Perspectives in the Study of Indigenous Migration to Cities in Mexico[1]

Victoria Chenaut
(Centre for Research and Advanced Studies in Social Anthropology, Mexico)
vchenaut@ciesas.edu.mx

Indigenous migration to cities in Mexico has been the focus of a range of research initiatives in Mexican anthropology, as new research approaches, questions and problems have emerged. In the context of a strengthened indigenous movement and of constitutional reforms that recognize cultural diversity and indigenous rights, the enhanced visibility of indigenous migrants that started in the 1990s has led to the development of new research topics, which are analysed in this article.
Keywords: indigenous, migration, cities, rights.

Introduction

In this article I provide an overview of the approaches used by anthropologists since the 1990s in their research on indigenous migration to cities. The introduction of new paradigms in the social sciences and the emergence of social movements have led to a reformulation of both the questions raised by such research and the theoretical positions from which they have been addressed. One issue that stands out is related to a growing interest in demonstrating that gender inequalities and the recognition of ethnic identity are not only a source of vulnerability and discrimination for migrants, but also form the basis for the demands related to rights and citizenship put forward by urban indigenous organizations.

I focus mainly on research carried out in Mexico City, in addition to studies carried out in two cities in northern Mexico, Monterrey and Tijuana. By including these other cities, I attempt to show some of the similarities and differences that characterize migrants' living conditions in the urban contexts in which they are inserted and how these have been addressed in the literature. In Mexico City, the process of industrialization that began in the 1940s and 1950s attracted many migrants from rural settings, for whom this city became the primary destination (Kemper 1976: 52). These movements of population led to the insertion, and in many cases, assimilation, of migrants into city life, which has made their social and identity integration a central issue in studies of migration to Mexico City. It is important to keep in mind not only that migrants of diverse ethnicities from all over Mexico live in Mexico City, making it a multicultural city, but also that this city is home to the Náhuatl people — the descendants of the native people of the Mexico valley — who have been incorporated into urban life as the city has grown, thus modifying their traditional lifestyles and in many cases leading to the loss of their farmland. I will expand later on how the different situations of the two kinds of indigenous people who live in Mexico City have led to specific demands related to their ethnic, social and cultural rights.

The city of Tijuana is characterized by its position on the border between two countries (Mexico and the United States) and by the fact that it provides infrastructure and services to people in transit, aiming to cross legally or illegally into the United States. Life in Tijuana entails exposure to the cultural influence of the United States, with its codes and regulations, and the ever present reality that crossing the border involves potential access to employment, which would ensure the reproduction of the family unit. In Tijuana many migrants are commuters living in Mexico and traveling daily or weekly to work in the United States (Velasco and Vargas 2010: 106). The influence of the border is expressed in many ways, causing a reconfiguration of ethnicity, as 'transnationalization means that subjects live in different state and national frameworks at the same time'[2] (Velasco 2002: 166). Migrants' lives are marked by international migration and by the everyday presence of 'coyotes' (people who charge a fee to help undocumented migrants to cross illegally into the United States), of migrants from different parts of Mexico and from Central America who are eager to cross 'to the other side' and of tourists from the United States who travel to Tijuana for cheap entertainment and shopping; they are the main customers of the indigenous Mixtec street vendors in downtown Tijuana (Velasco 2002).

Indigenous migrants in Monterrey have been invisible to public policy and social research until recently, for migration to this city began slowly in the 1970s and has only increased since the 1990s, with migrants coming from the states of Hidalgo, San Luis Potosí and Veracruz (Durin and Moreno 2008: 92). Proof of this invisibility lies in the fact that the first public policy aimed at indigenous people in Nuevo León was developed in 1998, and the Commission for the Development of Indigenous People (CDI)[3] first established a sub-delegation in the city of Monterrey as late as 2006 (Durin 2008: 26).

The different characteristics of these cities where indigenous migrants have settled have influenced the ways in which researchers have addressed the topic of urban migration. While in Mexico City the emphasis has been on studying the causes of migration and the patterns of assimilation, insertion and reproduction of ethnic identity (Arizpe 1975, Kemper 1976), in Tijuana a central line of research has been to explore ethnic agency and ethnicity in the context of the transnational situation in that city (Velasco 2002, 2005, 2010). In contrast, the studies carried out in Monterrey are largely marked by the need to define the study subjects, emphasizing a combination of demographic and social anthropological approaches to make these subjects visible and to provide an overall picture, in addition to pursuing qualitative lines of research further to explore specific issues (Durin 2008: 36 and 39).

In the 1990s, indigenous migrants to Mexican cities acquired greater visibility as a result of ethnic mobilizations related to the strengthening of the indigenous movement, the signing of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169, which recognizes the collective rights of indigenous people, and the indigenous uprising led by the Zapatista

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[2] The original Spanish reads: 'la transnacionalización implica que los sujetos viven al mismo tiempo en marcos estatales y nacionales diferentes'.

[3] This is the 'Comisión para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas', or CDI, formerly the National Indigenist Institute (Instituto Nacional Indigenista).

National Liberation Army (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN) in the state of Chiapas, demanding social justice, land and democracy and engendering an intense debate on indigenous rights in Mexican political and academic circles. In this context, the Mexican government introduced multicultural policies and in 1992 approved reforms to Article 4 of the Constitution, in recognition of the country's cultural diversity. In 2001, Article 2 was also modified, recognizing indigenous rights and autonomy. Despite criticism on the limitations of these reforms, it is nonetheless significant that for the first time indigenous people were recognized at constitutional level, questioning the idea of homogeneity and legal equality that had prevailed until then (Aragón 2007).

Research Issues and Approaches

Indigenous migration to cities has long been studied in Mexican anthropology, and new research approaches, questions and problems have consistently emerged. Robert Kemper (1987) identifies two broad paradigms in migration studies in Mexico, which I will explore briefly here. Until the late 1960s and early 1970s, a research perspective Kemper calls 'culturalism' predominated; influenced by scholars from Europe and the United States, it favoured case studies from an empirical and inductive perspective. Migration research emphasized analyses of sociocultural change, using a model that opposed tradition and modernity. Authors were thus concerned with analysing the causes of migration and family coping strategies, as well as values, attitudes and forms of adaptation to and assimilation into the broader society. In this context, the work of Oscar Lewis (1961) stands out. Lewis conducted his research in the mid-twentieth century among peasants who migrated to Mexico City. He contributed a new methodology, which, instead of focusing on classic studies of community, took as the unit of analysis migrants' families and individuals scattered throughout different neighbourhoods in Mexico City.

The late 1960s and especially the 1970s saw the consolidation of an approach that Kemper (1987) calls 'historical-structuralism'. This approach was influenced by Marxism and Latin American social scientists who, from a theoretical and deductive perspective, emphasized the importance of understanding migration as tied to the conditions created by dependent development in the capitalist system. The general approaches were thus aimed at emphasizing the social, political and class conditions that affect migration. Analyses of the causes of migration underscored such issues as the structural incapacity of the system to absorb the growth of the population (Nolasco et al. 1979: 10). Here, the work of Lourdes Arizpe (1975, 1978) stands out. She asks how ethnicity influences migration patterns and concludes that, while there are structural explanations for migration, it has a specific historical nature and thus it is important to analyse its dynamics in order to understand the different forms that it takes (1978: 228).

Since the 1980s, research on women in diverse spheres of social life has intensified in Mexico, and new debates and approaches have produced a shift from studies of 'women' to analyses based on the concept of 'gender', which entails an analysis of the hierarchies and relations of power that connect the two sexes (Alberti 2004). According to Cristina Oehmichen (2005: 22), it was not until the 1990s that studies on the culture of migrants to

cities were once again undertaken, especially studies about identity issues and, to a lesser extent, interethnic relations. The greater visibility of the migrant population in Mexico since the 1990s, underpinned by the forms of organization of the indigenous movement and rights-based demands, has stimulated new research questions and topics.

Some Common Problems

Since the 1990s, notable contributions to the study of indigenous migration to cities have addressed four broad themes: ethnicity and identity; family, kinship and social networks; gender; and the link between ethnicity, justice and rights. These themes have not all been explored to the same depth. While there is a significant body of literature addressing the first three issues, that of justice and rights, which has gained a great deal of public visibility over the last two decades, is an emerging line of research of great relevance for public policy related to migrants. I will address this issue in the next section.

The literature shows that the employment held by indigenous migrants is not homogeneous in nature. However, the common denominator among those with low wages is that men work in jobs that require physical strength, which tends to give them access to jobs that entail heavy labour, such as loaders at the La Merced market in Mexico City, while women's work largely consists of street vending and domestic employment (Oehmichen 2005). How do men's and women's employment affect their social interaction and the way in which they express their demands for their rights? On this point, the volume edited by Séverine Durin (2008) is instructive, as it explores two different types of jobs. On the one hand, she looks at indigenous men and women who work as street vendors in the city of Monterrey. They, she reports, are permanently harassed by the police due to their lack of street vendor permits and face a situation of conflict that constitutes an incentive to become organized, establish relationships with state institutions and demand their rights; thus, they acquire greater visibility and their work allows them to reside in densely populated neighbourhoods. On the other hand, and in contrast, women who are domestic workers and live in the homes of their employers, generally located in middle or upper middle class neighbourhoods, are isolated from one another. This dispersal fosters their invisibility; yet, it does not lead to a rupture of the ties on which their ethnic identities are based, as they participate actively in networks based on family and on shared places of origin (Durin 2008: 33 and 35).

The gender approach has also placed an emphasis on studying family dynamics and the situation of women migrants (Ariza 2000: 39). The presence of women in migratory processes was originally noted in the pioneering study by Lourdes Arizpe on the 'Marias' (Mazahua indigenous women engaged in street vending) in Mexico City (1975). Since then, studies have endeavoured to distinguish between men's and women's reasons for migration, identify the different kinds of employment they engage in and examine their roles in the reproduction of the group (Arizpe 1975, Oehmichen 2005). Recent research on gender issues among indigenous migrants has indicated that women migrants are social actors who play an active role in shaping their own lives and that new migratory patterns involve a redefinition of family dynamics (both in the places of origin and in the new places of residence), in which

gender roles, as well as rights and obligations within the family, are negotiated and redefined (D'Aubeterre 2000). There remains much to investigate in this respect, and Marina Ariza's (2000: 48) question, 'can migration modify the asymmetry between men and women?'[4] is still valid.

The issues of identity and networks are closely related, as networks (based on kinship, place of origin, membership of an organization) ultimately constitute bonds upon which ethnic identity is based and reproduced. References to networks are numerous in the literature. Oehmichen (2005) employs an innovative approach to this topic, emphasizing from a gender perspective the social construction, dynamism and flexibility of networks among relatives. Among the Mazahua families that she studied, networks are formed around the relationships established by the women, and in them expressions of loyalty, solidarity and mutual support in child care and child rearing are predominant. In any case, networks of relatives and people from the same place are rooted in a feeling of shared origins and constitute a social capital that protects migrants from the vulnerability and marginality they experience in the city (Oehmichen 2005: 386-387). Authors agree on the role that migrant networks play in the survival, reproduction and protection of the members of the group. The networks that bring women together are an expression of this aspect; in the face of widespread violence, women take care of each other, protect each other and watch over what happens in each other's lives (Chavarría 2008: 199). However, the role of networks extends beyond this, as they are, in turn, the basis on which indigenous organizations are established.

One example is given by Laura Velasco (2002: 49), who addresses indigenous organization on the Mexico-US border and, interestingly, shows that both networks and organizations are built on the deep ties and solidarities that develop among relatives and people from the same place. She argues that 'migrant organizations could not exist without the networks.'[5] For instance, the Binational Oaxacan Indigenous Front (*Frente Indígena Oaxaqueño Binacional*, FIOB), which brings together Mixtec, Zapotec, Triqui and Mix indigenous people, extends over the national territory and also crosses borders. From a perspective that aims to analyse the impact of migration on ethnic identity, Velasco (2002: 45) sees ethnicity as a resource that makes it possible not only to deal with vulnerability, but also to produce organizations with the 'capacity to construct an ethnic project that is expressed in a social awareness.'[6]

However, Carmen Martínez (2004, 2006), who conducted research in Baja California with migrants living in Tijuana and with those working as day labourers in commercial agriculture for export in the San Quintín Valley, became interested in investigating the capacity of the state to create identity through institutions such as the CDI. She also conducted research on the responses of marginal groups in society to multicultural policies that recognize cultural diversity and encourage these parts of the population to identify

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[4] The original Spanish reads: '¿es capaz la migración de alterar la asimetría entre hombres y mujeres?'

[5] The original Spanish reads: 'sin las redes no podrían existir las organizaciones de migrantes'.

[6] The original Spanish reads: 'capacidad para construir un proyecto étnico que se hace manifiesto en una conciencia social'.

themselves as indigenous. She found that the kind of ethnicity promoted by the government employees who apply these policies superimposes a generic and stereotypical ethnic identity that does not recognize the specificities of migrants' experiences. Due to difficult living and working conditions, for most migrants their indigenous identity functions as a stigma that hinders their social and economic progress and that they try to avoid. Thus they prefer cultural assimilation, which involves their integration into the broader society as citizens. Therefore, Martínez suggests that the recognition of difference is not demanded by most migrants, due to the racism that excludes them from access to resources and opportunities.

This case of migrants in Baja California demonstrates the need to explore further the issue of identity among indigenous migrants and shows that multicultural policies that recognize cultural diversity have different effects among indigenous people, depending on the contexts in which they are applied and the specific gender, age and status of the people to whom they are targeted. Relevant studies have been carried out among young people who migrate to the cities to work, as well as among second- and third-generation migrants who live in large urban centres. In the next section I discuss this research on younger generations, which aims to shed light on issues of cultural assimilation and on demands for ethnic rights.

Indigenous youth were rarely addressed in the anthropological studies carried out in Mexico prior to the 1990s, when the emergence of new research approaches and methodologies, the increase in the migration of indigenous and mestizo youth to the cities and the expansion of the use of media such as television and the internet, among other factors, made indigenous youth more visible (Urteaga 2008, Pérez 2008a). Here I am interested in emphasizing several points of relevance in the studies of indigenous migrant youth, as they underscore the tensions that occur between parents and children around the children's reproduction of social values and in connection with the practices associated with community life and the cultural traditions of their places of origin, to which the parents are more attached. Urteaga (2008) reflects on how young people question certain relations of power that occur in the community context, while at the same time research shows how forms of social control that are rooted in community values and norms are in some ways reproduced in the urban life of migrants; one thinks of the persistence of asymmetries and long-standing views on gender roles such as supposedly honourable feminine conduct, even as increasing numbers of young women travel to the cities in order to find work. This is what Jahel López (2013: 153) found in terms of social control over the exercise of female sexuality, though the context of migration has also led to changes and greater flexibility in how marriage arrangements are made. Something similar has been found among women migrants in Monterrey who work as live-in domestic employees. These women must watch their conduct in order to protect their reputations in the face of the moral sanctions applied to women who freely exercise their sexuality, which their families find out about through rumours and comments spread by acquaintances, friends and relatives (Díaz 2009: 173).

Despite the racism and stigma associated with being indigenous, living in the city undoubtedly offers young people new opportunities to work, study, connect with each other and have fun. This is evident in the ethnographies on the importance of dance halls in Mexico City (López 2013) and on the Alameda in Monterrey, a public plaza that used to be a

recreation site for the city's middle and upper classes but has now been 'appropriated' by indigenous youth as a place for courting and socializing (Díaz 2009). In both cases, these urban places constitute spaces for dialogue, identity negotiation and intercultural relationships with mestizos and youth of other ethnicities, as well as for belonging to new networks based on friendship. As Maya Lorena Pérez (2008b) argues, in the cities young indigenous people are exercising their capacities to make decisions about how they want to live their lives. The accelerated processes of change that they experience, with the attendant tensions and conflicts, pose a broad range of questions to be further investigated along a thematic line of research that Urteaga (2008: 704) describes as an 'anthropology of borders',[7] which takes into account how the categories of young, Indian and migrant are being constructed '*inside* a new area and *outside* the borders of worlds that until recently seemed fixed and unchangeable…'.[8] Uretaga believes, nonetheless, that the parents' world continues to have an influence on how young people build their lives.

New Perspectives on a Key Issue: The Relation between Ethnicity, Justice and Rights
Migrants' demands for ethnic rights started to acquire prominence in the national setting in the early 1990s in light of the Zapatista movement and of the rise of movements for indigenous rights in Latin America. In this context, the ethnic rights discourse became a central strategy used by migrants to negotiate with the state in their efforts to have their demands met (Velasco and Vargas 2010: 104 and 116). The magnitude of the impact of Zapatismo and its demands for autonomy is evident in the fact that this issue appears repeatedly in the arguments of indigenous organizations such as the FIOB. Migrants demand ethnic rights and recognition as social actors in various ways, while also demanding that the state and authorities respect their human rights (Oehmichen 2005: 13).

According to Oehmichen (2007), men and women migrants have in common their vulnerability and lack of rights, and they all face discrimination and racism from mestizo society. This has led Oehmichen (2005: 184, 191) to consider their condition to be similar to that of undocumented migrants, as they, too, lack job stability, social security and social services. This vulnerability also promotes the concentration of migrants in specific neighbourhoods or districts and the strengthening of their networks and organizations (Sánchez C. 2004: 72-73). The importance of networks is also evident in the migrants' 'extraterritorial communities'[9] (Oehmichen 2001: 185), whose members may reside in different regions of a country and even in different countries. This is the case with migrants to the United States, who maintain ties with their communities of origin as they keep their sense of belonging to their ethnic group or place of birth.

Other authors have emphasized that migrants' vulnerability helps to explain why they seek support in the networks of relatives and people who originate from the same place. It is

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[7] The original Spanish reads: 'antropología de frontera'.
[8] The original Spanish reads: 'dentro de una zona nueva y fuera de las fronteras de los mundos que hasta hace poco parecían fijos e inmutables…'
[9] Original Spanish: 'comunidades extraterritoriales'.

worth reiterating that these networks provide a social capital that can protect them from the violence that they experience as migrants; a product, that is, of the asymmetric relations in terms of gender, class and ethnic identity (Chavarría 2008: 176). Women suffer violence within the home, workers experience it through the hierarchies and relations of power in the work context; because of their identities as indigenous people, they are also subject to discrimination, racism and the abuse of power by the authorities and the police (Chavarría 2008: 199). In this sense, the vulnerability of indigenous migrants is similar to that of international migrants who lack legal permits to enter and stay in a country; thus, their rights are limited and they experience a 'lack of power'[10] also through daily discrimination, as is the case of Hispanics in the United States (Bustamante 2001: 28). In the case of the migrants analysed in this article, there is no context of illegality because they reside in their own country; however, their lack of power, as discussed by Bustamante, is evident in the fact that many of them do not have birth certificates, which prevents them from obtaining other official documents, and in the fact that they are often unaware of their rights as citizens and workers.

Taking as a point of departure the notion that ethnic identities 'are a product of historically constructed social relations',[11] Oehmichen (2005: 297) explores the question of sociocultural change and notes that certain ethnic markers have been re-functionalized since the rise of the issue of indigenous rights. Indigenous language and dress, which in many cases had been abandoned to avoid discrimination, are now used when negotiating with the state from their position as indigenous people. This strategic use and manipulation of ethnicity in accordance with the context and circumstances at hand suggests that ethnicity becomes an element that differentiates these actors from the rest of the urban poor; the political use of ethnicity enables them to 'better defend their rights'[12] (Oemichen 2005: 400). This has led to a greater visibility of migrants, who reaffirm themselves as indigenous people and stress their ethnic and cultural identity (Igreja 2005: 306 and 312).

This revaluation of indigenous people's ethnic identity and language has not occurred in a homogeneous manner in Mexico City. Various factors have played a role in such a process. People's socio-economic status and, as Maya Lorena Pérez (2007) emphasizes, social differentiation in the migrants' places of origin affect the ways in which they settle into the city. It is important to keep in mind that not all indigenous people residing in Mexico City live in poverty, though a large number do. Equally important, as Igreja (2008) points out, there are Mazahua migrants who do not teach their children their language so that they will not experience racism and discrimination, while Triqui migrants are more attached to their customs and they do teach their language to their children and generally consider it appropriate to impart justice within their group in accordance with the norms and practices of their communities of origin. It is the young who, as a result of their greater integration into city life, mainly question this process of ethnic revaluation; however, through their participation in different indigenous organizations and the contributions they make drawing

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[10] The original Spanish reads: 'carencia de poder'.

[11] The original Spanish reads: 'son producto de relaciones sociales históricamente construidas'.

[12] The original Spanish reads: 'defender mejor sus derechos'.

on their experiences and perspectives, many young people have come to 'discover the best of their culture as well as that which they do not think should be reproduced'[13] (Igreja 2008: 235). In a sense, they seem to choose tradition and, at the same time, continue to live actively in the city and take advantage of what it has to offer.

The rights demanded by migrants are varied and are a consequence of the vulnerability, conflicts and different contexts in which they are situated. In the case of the street vendors, what stands out are the demands related to abuses by the authorities and those in defence of their business, leading Séverine Durin (2008: 50) to argue that 'they have managed to be recognized as an entity with collective rights.'[14] Other demands aim at highlighting the lack of labour, political and social rights, as well as the legal vacuum in the current legislation, which does not take into account the ethnic and cultural diversity that exists in the cities (Yanes 2004: 207). The authors who have addressed this topic stress the peculiar situation of indigenous migrants, who have a sense of community based on their shared origin anchored to their towns and communities and to their group belonging, but because of their migration do not have a territory. This paradox seems to constitute a central point for the indigenous rights of urban migrants: how can they demand autonomy if they are not associated with a territory?

Indigenous rights in Mexico City must also be understood in view of the fact that indigenous descendants of the area's original inhabitants, known as 'native people',[15] also live in several municipalities in Mexico City (Mora ed. 2007). Dispossessed of their land since the colonial period, they are rooted in their territory and face difficulties raised by illegal settlements, the development of new neighbourhoods and the expropriation of their land for public works (Mora ed. 2007: 41 and 119), which, among other problems, has led to water scarcity and to the violation of their human and cultural rights (Pérez 2002). They, therefore, demand recognition of their territorial autonomy, unlike migrants who, lacking territory, can only demand 'cultural autonomy'[16] (Sánchez C. 2004: 80).

There is consensus among writer on this issue that the ethnic rights of urban indigenous people transcend territorial rights (Martínez and de la Peña 2004: 133; Oehmichen 2005: 198). The Assembly of Indigenous Migrants (*Asamblea de Migrantes Indígenas*), which includes indigenous people of various ethnicities, demands recognition of the autonomy and ethnic rights of these people in spite of the fact that they do not have their own territory (Sánchez P. C. et al. 2004). The Assembly has developed an agenda for reflection and study in order to debate the issue of urban indigenous people, with the issue of 'how to participate in this process of struggle'[17] as a starting point (Ortiz 2006: 270-271).

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[13] The original Spanish reads: 'descubrir lo mejor de su cultura y lo que les parece inadecuado reproducir'.

[14] The original Spanish reads: 'han conseguido ser reconocidos como un ente con derechos colectivos'.

[15] The original Spanish reads: 'pueblos originarios'.

[16] The original Spanish reads: 'autonomía cultural'.

[17] The original Spanish reads: 'cómo insertarse en este proceso de lucha'.

In the political context that has developed since the 1990s, urban indigenous people question being referred to as 'migrants', as they associate this word with the subordination and exclusion to which they are subjected in urban life; they ask to be called, instead, 'indigenous residents'[18] in the city (Banda and Martínez 2006: 286-287). However, this change in terminology does not do away with the tension that exists in the demands for rights expressed by the two groups of indigenous people who live in Mexico City; specifically, the native people demand collective rights based on territory, while indigenous residents can only demand to be able to exercise their rights as individuals (López 2006: 364).

Dolores Figueroa (2005: 250) asks, 'What does the distinction between migrant and native imply in terms of the granting of rights?'[19] She concludes that, drawing on different priorities, they demand different rights,. Among other issues, migrants' demands are related to 'limited access to the basic level of services, and to racism, discrimination, lack of access to full citizenship; lack of access to bilingual/bicultural education; school dropout rates; the lack of public policies with respect to migrant women and children'[20] (Figueroa 2005: 262). In contrast, indigenous people who live in their native land struggle against the threat posed by urban sprawl to their territorial integrity, as well as against real estate speculation, the division of communal lands into lots, deforestation, overexploitation of aquifers and the lack of recognition of their traditional authorities. So, while the demands of those in their native land are related to 'power and property, to local capacity in decision-making',[21] those of migrants are related to the recognition of their political, economic and citizenship rights and to the need for the implementation of public policies that benefit them. The tension between these demands is marked by the potential that the territorial rights pursued by indigenous people in their native lands have to deprive of their rights the citizens residing in these areas, including indigenous migrants (Figueroa 2005: 263).

A question of great relevance is how to reconcile native and migrant rights in a legislation on indigenous rights in Mexico City that takes into account what both groups have in common and where they differ. Regardless of their differing views in this debate, all writers address the need to incorporate indigenous rights into Mexico City's institutions and legal framework (López 2006: 349 and 355). This matter deserves special attention in migration studies, because it has important public policy implications. It is important to define the approach from which these policies must be developed. Alejandro López (2006: 365) suggests that a perspective is needed that emphasizes both universal rights and cultural diversity, as opposed to the approach of the federal government, which is based on combating

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[18] The original Spanish reads: 'indígenas residentes'.

[19] The original Spanish reads: '¿Qué implica en términos de otorgamiento de derechos la distinción entre migrante y originario?'.

[20] The original Spanish reads: 'Problemática de migrantes: limitado el acceso a piso básico de servicios… el racismo y la discriminación/no acceso a ciudadanía plena; el no acceso a la educación bilingüe/bicultural; la deserción escolar; la ausencia de políticas públicas con respecto a las mujeres y niños migrantes'.

[21] The original Spanish reads: 'el poder y la propiedad, con la capacidad local en la toma de decisiones'.

poverty among indigenous people. Heeding López's suggestion means attending to the issues that arise from the contextual situation of indigenous people in the city, which will make it possible to address their needs and demands.

The Marcelo Ebrard administration (2006-2012) implemented human rights policies leading to the development of the Mexico City Human Rights Program (2009), which formed the basis for the Mexico City Human Rights Law, enacted in 2011. This programme takes into account the city's cultural diversity and acknowledges that even though indigenous people and communities may come from different places (they can be native or migrants), they all need their shared collective rights to be recognized, without overlooking their specific rights (Hernández 2010: 3). The programme defines a series of rights that form the basis for advancing public policies and strengthening legislation; among others, they include the right to maintain a community identity, the right to equality and non-discrimination, the right to access to justice, the right to land/territory, the right to work, the right to adequate housing, the right to the use of public spaces and the right to education and health care.

In order to address the legal vacuum in terms of indigenous rights, in 2011 and 2012 a bill on the Rights and Culture of Indigenous and Native People in Mexico City was debated, though not passed into law. In Mexico City, Miguel Ángel Mancera's administration (elected in 2012) has approved a comprehensive draft indigenous Bill for native and migrant people living here. The Bill, which has not yet been passed by the Mexico City Legislative Assembly, includes, among others, the right to autonomy and self-determination, political rights, rights related to the administration of justice and law enforcement, the right to education, cultural and social rights and the right to economic development (see, Comité de Mecanismo de la Consulta 2014). I would like to emphasize two aspects that I consider to be significant in this bill. First, the Bill recognizes native and migrant indigenous people as 'entities in public law with legal personality and their own assets'[22] (art. 7), which has important consequences for the exercise of individual and collective rights. Second, it distinguishes between the rights of Native People and Neighbourhoods and the rights of Indigenous Resident Communities made up of migrants. So, the aspects shared by these two groups, the situations specific to each group and the need to differentiate between the rights granted to them are all taken into consideration. For example, in the chapter on Autonomy and Self-Determination, the former group is granted the right to establish 'self-governance in the territories as they see fit'[23] (art. 13), while the territorial dimension is not mentioned in the case of indigenous migrants and reference is made only to their right to autonomy 'in the identity-related spaces or places where they regularly carry out cultural, social, political or economic activities'[24] (art. 36). As far as I am aware, there are few academic publications that address the matter of rights and justice among indigenous migrants in Mexico City, though

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[22] The original Spanish reads: 'entidades de derecho público con personalidad jurídica y patrimonio propio'.

[23] The original Spanish reads: 'autogobierno en los ámbitos territoriales que así lo concideren'.

[24] The original Spanish reads: 'en los espacios o lugares identitarios en los cuales realizan de manera recurrente alguna actividad cultural, social, política y económica (art. 36).'

there have been debates in which academics have participated (Díaz 2013) alongside members of the city government and of indigenous organizations. It would appear that indigenous rights and justice continue to be underreported in the literature on migration to Mexico's capital city. Nonetheless, the nature of the topic and the impact that it will have on public policy in the city if this bill is passed suggest that this issue needs urgent attention and debate among academics and other interested parties.

Various authors have highlighted migrants' needs in terms of justice (see, for example, Yanes 2004 and Sánchez 2004). Rebecca Igreja's (2004) work on justice and indigenous organizations in Mexico City introduces the issue of legal pluralism, as she shows that some communities and organizations reproduce and re-signify — with different levels of intensity — the norms and conflict resolution procedures of their places of origin. As indigenous forms of regulation mix with state law, we witness the occurrence of situations of inter-legality, understood as the articulation and hybridization of different normative systems. This is a novel formulation in migration studies, as anthropological research on justice in Mexico has been focused on documenting inter-legal processes in rural areas of the country.

The norms and procedures for the functioning of groups and organizations constitute a central part of migrants' daily lives in the city. The members of ethnic groups create new norms of coexistence in accordance with the context in which they live and, largely in assemblies, seek ways to resolve conflicts and settle disputes within the group (Igreja 2004: 427). In this adaptation of the justice system to their interests and needs, some groups aim to recover the traditional justice of their places of origin while others do not, indicating that among indigenous migrants there are different ways of resolving the problems associated with living together. Furthermore, they make strategic use of state law, creating 'spaces of negotiation and inter-legality'[25] (Igreja 2004: 434), even though indigenous people are notably excluded from state justice institutions — as from other spheres of social life, due to their ethnic and class positions. The administration of justice is also inadequate as, in line with what happens across the country, indigenous people are often not recognized as such in the Mexico City's justice institutions and have to face deficiencies in legal proceedings, such as not having access to indigenous language translators. Young people are criminalized by legal authorities, facing criminal proceedings for drug addiction and delinquency. The authorities do not consider them to be indigenous because they do not speak the language of their parents, so when they are called to testify in court they find themselves in an ambiguous situation; they do not know whether they should identify themselves as indigenous in order to obtain institutional and legal support based on their ethnicity (Igreja 2008, Oehmichen 2003b). This example further demonstrates the difficulties that occur when the state establishes rigid definitions of what is indigenous, often requiring a person to speak an indigenous language in order to be categorized as such. In these cases, the dimension of lived experience is lost from sight, as are the subjective and objective aspects that lead indigenous people to define themselves as such.

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[25] The original Spanish reads: 'espacios de negociación e interlegalidad'.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion of recent research has brought out the centrality of the ethnic dimension both in the constitution of organizations and in their demands and has stimulated reflection on the consequences of practising multiculturalism in national legislation. In addition to this, we have seen that there are public policies of great importance on human rights in Mexico City. These policies are taking the lead on this issue in the country, though a law attending to indigenous rights in the city has not yet been passed. The performance of policies aimed at meeting the needs and demands of the indigenous population constitutes an important future field of study, extending to the inevitable conflicts and debates to which the application of such policies will undoubtedly give rise. The different political agendas of the indigenous organizations in the cities is another emerging field of study, as is that pertaining the role of women in these organizations and their specific demands. To sum up, the issues addressed here show that despite growing civic awareness about indigenous rights, these rights have yet to be fully realized.

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