

THE ACCOMPANYING PROCESS OF UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRATION BY TRANSIT

—

Jorge Antonio Morales Cardiel
jorgemcardiel@gmail.com

UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE ZACATECAS (UAZ)



— *Abstract*—

Mexico in the early decades of this century is going through a new migratory paradigm; the most outstanding is the change in relation to their migratory patterns, from being the traditional country of expulsion to become a country of transit of undocumented migrations. Documentation on the accompaniment process towards immigrant persons will be carried out within a network of civil society organizations; secular and confessional, installed on the route of undocumented immigration, that have been proposed to promote assistance in joint strategies to address violations of the human rights of these migrants. One of the keys of the accompaniment is to attenuate the huge emptiness of power on the part of governmental institutions through the practice of humanitarian service. The accompaniment throws increasingly clear signs that is starting to prevail a community perspective of certain groups of civil society and faith-based volunteer groups towards the undocumented immigrant in transit, who through their support strategies are in the process of transforming its own role making it more active.

Keywords

Accompanying; undocumented immigration; transit countries; humans rights; migration policies; empowerment.

Mexico in the first decades of this century undergoes a change in relation to their migration patterns; the most outstanding thing is to go from being the traditional expulsion country to becoming a transit country for undocumented migrations. Until now, human rights seem to fall short of what was expected when their treatment is raised to these legal areas, however for governments like Mexico's is easier to support them than its application. However, in the last decade Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), secular and confessional, have emerged with different foundations and are playing a more active role in the treatment of unauthorized immigration, assuming more pluralistic and flexible views of the migratory reality, accompanying the undocumented immigrant.

The increase of immigrants in an irregular situation demonstrates the inability in the public policies management towards undocumented immigration. It also calls into question the recognition by the Mexican government of having signed international treaties that recognize the human rights of immigrants. In the same way, the classic government hard line falters in terms of the factual policy in the face of the arrival of more immigrants in an irregular situation, above all it denotes the lack of territorial governance existence on the migratory route.

The former as a starting point towards the accompaniment process of undocumented immigration; a process that has been developing by Non-Governmental Organizations in favor of human rights, whether confessional or secular in the last decade. Same that has its origin in a predictable aspect: the failure of public policies towards the migration of border control, which led the government authorities to have focused only on those aspects that regulate the volume and origin of migrant flows.

The process of accompaniment and empowerment on the part of these new actors of the civil, confessional or secular society implies the veracity and honesty of the preponderant role of public institutions in the task of defending the Human Rights of immigrants without documents. It highlights, above all, a real lack of political and social actions in the face of a humanitarian crisis such as that which occurs in these transit countries, which is not explained in the case of Mexico due to the absence of laws or regulations signed in favor of Human Rights, but because of lack of will, systemic corruption and authoritarianism.

Research objectives

Know the factors that enable or hinder the accompaniment process, the models and strategies of empowerment towards the undocumented immigrant, the actions of awareness towards the local community, the degree of solution and orientation to the problems of violation of the human rights presented by the undocumented immigrant and the effects of this accompaniment on the migratory project.

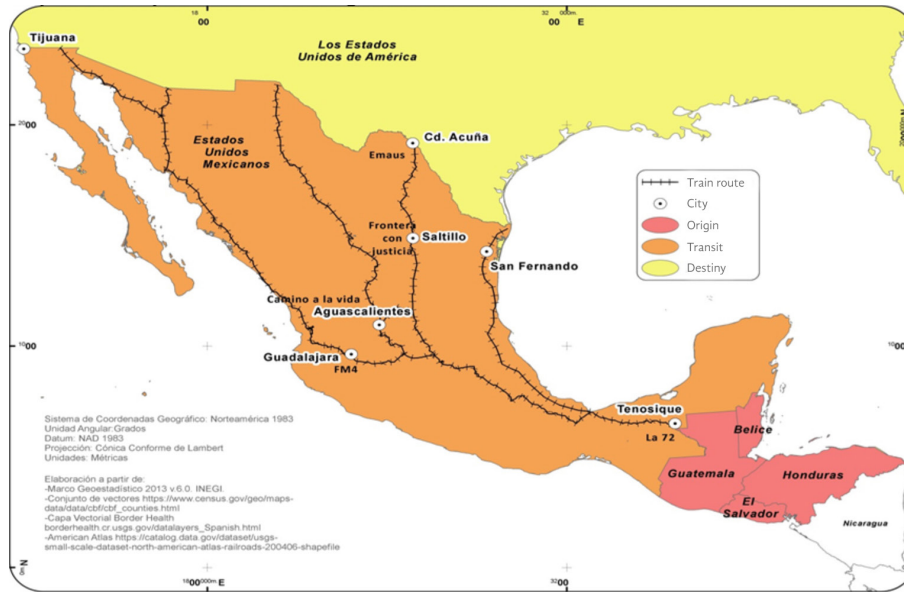
Methodology

The documentation on the process of accompaniment towards immigrants, in a first stage through Mexico, is intended to be carried out within a network of civil organizations; confessional, secular or mixed, installed along the route of undocumented immigration that have proposed to promote assistance strategies together to address the recurrent violations of the human rights of these migrants.

The example aims to strategically cover the most important points of the migratory route, emphasizing the borders of the country, and other points that have a considerable progress in terms of accompaniment. At the moment, there are 62 organizations throughout the Mexican territory that provide some type of service or assistance to the Central American immigrant and the deportee for the sake of accompaniment; dining rooms, shelters and medical assistance points; some with a strong experience and territorial roots, some with great disadvantages to continue working, but can sustain themselves and others with international character that have agreements in Mexico.

The organizations that for the time being are part of the sample and of the field work are; 1) Hostel La 72, Tenosique. Tabasco, 2) Camino a la vida, Aguascalientes, 3) Frontera con Justicia A.C, Casa del Migrante de Saltillo, Coahuila, 4) Casa Emaus, Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, 5) Justicia en el Camino A.C FM4, Guadalajara, Jalisco. Which are shown below on map 1.

Map 1. Migrant accompaniment



Within fieldwork an important support is the use of tools of anthropology such as participant observation, using the strategy of volunteers in the aforementioned migrant houses, to document common practices of the accompaniment process that allow us to approach the general objective of the research cited above.

In this research, the qualitative approach is mostly used, using the dependent variable as the psychosocial and legal accompaniment, the independent variables such as the immigrant's nationality, gender and age. In all, it includes the application of a series of semi-structured interviews to the different actors involved: the first of them aimed at undocumented and deported immigrants, the second aimed at covering the sample of representatives and volunteers of non-governmental organizations, and a third one with key members of civil society surrounding these immigrant care institutions.

THE CONCEPT OF ACCOMPANIMENT IN UNDOCUMENTED MIGRATIONS

A specific treatment of the term is found in the definition of the Royal Spanish Academy, although these definitions stand out for being subjective and rigorous, however, they represent an adequate precedent to analyze the meaning of a word. In the case of *accompaniment*, the RAE states that it is relative to the action or effect of accompanying or people accompanying someone, -nothing new really- another more profound and adequate mention is the one which indicates that it refers to a support or harmonic help. This support or harmonious assistance in the process of accompanying the most

vulnerable groups of people, such as undocumented immigrants, is nothing more than a service of humanitarian assistance and psychosocial and/or legal empowerment. Of special scope that prioritizes the accompaniment on a personal level. As suggested by the practice of humanitarian service, accompaniment is in itself a set of attitudes, principles and values congruent with the immigrant's reality, with hospitality and solidarity being the most prominent.

However, the institutions that provide these accompaniment services; voluntary non-governmental organizations, which come from civil society or religious organizations that are part of various religious groups, try to move beyond the mere provision of assistance services, since in most cases they offer a much-needed company. In general, focusing on the exercise of defense of human rights, for the Church, as pointed out by Pontin (1992), is more in keeping with the doctrines based on faith that prioritize charity over the unprotected. In sum all these actors try to focus their accompaniment process on the needs and concerns of the individual, making them regain dignity and hope for the future, Hanson *et al* (2014).

One of the fundamental keys of the accompaniment towards the undocumented immigrant is to attenuate the enormous power vacuum on the part of the governmental institutions on the territory. Hanson *et al* (2008), points out that an important key for the accompaniment process is truly substantial, is that the groups in charge of implementing it must have strong local bonds with the host communities, that is, to belong to the territory as local key actors, which will provide them with the necessary values of hospitality and solidarity.

Ventura (2008), is another author who mentions that facing accompaniment supposes, first; to understand the interaction between the parties, perceiving the relationship between the actors involved, respecting diversity and at the same time unity, and then when the power to take charge of specific problems becomes more powerful, one can approach the repercussions of the main problems. The International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2014) recommends taking into account certain specific characteristics such as gender perspectives or the life course of ethnic groups, to define the form of accompaniment and avoid generalizations in the understanding of cases.

Enhancing the forms of commitment represented by the accompaniment, means enhancing the ability to move forward, to have the courage to defend what is considered most important; including all these aspects in the accompaniment process means recovering the most fundamental emotional

aspects of life. In short, as Ventura (2008) refers, accompanying is also advising, but this could not be done without being supportive on the road, without empowering the immigrant to return control over their destiny and the dignity taken away during the migratory transit.

CASA DEL MIGRANTE DE SALTILLO, THINKING IN A PSYCHOSOCIAL AND CONFSSIONAL KEY

The organizations that are in this humanitarian accompaniment scenario are familiarized in different degrees with the local environment where the displacement of unauthorized immigrants takes place. They know well the people and the needs of the communities where they are installed to generate an adequate perspective that leads to a set of best practices in terms of the governance of migration. But above all, they must have an important and necessary empirical base on the ground. In sum this is what was analyzed during the field experience in the shelters of northern Mexico during the years 2015 and 2016 in the city of Saltillo and Ciudad Acuña.

La Casa del Migrante de Saltillo, "Frontier with Justice AC", received in the period from September 2014 to September 2015, a total of 3,390 immigrants, an average of 209 people per month, around 7 people at average per day. Of the total number of people who have arrived at the shelter in that last year, 2,910 are men and 180 are women, minors number 300. It is striking that the number of minors entering the shelter exceeds that of the women.

Before the tragic war against drug trafficking began in 2007 throughout the country, where a wave of violence against undocumented immigrants would be unleashed, La Casa del Migrante de Saltillo received an average of 300 immigrants from Central America per week. The figure since then has oscillated too much to be regularized at present in a figure that is around 200 people per month.

A singularity of La Casa del Migrante de Saltillo, which results in positive aspects of the accompaniment, is that it walks hand in hand without any problem both in its internal and external functioning with a mixed approach, that is, it has managed to consolidate as much as a confessional organization based on faith and as a lay nonprofit organization. The project financed by the Canada Fund, for example, was applied by the representatives of the shelter in its secular part, which is subscribed under the treatment of the psychosocial approach and the social networks that the hostel has worked with the local society to build the "Social armoring," which father Pedro Pantoja argues, has been for religious work based on faith.

The development of the psychosocial approach practiced in La Casa del Migrante de Saltillo has its origin and foundation in the conceptual elements of other approaches that have been applied in other Latin American societies, especially in Colombia; implemented due to the effects of armed conflicts that have permeated all dimensions of the human and affected the emotional, cognitive and behavioral categories. As well as for the violence exerted against the population that affects human dignity and limits people's life project (IOM, 2014).

In order to understand the application and results of the psychosocial approach, it is necessary to listen to the daily testimonies of those living within la Casa del Migrante, for example, based on the 19 interviews with undocumented immigrants carried out in the months of September and October of 2015; about 90 percent of immigrants who arrive at the shelter carry a strong emotional charge due to violent events that occurred during their transit through Mexico; ranging from assaults with violence, stoning, humiliation, extortion, kidnapping, sexual outrage, mutilation, torture and forced labor. Once the immigrants have lodged and manifest a situation like the previous ones, they are channeled through the moments (arrival, stay and departure) in which the internal work is organized.

A lot has to do with the application of this psychosocial methodology for the shelter if the immigrants stay for more than five days, since in the face of the reluctance of some it is pointless to apply this approach. After this time a new valuation appears, changing the immigrants' primary plan, for example; the new itinerary to where they are going once they leave the shelter, their longer stay in Mexico than originally thought, in some cases becoming permanent or even if they decide to return to their country of origin, some of them by assisted return¹ by turning themselves to the immigration authorities.

Derived from all the previous arguments related to the inner workings of the shelter, we can point out for this first part what is being attempted in La Casa del Migrante de Saltillo is the transformation of this space into a place of coexistence and encounter, and second, that the norms of coexistence

1 Immigrants in an irregular situation in Mexico can opt for assisted return, which does not imply any type of sanction. It is recognized by the Migration Act of 2011; which defines this action as: "the procedure by which the National Institute of Migration (INM) makes it valid to leave the national territory to a foreigner, referring it to their country of origin or habitual residence (Art, 3, LM).

and solidary collaboration based on the psychosocial approach, with their respective compliance, serve as the main internal protection mechanism. Coupled with the "social shielding" of the community, which as noted by Catholic father Pedro Pantoja (2013), it is thanks to local popular movements as new strategic groups that lead in the first instance to a "social subjectivity", that is, a qualitative shock force that creates places of refuge where violence and criminalization of the immigrant can be expelled without the intervention of the security forces.

The work aimed at social awareness of the community is of vital importance. Its relationship with territorial governance² towards undocumented migration as a vulnerable group in transit places is an aspect that leads us to the hypothetical understanding of who, at the beginning, hinders the opening and functioning of shelters and immigrant homes, can become at the end in the same ones that make possible its permanence and maintenance, until arriving at the so-called social shield, we speak of the local population that lives in the surroundings of the shelters.

To achieve this popular mobilization through work based on faith and the psychosocial approach is to situate the work of defense towards the undocumented immigrant with the qualitative shock force cited by Father Pedro Pantoja, before the governmental authorities on the one hand and before organized crime on the other, the latter dedicated to the illicit trafficking of immigrants as an alternative since the beginning of the war against drug trafficking. It is at the same time, as Father Pantoja pointed out; form a strategic group of citizen forces to create regions of refuge and try to expel social violence, in order to generate permanent solidarity and respect for minorities without involving the security forces.

For this, it is vital to publicize the work that is done within the shelter and that the different social strata that make up the community, feel intimate and welcome. In short, the active participation of society in the defense of the human rights of immigrants is required, but this could not happen without the social cohesion, which is very necessary in social participation.

2 The conceptual approach of governance with a territorial vision that this research proposes it's found an approach in Farinos (2008), when it mentions that it is a practice-process of organization of multiple relationships that characterize the interactions between diverse actors and interests with a strong presence in the territory. He points out that the result of this organization is the creation of a shared territorial vision, based on the valorization of territorial capital.

Regarding the voluntary decision of the immigrant once he has received the accompaniment, whatever the way in which the transit became a source or destination, it is not a simple situation, these people return with mixed feelings; on the one hand, there is the joy of returning home to be reunited with their family after months of absence and uncertainty, to feel free again, far from arrests, extortion and legal proceedings, as well as police treatment during deportation. But on the other hand it is loaded with a strong discouragement and demotivation, for not having achieved what had been proposed at the beginning, the longed for American dream that ended up becoming a Mexican nightmare.

WHEN TRANSIT BECOMES ORIGIN AND DESTINATION

There are several causes within the accompaniment of undocumented migrations that cause in a certain time that the transit becomes a source and destination. We have pointed out several ties of "belonging" to the place, for example, the social networks that emerge from religious practice as a valuable element to take into account in the integration into the host society. Another is the information about the most basic rights that are offered during the stay in some of the shelters; Casa del Migrante de Saltillo, FM4, Guadalajara y la 72 de Tenosique, in relation to political refuge.

For the recognition of the legal status of the immigrant who has suffered persecution and violence, in Mexico there is little recognition on the part of the institutions, despite the number of asylum seekers, the huge number of potential refugees who travel through this country, continues being to the authorities and to the bulk of society, invisible. A lot has to do with the Mexican Commission for Aid to Refugees (COMAR), which has only 15 protection officers throughout the country. In addition to the budget of this body has not grown for years.

According to figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in September 2014, Mexico hosted 1,837 refugees and another 2,872 were in the process of verification (Asylum Acces, 2015). According to COMAR figures in the same year 2014, 2,137 people applied for the recognition of refugee status and only 33% were accepted, that is, 705 cases. However, these data contrast with the reality raised by the NGOs that accompany and support immigrant refugees for these legal purposes, who estimate that the percentage of people in need of international protection in Mexico corresponds to 15% of the total number of people that travel through Mexico every year. This means a total of 60,000 people (Asylum Acces, 2015) with only 15 protection officers.

Regarding nationalities, according to official data, four out of ten requests come from people from Honduras and El Salvador. These countries dominate the list of asylum requests in Mexico, followed by other Central American countries such as Guatemala and Nicaragua. A fact that could be corroborated during the field work carried out in La Casa del Migrante de Saltillo and the shelter 72 de Tenosique, Tabasco.

In half of the cases, the immigrants who arrive at the Casa del Migrante Saltillo, decide to stay for more than five days that were allowed when they left the house. Out of these people, it can be found the supposed 15% of people with the need for international protection. Once the immigrant has opened to narrate their disagreements in the migratory traffic and after they have been informed about their rights.

Based on the interviews conducted at the Casa del Migrante de Saltillo, in general terms the decision to stay longer occurs due to multiple factors; because they no longer have money to continue the journey, either because they have no more money or because the money has been stolen from them during their journey, being assaulted in most cases by the government authorities themselves, at other times because they are waiting for more economic resources from a family member to keep moving forward, and in some cases due to health problems, and sporadically, due to misinformation, they do not know how to continue their trip.

In most cases, it could be documented that this situation produces effects contrary to what was originally planned. The main one, facing the future, is that during the trip these same discouraging aspects will be presented again. While staying longer, immigrants do not know what to do with their daily lives leading to a situation of despair and in some cases demotivation for when time goes by and fate escapes their hands, involving strong stress effects.

Other situations during a prolonged stay and that are closely related to their imminent but delayed departure from home are; anxiety, distrust, fear of authority, fear of smuggling. This situation is valid for those who have not yet hired a "travel agent" in the figure of the coyote that can accompany them from their countries of origin, especially when whole families travel with the northern border as a point of contact and that some relative from the United States has hired them.

The stay can be extended by the completion of some immigration process, that is, by legal accompaniment, for which la Casa del Migrante de Saltillo

has implemented actions in case immigrants present these symptoms of stress; the most important is the "involvement", what the psychosocial area of the shelter called "solidary collaboration". It implies that people have greater responsibilities in the maintenance of the shelter in different tasks such as order and cleaning through "commissions" or "posts", which is nothing else than community work. The same immigrants since their arrival are in charge of cooking, washing their clothes and dishes, cleaning the different areas of the place, answering phones, guarding the entrance and checking the new immigrants who arrive, classifying the donations, supplying the different commissions of the house and of laying their mattress or bed. We could ensure that there is a self-sustainable scheme through solidarity involvement.

Returning to the extended stay and the accompanying work, there is a relevant aspect when immigrants enter a situation of "normality", they move to a new phase of monitoring, follow-up and involvement by the shelter staff. We speak of periods of time ranging from fifteen days to 4 months of stay, being mostly unaccompanied women. When they reach this period of time is when they get inserted in the dynamics of awareness to the local population, with different tasks, for example, distributing donations of clothing and food and taking part in presentations, workshops and meetings related to human rights, both in schools and in private events, such was the case that coincided with our visit, when the rapporteur of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights attended Saltillo on Monday, September 28, 2015, where they met separately with two Honduran immigrants who previously had been kidnapped for three months by the Zetas, a group belonging to organized crime that operates on the migratory transit route.

This extended stay in the shelter, when the transit begins to become a destination, is preceded by this involvement, but at the same time, the immigrants are in a legal action being advised by the legal area with some of the migratory procedures to which they are entitled, in its majority is the humanitarian visa and the least is political asylum. It is worth noting the slowness and bureaucratic structure of these procedures and their cumbersome resolution on the part of COMAR, many of the times negative, it was inferred that this may be one of the fundamental factors that determine a prolonged stay in Mexico.

Even in the extended stays, inside and outside the shelter, there are accompanying actions to support immigrants to make a better stay plan, which basically consists of orientation and information about possible job offers, human rights and the follow-up to legal accompaniment. It was found that in some cases people who decided to stay in Saltillo are accompanied psy-

chologically for adaptation in their new community, demonstrating in the same way that the ties with la Casa del Migrante are still current. We could consider that it is a seed that is germinating for the formation of a small Central American community in Saltillo. On the other hand, when transit becomes the origin, for immigrants who decide to return to their country, there is the possibility of assisted return, which is when they decide to turn themselves in to immigration authorities to return them to their countries (Mexican authorities return them in buses unlike in the United States that many of them are returned in planes, flights of shame, as they are called in Spain). Some others decide to ride again on the shoulders of the beast, the freight train but in the opposite direction, from north to south, in the end it is safer, others will wander one more season through Mexico at risk of transhumance.

For any situation, whatever the way in which the transit became an origin, it could be documented that it is not a simple situation at all, these people return with mixed feelings; on the one hand, there is the joy of returning home to be reunited with their family after months of absence and uncertainty, to feel free again, far from arrests, extortion and legal proceedings, as well as police treatment during deportation. But on the other hand it is loaded with a strong discouragement -despite the accompaniment- for not having achieved what had been proposed at the beginning, the longed for American dream that ended up becoming a Mexican nightmare.

ACCOMPANIMENT TO THE MEXICAN REPATRIATE, CASA EMAUS

In the same state of Coahuila, but farther north, bordering the United States is Ciudad Acuña. In this city there is another process of accompaniment towards migrations, as well as other types of actors involved; accompaniment is provided to Mexican migrants who have been repatriated, captured in their attempt to cross the border, or to those who have ended their period of imprisonment in a jail in the United States, some of the latter for reoffending in their attempt to cross. Humanitarian assistance and accompaniment are given through the word of God, by the Catholic Church in the Casa Emaus, which depends on the Santa María de Guadalupe Parish, located in the neighboring city of Piedras Negras, also on the border.

Ciudad Acuña has a population of 134,233 inhabitants (INEGI, 2010), bordering the city of Del Rio, in the state of Texas, both cities separated by the famous Rio Bravo, Casa Emaus is located only about 100 meters from this river and at the same distance from the international bridge "Puerta de México", where they return the repatriated migrants that even from

the shelter can be seen. Acuña is the seat of this shelter at the end of the hospitality route of the Central American transit migrations... or rather, the beginning of the other route of hospitality for the Mexican repatriates.

Emaus means *the way*, as well as analogically this shelter tries to be with the thousands of repatriates that cross Acuña year after year; provide them with a place of rest and refuge in the middle of their transfer, which has not ended despite having entered their country of origin. For many, the ironic migration that is just beginning due to the security strategy of the United States to deport them from west to east of the Mexican physical border, from the desert area to the Rio Bravo region that divides both countries.

In 2015 alone, more than 42,000 repatriates passed through Acuña, which made this city the second most affluent border point, just behind Matamoros, and above other points of greater border importance, such as the cities of Tijuana or Ciudad Juárez. The National Institute of Migration receives them only with a repatriation sheet and some guidance; such as pointing the way to the bus station, the community canteen or the Emaus shelter, but not before crossing an army of itinerant financial speculators who try to change the dollars they carry with them or those who are about to send them.

So far in 2016, from January to March, 413 people have passed through the shelter, which is equivalent to 1,200 people a year, all are males of Mexican nationality, deported from the United States because they do not have documents that support their residence, have an average age of 35 years. They come from most of the interior of Mexico, but highlight the states of Guerrero, Sonora and Sinaloa, the latter two belonging precisely to the desert border region of the northwest of the country.

At the moment, Emaus only provides lodging for three days to the deportees provided they have their repatriation sheet and it is valid for the same day. Other services that the returnees have inside, in addition to dinner and lodging for three nights, is that sometimes they can be given a change of clothes, as some arrive dressed in prison uniform.

In the last decade, Emmaus provided advice and information on legal and labor procedures, such as intermittent assistance from the Federal Government through the National Employment Service to obtain a return ticket to their communities of origin. However, from a wave of violence that erupted in the region³, the economic pauperization of work sources in the border as the maquila, -which was where some returnees could

be employed-, and the constant changes of the administrations within the parish is that the accompaniment project has been shrinking.

The local delegation of the National Institute of Migration (INM) estimates that 85% of the people who enter Acuña, do not stay in the city, most take the first bus they can, the rest stays only a few days, others seek refuge in Casa Emaus, the least unfortunately remain in the streets without any basic attention prone to indigence. There are cases where the returnees decide to try their luck in Acuña, as happened with Oscar, one of the interviewees, who was strengthened in faith through the word of God that he heard every day in the shelter, and took his leave with great hopes of transcending in this city.

In an interview with Father Hermenegildo, director of Santa María Guadalupe parish, he comments on some key points to understand the details of the difficulty of accompaniment in Ciudad Acuña; the fact that this city is the transit of deported migrants, all of them of Mexican nationality; being like the rest of the Mexican "floating" border cities because of the little rootedness of the people that live in this place when they come from other places, the short time of stay inside the shelter of the repatriates, the little faith in the Gospels of some of these people and the network of illegal migrant trafficking immersed in this site.

Violence and social problems ended up turning Acuña into a passing city, into a floating city, as Father Hermenegildo says, together with the fact that in recent years it has been the preferred place for the deportations of migrants by the American authorities. As part of the security strategy of the Border Patrol, returning to Acuña those who were captured in their attempt to cross irregularly on the western side of the border, between the states of Sonora and Arizona, on the desert side, it is even known by everyone that it is the place used to cross-examine drugs using undocumented migrants. For this part, there are clear indications that some returnees, including those temporarily housed in Emaus, have been used to traffic drugs along this route and subsequently repatriated by Acuña, which makes them *burreros*, as they are known here.

3 This wave of violence reached its peak in October 2012 with the death of the ex-governor's son of the state of Coahuila and ex-leader of the PRI at the national level, Humberto Moreira, where Acuña police were involved, the former governor was arrested in January 2016 by the Spanish authorities in agreement with the authorities of the State of Texas for the laundering of euros.

This mechanism of the Border Patrol, *La migra*, is considered by all in Acuña as a cruel and inhuman strategy on the part of the United States government, in addition to having modified the local community organization, reconfiguring the same social fabric and dynamics of this city, condemns the transhumance of many of the returnees who have to travel thousands of kilometers to return to their places of origin or to try to cross the border through the same place where they tried before, many times without money or documents, which makes them "undocumented", exposing them to the illicit trafficking of migrants by organized crime, also putting into predicaments the internal rules of the Emaus house, since often the three days allowed are insufficient to gather the money to return to their homes. A long stay in the house allows the recruiters to recruit people inside and outside the place.

As already mentioned, Sonora and Sinaloa, states of the Mexican northwest, are those that employ a significant number of "*burreros*". As observed in the room inside the shelter about 70 percent of those who take refuge in this place are from these states, some belonging to the Yaqui, Navajo and Mayo indigenous groups. Unfortunately, the registers that they have inside the hostel are also "floating" about the place of origin, moreover there is no reliable record of the number of people who have arrived since the foundation, because the different administrations of the shelter have handled different formats or data have been lost in a mysterious way.

This austerity within the hostel is only enough to provide a coffee in the morning and a dinner in the evening. During the day, breakfast and lunch are given by a community canteen aimed at elderly, recently opened by the municipality of Acuña in the face of the massive deportation of conational migrants. Already inside the shelter the attempt of empowerment towards the migrant is made through the word of God, the truth is that some repatriated migrants feel deeply the teachings of the gospel, but others do not. In any way, we must bear in mind that the word is transmitted as understood by Don Miguel, one of those in charge of the shelter, not always sensitive to the question of gender, ethnicity, place of origin or sexual preference.

Occasionally sporadic members of the community, in specific families of Ciudad Acuña, belonging to the Santa María de Guadalupe Parish attend to continue transmitting the word of God and pray in the name of the Lord, with positive results for some returnees. Regarding the prayer Vidal and Martínez (2006) understand that it is the meaningful praxis of the religious being. However, Father Hermenegildo said in the interview that one of the reasons that prevents work in the faith and the transmission of religious values is that several of the migrants are not firm believers, especially when

it comes to those who across the border, in the US, were able to introduce themselves for years in the values of the American culture, and to the *burreros* who are usually people without spiritual or confessional growth.

Unlike la Casa del Migrante de Saltillo, in la Casa Emaus there is no, not even remotely speaking, social shielding that Father Pedro Pantoja talked about, on the contrary we can say that there is a "social permeability" in the sense that there is not much control over who enters and leaves the place. There is also no work to raise awareness of the community, using the approach of human rights as other shelters, despite the daily nature of repatriations in the social landscape of Acuña, for the bulk of the local community the migrants are invisible.

There is free and sovereign work of the Santa María de Guadalupe Parish towards the situation of the repatriated migrants, a kind of "religious shielding", since many of the observations of international organizations such as the Red Cross or the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) or local institutions such as the Secretariat of Health of Coahuila have not been considered, the latter which attended while field work was being carried out and some of its suggestions were not considered. The little help from the religious community is sporadic and the lack of coordination between the religious sector and the municipality of Acuña is notorious.

Therefore we cannot talk about any kind of accompaniment because there is no psychosocial, legal or medical professional assistance, those in charge have no training in any of the areas of accompaniment and had no training in the field of migration, we are talking about a Septuagenarian couple who share their time between the work at the parish and the repatriates, the only link before they were assigned the position to reach Emaus was their closeness to the parish's community.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the fundamental keys of the accompaniment is to mitigate the enormous power vacuum on behalf of governmental institutions through the experience of the humanitarian service, before the community emergency of certain groups of the civil society and of voluntary confessional groups, which have become in an alternate network that assists the undocumented immigrant who little by little is filling the vacuum of power within Mexican territory. Once the State has fully relied on restrictive control policies and has allowed the systematic violation of human rights of this contingent of people. It can be argued hypothetically that this occurs

because there is an alternative to the development of free human space mobility in the transit migratory route.

In a broader configuration, the accompaniment seems to show increasingly clear signs or signals that a community projection of certain groups of civil society and voluntary confessional groups towards the undocumented immigrant in transit are beginning to prevail, who through their strategies of accompaniment are in the process of transforming their own role, making it more and more active. But also the role of immigrants themselves in the decision-making and empowerment processes, in terms of formulating solutions.

However there are marked differences within this network, in the northern border for example, in la Casa Emaus there is no social shield that was found in Saltillo, there is the free and sovereign work of the Santa María de Guadalupe Parish towards the situation of the repatriated migrants, as we have called it a "religious shield" diametrically opposed to social shielding. Many of the observations of international organizations or local institutions have not been considered. The little help from the religious community is sporadic and the lack of coordination between the religious sector and the municipality of Acuña is notorious.

Therefore, we cannot say that there is any type of professional assistance within the psychosocial, legal or medical accompaniment; those in charge have no training in any of the areas of accompaniment nor in the field of migration. This internal disorganization has caused that the aid to the deportee from the parish is like intermittent, previously there were periods of takeoff but nowadays there is a period of backwardness and disorganization. For Father Hermenegildo this situation does not happen, to him is a part of the "essence" of his administration, he discerns that it is the way in which the religious community can and should help the returnees, even with ample knowledge of the psychosocial approach of la casa del Migrante de Saltillo.

But it must be recognized that, in general terms, it can be argued that by hosting undocumented immigrations, confessional organizations have an advantage over lay organizations in relation to humanitarian work because they generate a greater impact on local society by helping to raise awareness of the immigrant's rights. Confessional, laity or even mixed, shelters have become reference points along the route of immigration in transit. As Vidal and Martínez (2006) point out, they are and can be places of worship for immigrant communities from which opportunities for empowerment and social mobility can be reconstructed and managed.

REFERENCES

- Asylum Access Latinoamérica.** (2015). *Términos de referencia*. [Versión electrónica]. Ecuador
- ENLACE,** Comunicación y capacitación AC., Voces Mesoamericanas, Acción con Pueblos Migrantes., Consejería en Proyectos (PCS). Colectivo Ansur. Casa del Migrante Saltillo. Sin Fronteras IAP. (2014). *Abriendo Fronteras con el corazón. Guías para la aplicación del enfoque psicosocial en contextos migratorios*. Guatemala: Serviprensa S.A.
- Farinós, J.** (2008). Gobernanza territorial para el desarrollo sostenible. Estado de la cuestión y agenda. *Boletín de la A.G.* 46.
- Guillén, A., y Pérez, M.** (2014). Ruta 5. En, Tavera, P. (coord.), *Solidaridad en el camino. Atlas de organizaciones de apoyo a personas migrantes centroamericanas* (pp. 128-145). México, D.F: Propuesta Cívica.
- Hanson, J., Mcree, T., Calvo, R., Álvarez, F.** (2014). El valor del acompañamiento. La fe y las respuestas al desplazamiento. *Revista Migraciones Forzadas*, 48, 7-8.
- James, R.** (2009). What is distinctive about FBOs: how European FBOs define and operationalize their faith. Praxis Paper 22, INTRAC.
- Kidwai, S., V. Moore, L., FitzGibbon, A.** (2014). El papel de la religión en la formación de relaciones entre comunidades. *Revista Migraciones Forzadas*, 48, 10-13.
- Cámara de Diputados del H. Congreso de la Unión** (2013) *Ley de Migración. Diario Oficial de la Federación* (25 de mayo de 2011). Ciudad de México.
- Pantoja, P.** (2013). Belén, Posada del Migrante. Experiencia eclesiológica y alternativa social en el dolor y la violencia social de la migración forzada centroamericana. *Migración y Desarrollo*, 21, 177-186.
- Pontin, M** (1992). «Iglesia y migraciones latinoamericanas». CEPAM CIM, Colombia.
- Tavera, P., Guillén, A., y Pérez, M.** (2014). *Solidaridad en el camino. Atlas de organizaciones de apoyo a personas migrantes centroamericanas. México: Propuesta Cívica.*
- Unidad de las Naciones Unidas contra la Droga y el Delito.** (2016). *Set de información sobre el tráfico ilícito de migrantes*. México. ONUDUC.
- Unidad Para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas, Organización Internacional de las Migraciones.** (2014). *Elementos para la incorporación del enfoque psicosocial en la atención, asistencia y reparación a las víctimas*. Bogotá. OIM.
- Ventura, M.** (2008) Asesor es acompañar. *Revista de Curriculum y Formación de Profesorado*, vol. 12, núm. 1, pp, 1-14.
- Vidal, F. y Martínez, J.** (2006). *Religión e integración social de los inmigrantes: la prueba del ángel*. España. CEIM, Universidad Pontificia de Comillas.