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Title: El efecto del capital económico, social y humano en el proceso de tránsito que realizan los migrantes guatemaltecos, en busca del sueño americano
Issue Date: 2012-11-29
The effect of the economic, social and human capital in the transit process of the Guatemalan migrants, looking for the American Dream by Ma. de Jesús Ávila Sánchez.

This thesis analyses the process in which Guatemalan migrants transit through Mexico towards the United States, emphasizing the role played by the financial, human and social capital, and taking into account the differences in gender and ethnicity.

The specific objectives are i) to examine the social demographic profiles and trends of the migrants; ii) to estimate their numeric dimension; iii) to explore the impact of the policy of migration control applied by the Mexican government; iv) to estimate the effect of the vulnerability and poverty levels with respect to the probability of overcoming the transit stage; v) to know who are more exposed to face risks and under what circumstances; vi) to investigate human rights violations and violence experienced by migrants; vii) to analyze the differences in the possession and use of the financial, human and social capital that depend on gender and ethnicity.

This study derives from an analytic framework called dynamic approach to transit migration that includes restrictive immigration policies and the barriers associated with migration. It includes a set of transit stages that make up the migration process, and also takes into account various options for completing the process, considering that not all migrants who intend to enter a desired country are successful at the first attempt, so they try to enter several times, which highlights the dynamic nature of the transit within the migration process.

This is not only an issue of characterization, but it also raises important questions about the applicability of traditional migration theories and concepts. The theoretical foundation is based on the principles of three disciplines: Economics, Sociology and Politics, to understand why and how Guatemalans transit migration takes place.

A methodological triangulation was performed, using quantitative data from the microdata obtained in the Encuesta sobre Migración en Frontera Guatemala-México (EMIF Sur) and the American Community Survey (ACS), among others; as well as qualitative data from interviewed migrants who passed through Mexico.

The Guatemalan transit migration process is discussed in two stages: Mexico and the United States, particularly the migrants who have returned against their will, that is, the immigration authorities from Mexico or the United States deported them back to Guatemala, during 2004 – 2010 from a demographic perspective.

With these two stages it is possible to analyze the effect on the risks, vulnerabilities and economic, social and human capital, possessed and used by the migrants in the probability of overcoming each of the stages included in the Guatemalan migrant transit process.

The main findings show that the flow of Guatemalan migrants that direct towards the two main migratory circuits, Mexico and the United States, follows a trend of steady growth until 2010 despite of the implementation of a restrictive control migration policy in both countries, as well as the increasing risks faced by migrants during the transit through Mexico and the crossing of the United States border. Therefore, it seems that the number of Guatemalan migrants who decide to seek a better life in other countries is not decreasing.
There are differences in the dynamics of these two migratory circuits. The circuit having as destination Mexico is characterized by a long history and great diversity of migratory flows. The circuit to the United States is distinguished by its recent formation and because it is a migratory flow predominantly permanent in nature, especially in the last few years in which there is a breaking of the circularity of temporary migrants resulting from the difficulties of entering the United States, which has led to a continuous descent in the number of Guatemalans who live in the United States registered for the first time in 30 years, according to the ACS data.

It is possible to estimate the numeric dimension of the Guatemalan migrants in transit through Mexico with the intention to enter the United States, from the different migratory flows detected by the EMIF Sur, assuming that the migrants in transit try to mix with other migratory fluxes, as a strategy to evade controls and go unnoticed. The possible numeric magnitude of the migrants in transit through Mexico was about 118,317 and 174,663 annual movements during 2004-2010, represented by the Guatemalan migrants that used the Mexican territory to get to the United States, the desired destiny. This estimate is one of the first approximations to the numeric dimension on the migrants in transit, as there have been made few exercises of this kind in Mexico.

The social and economic conditions that generate multidimensional vulnerability (moderate or extreme) in the migration transit show an unclear relation with the probability to overcome the transit stage through Mexico and enter into the United States. The results of parity propensity score method (Propensity Score Matching), confirm that on one hand the hypothesis is proven that suggests that transit migrants through the United States are less multidimensional vulnerable than the migrants who only pass through Mexico, but on the other hand it stands out that in the flow of migrants who traveled through the United States a high quantity of migrants were in a situation of extreme vulnerability. That is, in both transit stages – in Mexico as well as in the United States – the migrant flows are heterogeneous in terms of their social vulnerability situation and incomes.

The context of vulnerability in which the transit route through Mexico and the crossing of the border with the United States takes place, has a differentiated impact on the risks that migrants face in each stage of transit, depending on gender and ethnicity, including the maximum risk: death. Although Guatemalan migrants knew beforehand the potential risks that they had assumed during the transit through Mexico, they decided to confront them because they show a high threshold of risk acceptance or aspiration to reach the United States, which contributes to the failure of the dissuasive migration policies of Mexico and the United States.

The human rights of the Guatemalan migrants in transit through Mexico are vulnerable to different forms of violation, by agents that perpetrate the diverse types of violence that the migrants face during their transit – the consequences depend also on gender and ethnicity. Due to this situation the Mexican government must assume its responsibility and act promptly to protect, respect and safeguard the rights of migrants in transit through its territory, sanctioning abuses, as well as compensating the damage to victims and eliminating any action that promotes impunity and corruption of the authorities in charge.

There are differences in the financial, human and social capital that migrants possess and use to overcome each of the transit stages - this applies to people in general (men, women, indigenous peoples) -, as well as in the effect that each of these capitals has in the probability to overcome the transit stage through Mexico and enter the United States. While financial and
social capital showed a decisive effect on the probability of a migrant overcoming obstacles from the transit through Mexico stage, the human capital has a negative effect on the probability to enter the United States, contrary to what was expected. It is concluded that the possession and use of financial and social capital contributes to explain why some Guatemalan migrants are unable to achieve their goals and their great desire to emigrate is frustrated.