the so-called "Mexican Miracle" that saw industrialization and urbanization as a solution to Mexico's economic problems. Women who migrated to Mexico City were employed as domestic employees, often serving middle-class *mestizo* families in city. On the other hand, men have migrated to the US since the *Bracero* program. However, international migration did not become a popular choice for men from Zegache until the 1990s. Most men from Zegache participate in the service industry (in California), and in seasonal agricultural work (in Oregon and Washington).

The Sylff award allowed me to conduct ethnographic research in Zegache and in Mexico City for eight months (2014-2015). During this time I interviewed migrants and non-migrants from Zegache who lived in Oaxaca and in Mexico City. I also conducted participant observation with families from Zegache. The experience of being part of a global community of scholars has also made me consider how my research can be relevant beyond the Mexico-US context, especially how family and emotional bonds shape gender and migrations across the globe.