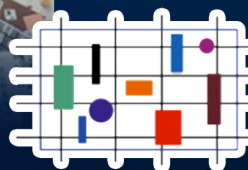
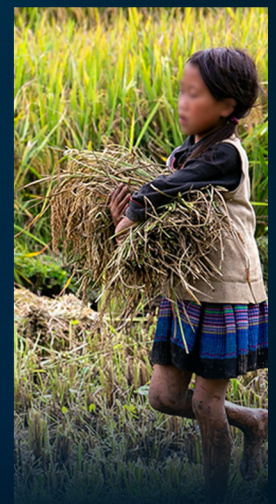
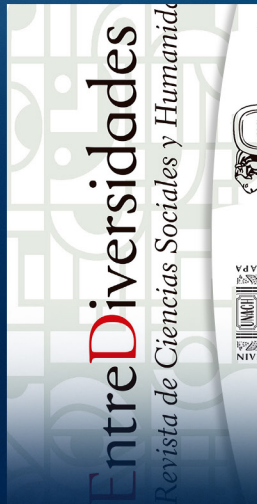


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Index

Editor's Letter	5
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Articles

Building a Regional Policy Strategy with an Intersectional and Intercultural Approach: Comparative Study of Gender Violence Alerts in Indigenous Mesoamerican Regions	7
Professional Competences for Educational Research in Mexico	25
The thousand faces of the school library: a regional diagnosis in public primary schools in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas	50
Migrant Waiting Territories in Emerging Urban Areas: A Theoretical Proposal and Analytical Perspective from Southern Mexico	68
Cartographies from the South: the telluric as a regional sociocultural construction	94
Mobile Scientific, Technological, and Humanistic Outreach Initiatives for Educational Inclusion Across Nine Socio-Educational Regions Of The Colegio De Bachilleres De Chiapas	116
Youth Identities From An Intercultural Educational Regionalization: Student Trajectories At COBACH-UNICH	127
EntreDiversidades and the Doctorate in Regional Studies: editorial trajectory, thematic convergence and contributions to the construction of knowledge from Chiapas	141
Current context of Physical Education teacher training in Chiapas: regional analysis and review	158
Analysis of the role of girls in child labor from a gender perspective	181

Document academic

UNACH's PhD in Regional Studies: Its Importance 18 Years Later	195
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EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear community, we present the issue corresponding to the June-September 2026 period of Volume 15 of the *Divulgación Científica Espacio I+D, Innovación más Desarrollo Journal*. This issue holds special significance, as it commemorates another anniversary of our institution's Doctoral Program in Regional Studies.

In this issue, we provide works that bring us closer to the current situation in Chiapas, spanning from educational perspectives to the phenomenon of migration. In this regard, we feature articles such as: *Building a Regional Policy Strategy with an Intersectional and Intercultural Approach: Comparative Study of Gender Violence Alerts in Indigenous Mesoamerican Region*; *Professional Skills for Educational Research in Mexico*; *The thousand faces of the school library: a regional diagnosis in public primary schools in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas*; *Migrant Waiting Territories in Emerging Urban Areas: A Theoretical Proposal and Analytical Perspective from Southern Mexico*; *Cartographies from the South: the telluric as a regional sociocultural construction*; *Mobile Scientific, Technological, and Humanistic Outreach Initiatives for Educational Inclusion Across Nine Socio-Educational Regions Of The Colegio De Bachilleres De Chiapas*; *Youth Identities From An Intercultural Educational Regionalization: Student Trajectories At COBACH-UNICH*; *EntreDiversidades and the Doctorate in Regional Studies: editorial trajectory, thematic convergence and contributions to the construction of knowledge from Chiapas*; *Current context of Physical Education teacher training in Chiapas: regional analysis and review*; and finally, *Analysis of the role of girls in child labor from a gender perspective*.

From this platform dedicated to the dissemination of knowledge and culture at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas, we contribute to the communication of regional knowledge and science. We congratulate the academic committee that has collaborated with us in coordinating this issue, and as always, we invite you to participate in our permanent call for papers, as well as in the various sections of this journal.

At the *Secretaría de Identidad y Responsabilidad Social Universitaria*, through the Editorial Department, we trust that this issue will contribute to a better understanding of the diverse situations within our state.

Silvia Álvarez-Arana
Editor

Revista Espacio I+D, Innovación más Desarrollo



Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas

«Por la conciencia de la necesidad de servir»

A R T I C L E S

Building a Regional Policy Strategy with an Intersectional and Intercultural Approach: Comparative Study of Gender Violence Alerts in Indigenous Mesoamerican Regions

—

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— Abstract —

This article presents a comparative analysis of the recommendations issued by the Interinstitutional and Multidisciplinary Groups (GIM) under the framework of the Gender Violence Alerts against Women (AVGM) in five southern Mexican states: Oaxaca, Chiapas, Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Puebla. All of these states share a significant presence of Indigenous women, which calls for the incorporation of intersectional and intercultural approaches in public policy design. Through a critical review of the AVGM reports, this study evaluates the extent to which these recommendations reflect the differentiated conditions experienced by Indigenous women due to gender, ethnicity, social class, and geographical context. While some discursive progress and culturally sensitive isolated proposals are identified, the findings reveal a weak methodological articulation of intersectionality. The analysis concludes with a proposal for common regional strategies to enhance the implementation of public policies with an intersectional and intercultural perspective, emphasizing the need for greater participation of Indigenous women in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of such policies. This work contributes to the construction of a Mesoamerican agenda that addresses the multiple forms of violence faced by Indigenous women by articulating solutions from a situated and contextual perspective.

Keywords:

Intersectionality, interculturality, gender violence alerts, public policy, Mesoamerica.

In the Mesoamerican region, gender-based violence against indigenous women constitutes one of the most complex expressions of structural inequality. The multiple forms of discrimination that permeate their lives – on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, social class, language, territory, or access to justice – are intertwined in a cumulative manner and are neither sufficiently visible nor adequately addressed within the institutional frameworks for care and prevention. This violence is further compounded in contexts where colonial, patriarchal, and racist dynamics persist, relegating indigenous women to conditions of extreme marginality.

Given this scenario, Mexico has implemented institutional mechanisms such as the Gender Violence Alert against Women (AVGM, by its Spanish acronym), with the aim of addressing situations of femicide violence and formulating urgent action strategies. However, the relevance of such recommendations in indigenous contexts has been scarcely analyzed through intersectional and intercultural approaches that would allow for an understanding of how different forms of exclusion operate simultaneously. This gap is particularly concerning in southern Mexican states –such as Chiapas, Oaxaca, Campeche, Quintana Roo and Puebla– where the indigenous female population represents a significant and particularly vulnerable segment.

This article aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the AVGM issued in the aforementioned states, identifying common and divergent elements in their recommendations, as well as methodological gaps regarding the recognition of cultural diversity and multiple forms of violence. The objective is twofold: on the one hand, to evaluate the extent to which the formulated policies incorporate an intersectional perspective with an intercultural approach; and on the other, to propose regional strategies that strengthen a more equitable, contextualized, and participatory response in favor of Mesoamerican indigenous women.

This work departs from the need to transcend fragmented responses, proposing a regionally articulated action agenda that integrates local knowledge, guarantees effective access to rights, and places the voices of indigenous women themselves at the center. Only through a critical and situated approach will it be possible to transform the structures that sustain violence and build public policies with genuine impact in territories that have historically been overlooked.

1. GENDER VIOLENCE ALERTS AS AN INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM

The AVGM is an emergency mechanism established under the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (LGAMVLV, by its Spanish acronym). Its purpose is to confront and eradicate feminicide violence in specific territories of the country through the issuance of binding recommendations by an Interinstitutional and Multidisciplinary Group (GIM, by its Spanish acronym) that analyzes the local context and proposes priority actions. This mechanism, created in 2007 and operational since 2015, emerged as an institutional response to the alarming prevalence of extreme violence against women across various states of the country.

The process of activating an AVGM includes a request submitted by civil society organizations or institutions, the establishment of the GIM, the development of a quantitative-qualitative diagnostic, and the issuance of a report with recommendations directed at local authorities. These recommendations must be urgent in nature and oriented toward eliminating the factors that generate and reproduce femicide violence, under principles of comprehensive protection and respect for human rights (Grupo Interinstitucional y Multidisciplinario, 2018).

However, various studies have noted that the effectiveness of the alerts has been uneven, particularly in indigenous or rural contexts, where the structural conditions of historical discrimination have not been adequately taken into account. This limitation has generated criticism regarding the homogeneity of the recommendations, the centralized nature of their design, and the lack of participation of indigenous women in the formulation of policies (Ríos Cázares, 2021).

2. INTERSECTIONALITY AND INTERCULTURALITY AS CRITICAL ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

Intersectionality has established itself as a fundamental tool for understanding how different forms of oppression —gender, ethnicity, social class, disability, sexual orientation, among others— interact simultaneously and cumulative in people's lives. Initially proposed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, this concept has been taken up and expanded by numerous scholars to analyze how power structures produce complex inequalities, particularly in contexts marked by colonial legacies and structural racism (Crenshaw, 1991; Viveros Vigoya, 2016; Roth, 2022).

From a situated perspective, intersectionality does not merely imply the identification of multiple forms of discrimination, but also the need to analyze them in relation to specific historical, political, and social contexts (Viveros Vigoya, 2016). In this way, the intersectional approach makes it possible to demonstrate how gender does not operate in isolation, but rather in constant interaction with other structural conditions that shape differentiated experiences of violence.

In parallel, the intercultural approach critiques the homogeneous view of rights and public policies, and proposes incorporating the recognition of the worldviews, customary normative systems, and community practices of indigenous peoples. The articulation between interculturality and intersectionality is particularly relevant in the Mesoamerican region, where indigenous women not only face gender-based violence, but also systematic exclusion derived from racialization, territorial inequality, and institutional lack of protection (Sánchez-Melero & Gil-Jaurena, 2015; Guiñazú & Trentini, 2019).

It should be clarified that this article analytically distinguishes between the approaches of intersectionality and interculturality, while articulating them in a complementary manner. Intersectionality is employed as an analytical tool to identify how the interaction among gender, ethnicity, territory, and other categories

produces specific, non-additive forms of inequality (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins and Bilger, 2016; Hankivsky, 2014). Interculturality, in turn, is assumed as a normative and political approach oriented toward the recognition of cultural diversity, the dialogue of knowledge systems, and the transformation of historically asymmetrical relationships between cultural groups (Walsh, 2009; Tubino, 2005; De Sousa Santos, 2010). In terms of public policy, intersectionality is operationalized through disaggregated indicators and analyses of differentiated impacts, while interculturality is implemented through mechanisms of culturally pertinent participation, institutional adaptations, and the recognition of local knowledge in the design and implementation of policies.

Therefore, the combination of both approaches proves indispensable for analyzing the pertinence of the AVGM reports in indigenous contexts, as it allows for an assessment of whether the designed public policies respond, or fail to respond, to the complexity of the structural forms of violence that permeate the lives of indigenous women.

3. GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE AVGMS: ADVANCES AND LIMITATIONS

The recommendations issued by the GIMs within the framework of the AVGMs draw on the gender perspective as the primary tool for analyzing violence against women. In the majority of cases, the reports acknowledge that structural inequalities and gender stereotypes fuel dynamics of femicide-related violence. Hence, the reports insist on the need to train public servants, harmonize state laws, raise awareness in communities, and guarantee access to justice and health services without discrimination (Grupo Interinstitucional y Multidisciplinario de Chiapas, 2016; Quintana Roo, 2016; Puebla, 2017).

However, the use of the gender perspective within the alerts tends to be limited to a binary and universalist vision that does not always recognize the diversity of experiences lived by women under conditions of structural inequality. In many reports, gender appears disconnected from other social categories, which reduces the capacity of the policies to address the specific forms of violence faced by indigenous women.

This methodological limitation prevents a deep understanding of how multiple forms of exclusion operate. As Ríos Cázares (2021) warns, the absence of data disaggregated by ethnicity and language, as well as the lack of consultation strategies with indigenous communities, reflects an insufficient application of the principle of equity from an intersectional perspective.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative documentary analysis approach with an intersectional and intercultural perspective. The research focuses on the comparative analysis of five reports issued by the GIMs within the framework of the AVGMs, corresponding to the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Puebla. These states were selected on the basis of their high proportion of indigenous female population and their shared dynamics of structural inequality in the Mesoamerican region (INEGI, 2021).

The selection of the five states analyzed does not respond to a criterion of statistical representativeness, but rather to a theoretical and intentional selection logic aimed at maximizing the analytical relevance of the study. Federal entities were chosen that simultaneously meet four criteria: (1) having a significant proportion of indigenous population, so that the ethnic dimension is substantive for the analysis of gender-based violence; (2) having a Gender Violence Alert against Women decreed and an official public report available; (3) representing different territorial contexts and institutional trajectories, in order to incorporate regional and political variation; and (4) allowing for an in-depth qualitative and manageable comparative analysis within the limits of the study.

Limiting the analysis to the five cases responded to a methodological decision oriented toward privileging analytical depth over descriptive breadth. Given that the objective of the study is to critically examine the interpretative frameworks, public policy categories, and institutional mechanisms from an intersectional and intercultural perspective, expanding the number of cases would have reduced the possibility of conducting a dense, contextualized, and comparative reading of each report. In this sense, the five states function as strategic cases that allow for the identification of structural patterns and relevant variations without claiming to exhaust the universe of entities with indigenous presence.

The methodology is grounded in the critical review of the contents and recommendations of each report, with the objective of identifying the extent to which intersectional approaches—which consider the interaction among gender, ethnicity, class language, and territory—(Viveros Vigoya, 2016) and intercultural approaches—which recognize the normative diversity and worldviews of indigenous peoples—(Sánchez-Melero & Gil-Jaurena, 2015) are integrated.

To this end, an analysis matrix was constructed to categorize the main lines of recommended action, evaluate the presence or absence of differentiated considerations toward indigenous women, and detect common or divergent elements among the reviewed documents. This process was guided by the methodological principle of situated and relational experience (Roth, 2022), with the aim of interpreting the policies from specific contexts of exclusion.

The study adopted a qualitative comparative documentary analysis approach, oriented toward identifying similarities, differences, patterns, and absences in the

way different states construct the problem of gender-based violence and design their institutional responses in contexts with a significant indigenous population. The comparison is not conducted between “cases” understood as closed units, but rather between discursive, normative, and programmatic configurations present in the official reports establishing the Gender Violence Alerts against Women (AVGM), read as public policy texts that express particular interpretive frameworks, institutional priorities, and conceptions of subjects, rights, and territories.

Based on a systematic reading of the five selected reports, a comparative analysis matrix was constructed around six analytical dimensions: (1) the diagnosis of the problem of gender – based violence and its causes; (2) the recognition – or absence – of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity; (3) the manner in which indigenous women are represented (as actors, recipients, or absent subjects); (4) the type of measures proposed and their degree of adequacy to specific territorial contexts; (5) the implicit institutional model (centralized, technocratic, territorialized, or community-based); and (6) the way in which women’s rights are translated into concrete sphere of social, political, territorial, economic, and labor life. These dimensions allowed for the comparison of not only explicit content, but also silences, omissions, and forms of invisibilization that are relevant from an intersectional and intercultural perspective.

The analysis was conducted from an intersectional and intercultural approach, which involved examining how the categories of gender, ethnicity, territory, language, and socioeconomic inequality are articulated – or dissociated – in the documents, and how such articulations produce differentiated effects in the construction of public policies. In this way, the comparison did not seek to establish hierarchies among the states, but rather to understand the distinct institutional rationalities that guide responses to gender-based violence in indigenous contexts and the structural limitations they share. In this sense, the results should not be read as exhaustive, but as analytically transferable to other contexts with similar structural characteristics. Likewise, national statistical sources were consulted —such as the National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships (ENDIREH 2021)— to contextualize the types of violence faced by indigenous women and to contrast this information with the gaps or omissions observed in the institutional recommendations.

The comparative nature of the study makes it possible to render visible common patterns of omission, fragmentation, or insufficiency in the recommendations, while simultaneously identifying incipient experiences of good practices that could be articulated as regional strategies. The analysis was carried out under a critical and constructive logic, with the aim of contributing to the design of more pertinent, effective, and culturally situated public policies (Guiñazú & Trentini, 2019).

5. RESULTS BY ENTITY: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF AVGM RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE MESOAMERICAN REGION

The Mesoamerican region, in historical and anthropological terms, encompasses the territory occupied by various indigenous civilizations prior to European colonization, and currently extends across southern Mexico and parts of Central America. In the Mexican case, states such as Chiapas, Oaxaca, Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Puebla represent geographical, cultural, and demographic nuclei of this region. These entities share a high density of indigenous population, a rich linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as historical contexts marked by structural inequality and institutional exclusion. This historical condition, far from having been overcome, persists today as a factor that aggravates the situation of gender-based violence against indigenous women, who face multiple obstacles to the effective access to rights and public services.

The selection of these five states is based on three main criteria: 1) their location within the traditional Mesoamerican territory; 2) their high proportion of indigenous female population—in Chiapas, for example, more than 27% of women self-identify as indigenous (INEGI, 2020)—; and 3) the existence of AVGM reports that allow for a comparative analysis of their institutional recommendations. According to data from the National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships (ENDIREH 2021), indigenous women present significant percentages of psychological violence (40.6%), physical violence (28.7%), and economic violence (18.7%)—figures that, even if potentially underestimated due to barriers to reporting, evidence a systematic problem. The review of the AVGM reports in these states allows for an understanding of the extent to which institutional responses have—or have not—managed to integrate an intersectional and intercultural perspective that responds to the particular conditions of Mesoamerican indigenous women.

5.1 Case: Chiapas

The report of the GIM of the state of Chiapas, issued in October 2016, constitutes one of the most advanced documents in terms of sensitivity toward contexts of multiple vulnerability. Although the concept of “intersectionality” is not explicitly mentioned, the analysis recognizes the need to simultaneously address various conditions of exclusion that permeate the lives of indigenous women, such as pregnancy, disability, migration, and ethnic belonging. This approach allows for an initial understanding of the intersection between structural categories to be glimpsed, albeit without a developed methodology for articulating them in an integrated manner.

Among the notable actions identified is the training of judicial system personnel—judges, prosecutors, and operators—to apply instruments such as the Protocol for Judging with a Gender Perspective and the Protocol of Action in

Cases Involving the Rights of Indigenous Persons, Peoples, and Communities (*Protocolo para Juzgar con Perspectiva de Género y el Protocolo de actuación en casos que involucren derechos de personas, pueblos y comunidades indígenas*). This suggests an institutional willingness to equip legal operators with adequate tools to reduce systemic discrimination in access to justice (Grupo Interinstitucional y Multidisciplinario de Chiapas, 2016).

Furthermore, the design of specific policies to prevent violence in indigenous communities is promoted, taking into account elements of cosmovision, community norms, and local authority structures. This inclusion recognizes the importance of adapting state-level approaches to cultural particularities, avoiding the imposition of homogenous models that may be foreign to community dynamics.

A relevant aspect of the report is the proposal to strengthen female community leadership through the training of human rights promoters, who would play an active role in the prevention of violence and in the dissemination of information within their communities. The development of culturally pertinent awareness campaigns is also proposed, taking into account the language, symbols, and referents of indigenous peoples.

Although the report advances in identifying vulnerability factors and proposes differentiated interventions, the absence of an intersectional methodological structure persists – one that would allow for a clear articulation of how different forms of oppression intersect and how public responses should be designed on the basis of this complexity. Nevertheless, the Chiapas case can be considered a reference point for incipient practices that could be strengthened and replicated at the regional level of provided with a more robust analytical systematization.

5.2 Case: Quintana Roo

The GIM report of Quintana Roo, published in 2016, addresses the situation of gender-based violence in five municipalities of the state: Benito Juárez, Cozumel, Isla Mujeres, Lázaro Cárdenas, and Solidaridad. Although it does not explicitly articulate an intersectional methodology, the document recognizes the existence of conditions of multiple vulnerability that differentially affect certain groups of women, such as indigenous women, migrants, and those living in conditions of poverty.

One of the report's primary strengths lies in the recognition of the structural inequalities that generate specific contexts of violence in the northern part of the state. In this regard, the development of more refined diagnostics is proposed, integrating socioeconomic, demographic, and cultural variables, with the aim of designing more effective prevention strategies. This recommendation points toward the need to territorialize public policies, adapting them to the characteristics of each community.

The report also raises the inclusion of vulnerability criteria in budget allocation, with the purpose of ensuring that interventions effectively reach the women most

exposed to multiple forms of violence. This approach, though still limited, represents an attempt to mainstream the structural inequality perspective into planning and financing processes.

On the other hand, the urgency of training justice system personnel and public service staff in gender perspective and non-discrimination is emphasized, in order to avoid re-victimizing practices and promote more humane and efficient care. The report suggests the design of specialized protocols for cases of harassment, sexual misconduct, and domestic violence, albeit without detailing how these should be adapted to intercultural contexts.

Taken together, the recommendations of the GIM of Quintana Roo reflect a partial approach to the principles of intersectionality, insofar as the coexistence of various forms of exclusion is acknowledged. However, the document does not develop specific mechanism to address these interactions in a structural manner. Its most relevant contribution lies in the budgetary recognition of multiple vulnerability, which constitutes a starting point for driving deeper reforms toward a public policy with an intersectional and intercultural approach.

5.3 Case: Puebla

The GIM report of the state of Puebla, issued in December 2017, sets forth a set of recommendations oriented toward confronting feminicide violence in the state. Unlike other reports, the document adheres to the human rights' legal framework, the gender perspective, and the need for normative harmonization, but lacks a clear articulation that would allow for the identification of an intersectional approach in the strict sense.

The document emphasizes the importance of public policies addressing the structural inequalities that perpetuate violence against women, particularly in indigenous and rural contexts. While the existence of cultural differences is acknowledged and a call is made to respect the worldviews of indigenous peoples, these references remain at a declaratory level, without being translated into concrete mechanisms for differentiated care.

Likewise, the obligation of the State to train its public servants in the gender perspective is underscored, in order to guarantee equal access to justice. However, the report does not contemplate specific contents related to the rights of indigenous peoples, nor to the institutional, linguistic, or cultural barriers faced by indigenous women when seeking protection from violence.

In terms of institutional design, the document proposes aligning state legislation with international instruments such as the Belém do Pará Convention and the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence. This orientation is positive; however, the absence of strategies that recognize the multiple forms of discrimination intertwined in the experiences of indigenous women is once again observed.

The case of Puebla illustrates the limitations of an approach that, while acknowledging cultural diversity and the gender perspective, does not incorporate an intersectional outlook in a structured manner. The proposals contained in the report focus more on the universalization of rights than on addressing cumulative inequalities, and therefore its transformative potential is limited in the face of the complexity of the forms of violence experienced by indigenous women in the state.

5.4 Case: Campeche

The GIM report of the state of Campeche, issued in May 2017, incorporates some relevant references to the human rights approach and to the need to guarantee substantive equality between women and men. Although it does not explicitly articulate an intersectional methodology, the document recognizes the importance of implementing affirmative and cross-cutting actions to address historically excluded sectors, including indigenous women, migrants, and those living in poverty.

Among the proposals, the recommendation to eliminate gender stereotypes across various institutional spheres stands out as a prior measure for modifying the structures that reproduce violence. This approach is articulated with the demand to develop public policies aligned with the principles of universality, interdependence, indivisibility, and progressivity of human rights, which lends legal and normative strength to the recommendations.

However, the report maintains a generalist logic when proposing specific measure for indigenous women. Although it recognizes their condition of vulnerability, no concrete actions are specified that consider the cultural, linguistic, or community particularities they face. Nor are differentiated participation mechanisms incorporated, nor is reference made to the need to consult the communities themselves in the design of policies.

Unlike the case of Chiapas, where a willingness to territorialize prevention strategies can be glimpsed, in Campeche a more institutional and normative vision persists, without sufficient connection to local contexts. The presence of a human rights-oriented language is a strength; however, its transformative potential is limited by the lack of strategies that address the intersection of multiple structural inequalities.

In summary, the Campeche report advances at the discursive level toward a more inclusive equality policy, but still lacks the methodological tools to operate with an intersectional and intercultural outlook that contemplates the specific realities of indigenous women.

5.5 Case: Oaxaca

The GIM report of the state of Oaxaca, issued in August 2017, evidences a greater effort to recognize the multiple dimensions of inequality faced by indigenous

women. Although it does not incorporate a declared intersectional methodology, the document contains important references to structural discrimination, racism, and historical exclusion that permeate the lives of women indigenous contexts.

One of the report's key strengths is its explicit recognition that indigenous women face a heightened state of vulnerability, driven by factors such as language barriers, local customs, poverty, and institutional obstacles. Building on this, the report proposes strategies aimed at adapting public services to the cultural and linguistic realities of indigenous communities. Particularly noteworthy is the proposal to certify interpreters in indigenous languages and to regionalize institutional actions so that they reflect local practices and customs.

The report also calls for government programs to incorporate indigenous world-views and promotes community participation in the design of public policies. This approach marks a significant step toward an intercultural policy framework that, while not explicitly grounded in intersectionality theory, nonetheless acknowledges the need to tailor state responses to the lived contexts of indigenous women.

Nevertheless, as with the other cases examined, the report lacks a methodological framework that explains how the different dimensions of inequality interact and how these should inform the design of targeted strategies. While the recommendations move toward differentiated care, they remain fragmented and without a unifying logic that integrates them into a structured system for the prevention of and response to violence.

Oaxaca stands out as one of the most promising examples in terms of cultural sensitivity; however, it needs to consolidate its approach through mechanisms that guarantee the meaningful participation of indigenous women in policy formulation, and that ensure their access to justice from both an intersectional and intercultural perspective.

6. PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONVERGENCE

The comparative analysis of the AVGM reports from Chiapas, Oaxaca, Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Puebla reveals a recurring pattern: while there is partial recognition of the differentiated conditions faced by indigenous women, the institutional recommendations largely lack an intersectional methodological framework that would allow for an effective engagement with the complexity of their experiences. The diversity of cultural, linguistic, and geographic contexts is not reflected in the depth of the proposals, which limits the capacity of these alerts to transform the structures that reproduce violence.

A first cross-cutting observation is the absence of a structured intersectional framework. None of the reports employ this framework as a formal analytical category, although some – such as that of Chiapas and, to a lesser extent, Oaxaca – implicitly acknowledge the need to address multiple conditions of vulnerability.

However, this recognition remains at a descriptive level and does not translate into systematic strategies for addressing the interaction between gender, ethnicity, class, and territory. As Viveros Vigoya (2016) warns, without a situated and relational perspective, public policies tend to replicate fragmentary approaches that fail to account for cumulative inequalities.

A second recurring pattern is the limited inclusion of indigenous women's voices in the development of recommendations. Most diagnostic assessments are built on official sources, interviews with government officials, and in some cases, civil society organizations, but rarely incorporate direct participatory processes with the affected communities. This omission reinforces a centralist and technocratic logic that render situated knowledge invisible and reproduces colonial dynamics of decision-making (Guiñazú & Trentini, 2019).

Another critical issue is the lack of territorial and cultural adaptation in the proposed actions. The reports analyzed reveal a tendency to replicate urban models of violence prevention and response, without accounting for the particularities of indigenous communities. The centralization of services in municipal seats, the limited availability of interpreters in indigenous languages, and the lack of familiarity with community authority structures are persistent barriers that restrict effective access to justice (Ríos Cázares, 2021). Although Oaxaca and Chiapas put forward some incipient proposals for regionalization and cultural adaptation, these have yet to consolidate into comprehensive public policies.

From the standpoint of critical interculturality (Gago, 2015), the findings regarding limited participation, centralization, and inadequate cultural adaptation cannot be explained merely as "implementation deficits" but rather as expressions of historical power relations that tend to translate cultural diversity into a technical-administrative language, without redistributing authority or fully recognizing community knowledge and deliberative practices. Within this frameworks, strengthening a regional strategy does not simply mean "adapting" programs, but rather reconfiguring governance – that is: 1) shifting decision-making toward community-based and regionalized mechanisms; 2) ensuring linguistic and institutional mediation, not merely the use of translation as currently practiced; and 3) establishing conditions for the co-production of diagnostic assessments, indicators, and pathways to justice, health, and protection, with an intersectional and intercultural approach.

Finally, the comparative review highlights the need for a Mesoamerican regional strategy that brings together the best practices identifies and addresses the recurring gaps. Such a strategy should be oriented toward building a violence prevention policy grounded in the recognition of the multiple forms of discrimination affecting indigenous women, integrating a gender perspective with a robust intersectional and intercultural approach. This entails breaking with the current fragmentation and moving toward an intervention logic that is territorialized, participatory, situated, and respectful of the region's cultural diversities.

7. PROPOSALS FOR A REGIONAL STRATEGY WITH AN INTERSECTIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL APPROACH

The review of the AVGM reports in key states of the Mesoamerican region underscores the urgency of building an articulated, situated, and differentiated response to the multiple forms of violence affecting indigenous women. Based on the analysis conducted, five strategic axes are identified that can constitute the foundation of a shared regional agenda, designed with an intersectional and intercultural approach:

1. Participatory policy design with indigenous women

The active participation of indigenous women in the design, implementation, and evaluation of public policies is an essential component for ensuring their pertinence and effectiveness. It is necessary to establish institutionalized community consultation mechanisms in each federal entity, with direct representation of community leaders, community promoters, and indigenous rights defenders. This will allow for the integration of situated knowledge and the strengthening of local organization networks, recognizing women not as beneficiaries, but as rights-bearing subjects and strategic actors.

In this work, the participation of indigenous women is understood as an enabling right and a condition of public justice: it is not limited to consultation, but implies real capacities to influence the public policy cycle (problem definition-category construction- prioritization-budgeting-implementation-monitoring and evaluation). From an intercultural and intersectional standpoint, this requires that intervention categories be constructed from all the multiple spheres of life in which women's rights are materialized (social, political, territorial, economic, and labor), avoiding the imposition by the State of universal frameworks that render invisible linguistic barriers, the still-prevailing institutional racism, the at times evident territorial inequality, and the existence of community norms permeated by gender relations.

2. Development of Differentiated Protocols by Cultural and Linguistic Context

Progress is required in the creation of specific care protocols in the areas of justice, health, and protection, developed in conjunction with indigenous communities. These must take into account indigenous languages, worldviews, internal normative systems, and geographical location. The certification of interpreters, the translation of prevention materials, and the regionalization of services must form part of a policy of effective access with a rights-based approach.

3. Structural Training in Intersectionality and Interculturality

It is indispensable to incorporate structures content on intersectionality and interculturality into the training of public officials, justice operators, health and security personnel, as well as into the curricula of public universities. This training must enable a critical understanding of how multiple inequalities operate and how institutional practices must be transformed so as not to reproduce structural violence or re-victimization.

4. Operational Decentralization of Services and Resources

A regional strategy requires the promotion of genuine decentralization models, with mobile services and comprehensive care units that reach remote communities. This decentralization must be accompanied by specific budget allocations for contexts with a high indigenous female population, applying criteria of structural vulnerability and historical inequity in the distribution of public expenditure.

5. Systematization of Regional Good Practices

The experiences identified in states such as Chiapas and Oaxaca – regarding the integration of community promoters, the recognition of indigenous worldviews, and the regionalization of actions – can be systematized and replicated among states with similar cultural and sociodemographic characteristics. It is necessary to promote interinstitutional and intergovernmental dialogue spaces in which methodologies, indicators, and normative frameworks appropriate to the Mesoamerican reality are shared.

These proposals aim to consolidate a regional strategy that not only responds to the femicide emergency, but also contributes to dismantling the structures of exclusion that have historically silenced indigenous women. From a social justice perspective, these actions must be oriented toward building transformative public policies that place communities at the center, recognize the plurality of identities, and redress the historical debts of the State toward indigenous peoples.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the AVGM reports in the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Puebla makes it possible to identify a common pattern of structural insufficiency in the institutional responses to the violence experienced by indigenous women in the Mesoamerican region. Although in some cases the existence of conditions of multiple vulnerability is acknowledged, the majority of the recommendations lack a systematized intersectional outlook and an articulation with the cultural and territorial realities of indigenous peoples.

Violence against indigenous women cannot be understood or addressed solely from a universalist gender perspective. The historical conditions of exclusion, institutional racism, linguistic barriers, and political invisibilization operate as factors that aggravate violence and hinder access to justice, health, and comprehensive protection. State responses that do not consider these dimensions are condemned to reproduce the very exclusion they seek to combat.

It is essential to transition toward a public policy that articulates the approaches of gender, intersectionality, and interculturality from a situated justice logic. This implies not only recognizing the plurality of identities and experiences of indigenous women, but also transforming the power structures that subordinate them, including the technocratic and centralized design of institutional mechanisms such as the AVGMs.

The future of policies aimed at eradicating gender-based violence in the Mesoamerican region requires the construction of a regional agenda grounded in horizontal dialogue, respect for community autonomy, and the active participation of indigenous women as political subjects. Only through this path will it be possible to advance toward a truly transformative justice that repairs historical debts, recognizes diversity, and guarantees all women a life free of violence, without cultural, territorial, or ethnic exceptions.

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Professional Competences for Educational Research in Mexico

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— Abstract —

This paper aims to analyze the main competencies identified by researchers in Mexico as crucial for their professional performance, considering personal and academic-occupational characteristics as well as the social recognition they obtain from belonging to national and state research systems. The discussion presented results from a quantitative research with a descriptive correlational design, gathering information through a questionnaire answered by 1,246 participants working in Mexican institutions. The results highlight educational research as a professional field that requires multiple competencies, among which three stand out as priorities. These are analyzed, showing variations corresponding to the academic working conditions of those who conduct the research. The results open routes to define educational research paths as a professional performance field.

Keywords:

Competence requirements; educational research; scientific researchers; higher education; Mexico.

Social reality is undergoing a rapid global transformation as a consequence to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where educational and professional landscapes are being reconfigured based on the demands and requirements of the new global order. In this regard, in recent years the educational offer has begun a process of modernization concerning the “professions of the future” and the imperative development of human capital capable of responding to these emerging socio-professional dynamics (Schwab, 2016). Despite the few commonalities between emerging and traditional educational offerings, certain core pillars connect them, serving as bridges that facilitate a staggered yet continuous transition. Specifically, “[it will be necessary to maintain] mathematics, science, and computing...” (El Financiero, 2023,4:25) to the extent that staying at the forefront of the era of artificial intelligence and digitalization is desired. Hence, in each field of knowledge, there is an ongoing debate regarding the pertinent competencies that its members must develop to effectively operate in today’s professional world.

Based on the above, research is understood to be one of the most critical pillars in the education of new generations worldwide. The advancement of knowledge will help shed light on the scope, challenges, and horizons of 21st-century society amid whirlwind of change brought about by the current industrial revolution. The fact that the production of knowledge across various fields is inherently linked to the number of researchers in asymmetrical and alarming scientific and technological development among nations globally.

In this vein, and despite Mexico ranking 29th in scientific knowledge development worldwide in 2020 (Scimago, 2022), the country had an approximate population of 263 scientists per million inhabitants. This positioned it as one of the nations with the lowest level of training for the professional practice of science (Sandoval Villalbaz, 2019; UNESCO, n.d.), with the field of educational research being one of those possessing the least human capital for its development.

Educational research is called upon to address the serious issues facing humanity in this area, which are summarized in Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda (PNUD, 2023). Examining educational research as a professional field in Mexico becomes relevant in the search for pathways to achieve inclusive, quality education, improve learning across all levels of the National Education System (SEN, by its Spanish initials), and contribute to narrowing the economic, gender, and ethnic gaps, among others, that prevail today. To this end, it is necessary to identify the professionals tasked with this endeavor and determine the competencies to be developed to prepare the future generations who will bear this responsibility.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review focuses on two key axes of analysis relevant to a deeper understanding of educational research as a professional and occupational field: first, the definitions and social impact of educational researchers; second, the professional competencies required for scientific work in education.

In the first axis, *Definitions and Social Impact of Educational Researchers*, some authors define the term as the human capital that develops their professional work between the design and coordination of research projects, the publication of their results, and the training of new cohorts of specialists in the field (Pérez-Reveles et al., 2014; Vásquez-Villanueva et al., 2020); other studies define these professionals as agents who interpret and explain educational phenomena from the context in which they occur (Lozoya, 2017; Pons Bonals & Espinosa Torres, 2020); on the other hand, there is research that defines them as autonomous individuals who educate themselves, with the support of human mediators of through practice itself (López Ordoñez & Nairdorf; 2017; Nájera et al., 2017).

For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that educational researchers are key actors who focus their professional practice on analyzing the social realities specific to their field, with the aim of contributing to the improvement or resolution of regional or broader educational problems, guided by the principles of ethics and justice for all (Acuña-Gamboa, 2022a); despite this, training in educational research remains a goal yet to be achieved almost worldwide (Colás-Bravo, 2021).

In terms of social impact, some authors assume that such impact is closely linked to the formative processes through which researchers develop the skills necessary for the research profession, where institutionalized training plays a key role in raising awareness of social needs and demands in the field of education in order to address them (Acuña Gamboa & Pons Bonals, 2019; Reis-Jorge et al., 2020); however, there are also studies that argue that educational researchers have sidelined their capacity for agency in the face of the socio-educational problems and needs of their contexts of impact, becoming human capital eager for credentials for the sake of social, symbolic, and economic recognition (Acuña-Gamboa et al., 2023; Ocampo-Gómez et al., 2019; Turpo Gebera et al., 2021).

In the second axis, *Professional Competencies for Scientific Work in Education*, some studies argue that personal competencies (sensitivity to social phenomena, the ability to listen, as well as critical, reflective, and independent thinking), interpersonal competencies (communication, teamwork, and leadership in the field), intellectual competencies (creativity and decision-making), and organizational competencies (resource management and environmental responsibility) are necessary for engaging in research (Guerrero Useda, 2007; Moreno Bayardo, 2002). A second line of thought supports the idea that correctly framing research problems, formulating rigorous research questions, knowing how to review the state of the art and theoretical frameworks, designing and validating research in-

struments, mastering data analysis techniques, preparing and presenting scientific papers at academic events, as well as having knowledge of languages and general culture, are the necessary competencies that must be developed for the practice of research, which are typically acquired in institutional educational settings (Numa-Sanjuan & Márquez Delgado, 2019; Quijano Aranibar, 2020; Pérez Díaz et al., 2019; Rivas Tovar, 2011; Vásquez-Villanueva, 2020).

On the other hand, other documents refer to the development of these competencies through guidance from an expert (using a traditional approach) (Chávez Vera et al., 2022; Gorostiaga, 2017; Sánchez Puentes, 1987). On a different note, some authors emphasize the need to develop competencies in the use and application of information, communication, knowledge, and digital learning technologies (TICCAD) that contribute to the understanding of social reality and the analysis of findings within it (Acuña-Gamboa, 2022b; Chumaceiro Hernández et al., 2022).

Finally, beyond the development of professional competencies for conducting educational research, it is evident that the principles of research ethics are fundamental to the effective practice of the research profession, since it is by upholding these principles that one can make a tangible impact in the social field (Espinoza Freire & Calva Nagua, 2020; Hortigüela Alcalá et al., 2017; Ruiz-Guanipa, 2020).

Based on the aforementioned, it is evident that studies related to the educational research community and its competencies have a long history; however, these works rely on generic classifications of such competencies that, to date, do not allow for an understanding of the educational researcher's profession in terms of the academic, cultural, and symbolic capital that enables them to assume that role; Thus, it is of interest to analyze the professional competencies with which Mexican educational researchers carry out their professional practice, and their relationship with personal and training spaces, as well as with the systems of recognition for research merit that the country's scientific community relies upon.

METHOD

This is a quantitative study with a descriptive-correlational design (Arias González & Covinos Gallardo, 2021; Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza Torres, 2018), using a survey technique to collect data via a questionnaire, with the aim of identifying factors that influence the subject of study—namely, the competencies that define the professional conduct of educational researchers in Mexico. The objective of the research discussed in this article is to identify the key competencies that researchers in Mexico consider essential for their professional performance, taking into account personal characteristics (age and gender), academic and employment-related factors (highest level of education and type of employment contract), as well as the social recognition they derive from belonging to national and state research systems.

Instrument

The results presented here are based on an analysis of the responses to a questionnaire comprising 33 items distributed across 6 dimensions (see Table 1), which address the need to account for the most important professional competencies for conducting educational research in Mexico. These items were developed based on various models of training for educational research, both nationally and internationally, that emphasize the most important competencies for this profession (Evans, 2011; Fieldman et al., 2013; Hunter et al., 2006; Moreno Bayardo, 2002; Moreno Bayardo & Romero, 2011; Reeves et al., 2012; Rivas Tovar, 2011; Pérez-Reveles et al., 2014). Said questionnaire was specifically designed and shared via the SurveyMonkey platform. The questions were multiple-choice, using ordinal scales with five options (most important, very important, important, somewhat important, and not at all important). The questionnaire included a special section for items that collected personal characteristics (such as age and gender), academic and employment information (such as highest level of education and type of employment contract), and information regarding their social recognition as researchers (membership in national and state research systems).

Table 1
Scope of the data collection tool

DIMENSIONES	ATRIBUTOS	
	1	Profesiográficos
	2	Reconocimientos al mérito en investigación educativa
	3	Relevancia formativa para la dedicación a la investigación educativa
	4	Historias de vida para la dedicación a la investigación educativa (vocaciones científicas)
	5	Beneficios profesionales y personales de la dedicación a la investigación educativa
	6	Compromisos profesionales y personales

To calculate the internal consistency of the instrument, McDonald's Omega coefficient (ω) was used, as it is considered the most appropriate measure for the validity of instruments that use ordinal-type items; furthermore, it is not affected by the number of questions in the validation process or by the number of response options in the questionnaire (Frías-Navarro, 2020). In this regard, a value of $\omega = .805$ was obtained; this indicates that the set of items is reliable in measuring the construct.

The findings of this article correspond to the third dimension, which addresses the competencies, requirements, and/or knowledge that educational researchers consider necessary to work professionally in educational research. This allows us to capture the perspectives of those who currently make up this knowledge-generating

community and to uncover the academic and personal conditions underlying their considerations regarding what is important in their professional work.

Sample

For this research study, a non-probabilistic, opinion-based sampling method was carried out, which selects representative samples qualitatively by including typical groups (Hernández-Ávila & Carpio Escobar, 2019). Based on the above, it was necessary for candidates to be part of the sample to meet two criteria of particular interest to the research: 1) that they be active academics at a public or private higher education institution in Mexico, and 2) that they conduct research in the field of education as part of their professional work.

To select the sample, an open call was held in which participation in the study was voluntary, resulting in a sample of 1,246 participants. Data collection spanned approximately 70 days, and given the goal of ensuring representativeness across Mexico's states, we chose to collaborate with a company specializing in communication, surveys, and polls (SociaLightMX). This collaboration resulted in the design of communication and public relations strategies involving a number of public figures who helped promote the survey, leading to the following actions:

- Compilation of a directory of principals, university presidents, department heads, education officials, teachers, and researchers.
- Contacts with key figures in the education sector: directors, professors, university presidents, and high-level education officials (DGESuM, UNAM, IPN, UAM, UAEM, Sistema Universitario Jesuita, Secretarías de Educación locales, Subsecretaría de Educación Superior, Conahcyt, among others).
- First contact and dissemination of information to educational authorities outside the immediate area, to establish communication and provide information about the research instrument.
- Use of own databases (over 35,000 email addresses).
- Use of social networks and digital platforms.
- Direct contact with teachers and researchers.

Data analysis

The data collected via Survey Monkey was exported to a Microsoft Excel file, to undergo a rigorous data cleaning and validation process. This stage ensured information integrity by filtering out incomplete responses. Subsequently, all data were subjected to a coding process to facilitate their importation into specialized statistical analysis software; for this study, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 28) was utilized. Once the data had been imported into the system, a

primary and descriptive analysis of the database was conducted, including analyses of frequencies, means, standard deviations, and skewness coefficients. To estimate the factors that influenced the development of professional competencies among researchers, contingency table analyses were conducted using Pearson's chi-square (X^2) test, and to identify the strength of these associations, Cramer's V was calculated. Additionally, Spearman's correlation coefficient was used to determine other associations between the study variables.

This study analyzes information regarding the professional competencies required to work in educational research in Mexico, based on the personal characteristics (gender and age), academic and professional characteristics (highest level of education and type of employment contract), and symbolic characteristics (national recognition in research) of the study participants. First, the ranking established by the study participants is presented, including 19 professional competencies in their field; subsequently, the three competencies that rank highest in the overall data set are analyzed. Given that, as explained earlier, the responses included five answer options, the extreme pairs were analyzed (most important and very important on one hand, and unimportant and not at all important on the other), excluding the responses in the middle.

In order to identify the personal, academic, and professional characteristics, as well as those related to social recognition, that influence the definition of what are considered the three most important competencies for conducting educational research, the responses were correlated with gender, age, highest level of education, type of employment contract, and membership in national and state recognition systems.

RESULTS

The following section presents the results of the survey regarding the professional competencies required for conducting educational research in Mexico, with a more in-depth analysis of those competencies that the educational researchers who participated in this study consider most important.

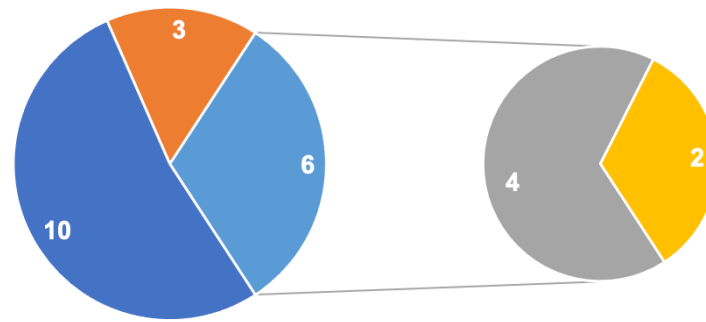
Of the 19 competencies listed in the questionnaire, more than 65% of respondents identified the following three as the most important:

- Having specialized knowledge within one's discipline.
- Conducting systematic literature reviews (state of the art) to support objects of study.
- Structuring scientific papers and demonstrating extensive proficiency in scientific writing techniques (see Table 2 and Figure 1).

Table 2*Key competencies for professional performance in educational research*

COMPETENCE	The most important or very important (%)
Having specialized knowledge within one's discipline.	69.9
Conduct systematic literature reviews (state-of-the-art) to support the research topics.	65.6
Structure a scientific paper and have a thorough understanding of scientific writing techniques.	65.5
To serve as a bridge and mediator between scientific knowledge and the various educational stakeholders interested in it (specialists, teachers, students, and the general public).	63.6
Possess teaching and/or pedagogical skills to foster an interest in science among students.	63.2
Be able to present findings and conclusions at national and international academic events.	63.2
Be proficient in quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques.	63.2
Formulate research questions rigorously	61.8
Rhetorical skills: how to persuade and construct logical arguments.	61.8
Develop and validate research models.	61.1
Master and apply knowledge of technological tools for the production and communication of science.	60.0
Belong to one or more national and/or international networks for professional and research activities in education.	48.8
Proficiency in languages and knowledge of universal art and culture.	54.7
Have published a paper with a recognized expert in the field of national and/or international educational research.	52.8
Belong to an Academic Body or a Research Group.	49.4
A doctoral degree is required.	46.4
Have completed research stays at the national and/or international level with highly respected scholars in the field of education.	42.1
Hold a master's degree.	40.1
Have completed at least one year of postdoctoral research or studies.	31.8

Source: Author's own elaboration.



- Competencies considered the most important by more than 60% of the participants
- Competencies considered the most important by between 51% and 60% of the participants
- Competencies considered the most important by between 41% and 50% of the participants
- Competencies considered the most important by less than 40% of the participants

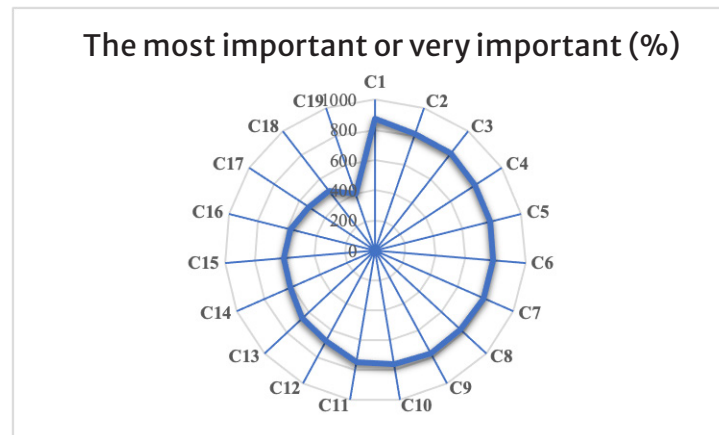


Figure 1. Distribution of the 19 competencies considered most important for professional performance in educational research. Source: Author's own elaboration

As for the negative responses—that is, those skills considered to be of little or no importance—the percentages are low, with only the following three exceeding 21%:

- Hold a master's degree
- Have completed at least one year of postdoctoral research or studies
- Have completed national and/or international research stays with highly respected scholars in the field of education (see Figure 2).

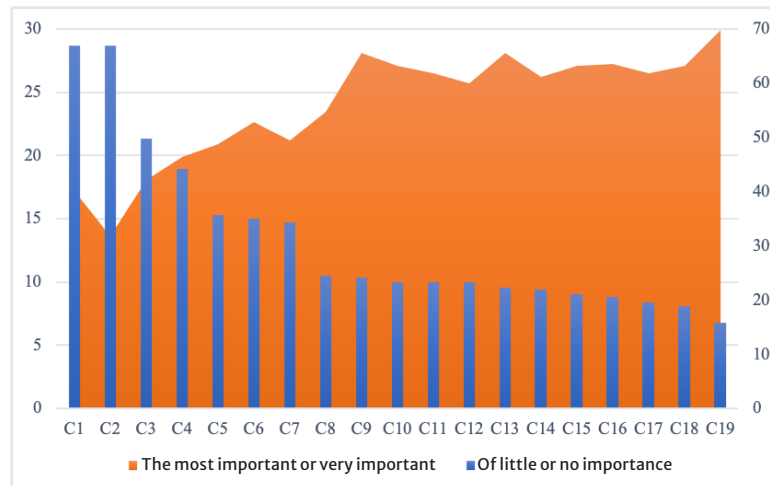


Figure 2. Comparative breakdown of responsibilities. Source: Author's own elaboration

The figure above shows a pattern of agreement: Competency 19 (*Having specialized knowledge within one's discipline*) was previously selected by 69.9% of participants as the most important, and this finding is confirmed by the 6.8% ($n=85$) of participants who chose it as the least important competency, thus underscoring that for seven out of every 10 participants, this competency is essential. On the other hand, an analysis of the two competencies that received the highest percentage of responses reveals that Competency 1 (*Holding a master's degree*) and Competency 2 (*Having completed at least one year of postdoctoral research or studies*) were selected by 28.7% of respondents ($n=358$). Given that the respondents to the questionnaire are educational researchers and, as such, possess certain characteristics that enable them to take a stance and express opinions regarding their professional work, the responses were analyzed to identify the three most important competencies, highlighting the variations that emerge when taking into account gender, age, highest level of education, type of position, and affiliation with research systems.

Of the total number of responses, 174 respondents—equivalent to 14% of the total—identified as members of the LGBTIQ+ community; 452 (36.3%) identified as female, 592 (47.5%) as male, and the remainder (2.2%) chose not to answer.

Regarding the gender of the study participants, of the total responses identifying specialized knowledge in one's discipline as one of the most important competencies for conducting educational research, 44.2% were provided by male participants, 41.6% by female participants, 10.7% from the LGBTIQ+ community, and 3.5% chose not to answer, showing percentages similar to the gender composition of the sample, with a slight increase in female participation in defining the importance of this competency.

This slight increase is even more pronounced when it comes to conducting systematic literature reviews (state of the art) to support research topics, with 45.3% of female respondents prioritizing this skill, as well as in structuring a scientific

paper and having extensive knowledge of scientific writing techniques, where the percentage rises to 43.8% (see Figure 3).

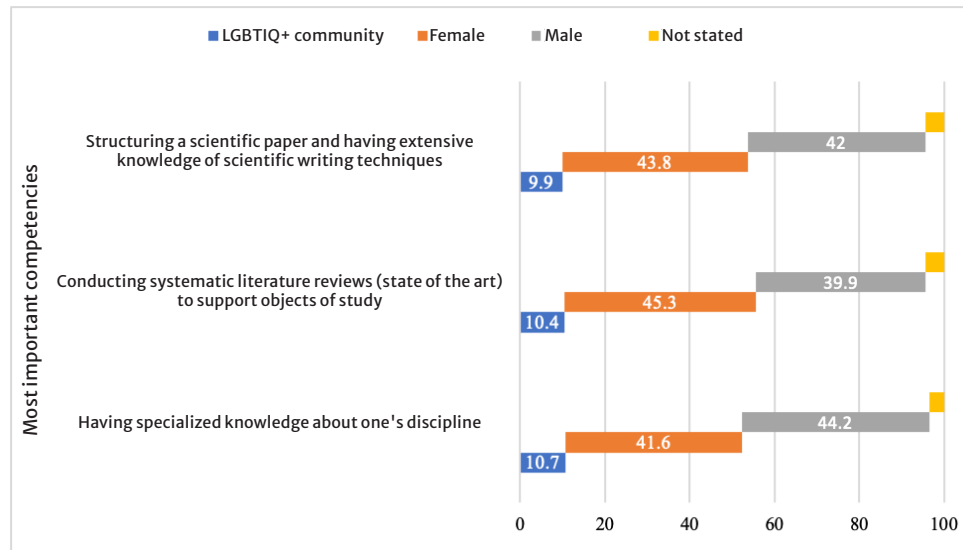


Figure 3. Gender distribution of the selection of competencies deemed important for professional performance in educational research. Source: Author's own elaboration

Looking at the age distribution of the group of educational researchers included in the study, 86 (6.9%) are under 30 years old, 310 (24.9%) are between 31 and 40 years old, 497 (39.9%) are between 41 and 50 years old, 264 (21.2%) are between 51 and 60 years old, while 89 (7.1%) are over 60 years old.

Table 5 shows the percentages of responses for each age group that highlight the three competencies identified as most important for the professional practice of educational research. According to the information presented, it is the older age groups (51 to 60 and over 60 years old) that show a higher tendency to prioritize these competencies, particularly the one related to conducting systematic literature reviews (state of the art) to support research topics (see Figure 4).

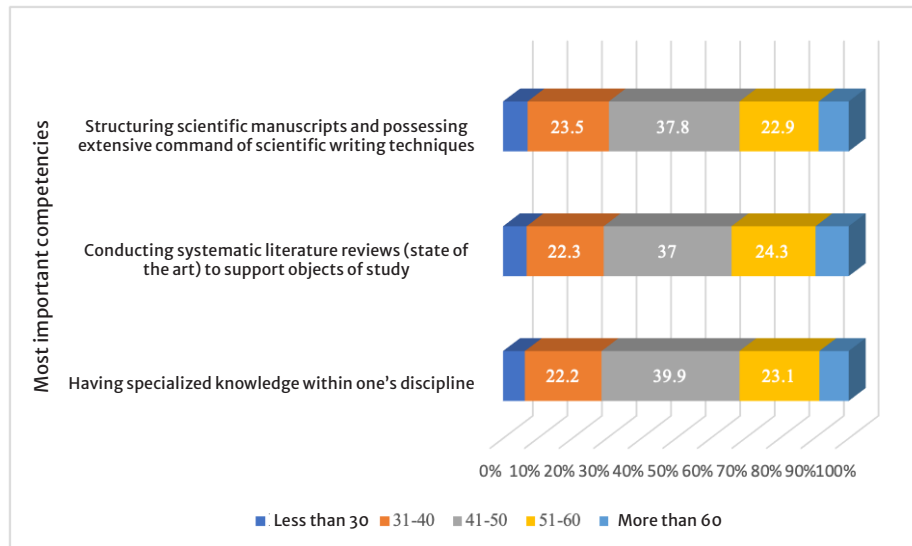


Figure 4. Gender distribution of the selection of competencies deemed important for professional performance in educational research. Source: Author's own elaboration

As shown in the figure above, the three competencies are proportionally represented in the choices made by each gender group that participated in the survey. The differences ranged from 0.1 to 1.3 percentage points for those aged 31 to 40; for those aged 41 to 50, the range was 0.8 to 2.1 percentage points; and, finally, the range was 0.2 to 1.4 percentage points for those aged 51 to 60.

On average, this means that for the three age groups in which the majority of responses were concentrated, the percentage differences ranged from a minimum of 0.36 to a maximum of 1.6. This therefore implies consistency or stability in the perception of the importance of these competencies within each of the age groups. The highest level of education among researchers: 983 (78.9%) hold a Ph.D., 255 (20.5%) hold a master's degree, and only 8 (0.6%) hold a postdoctoral degree. The responses prioritizing the three competencies identified as most important for the majority of those conducting educational research are more significant among those with a doctorate and postdoctoral degree, while there is a slight decrease in the percentage of those with a master's degree as their highest level of education (see Figure 5).

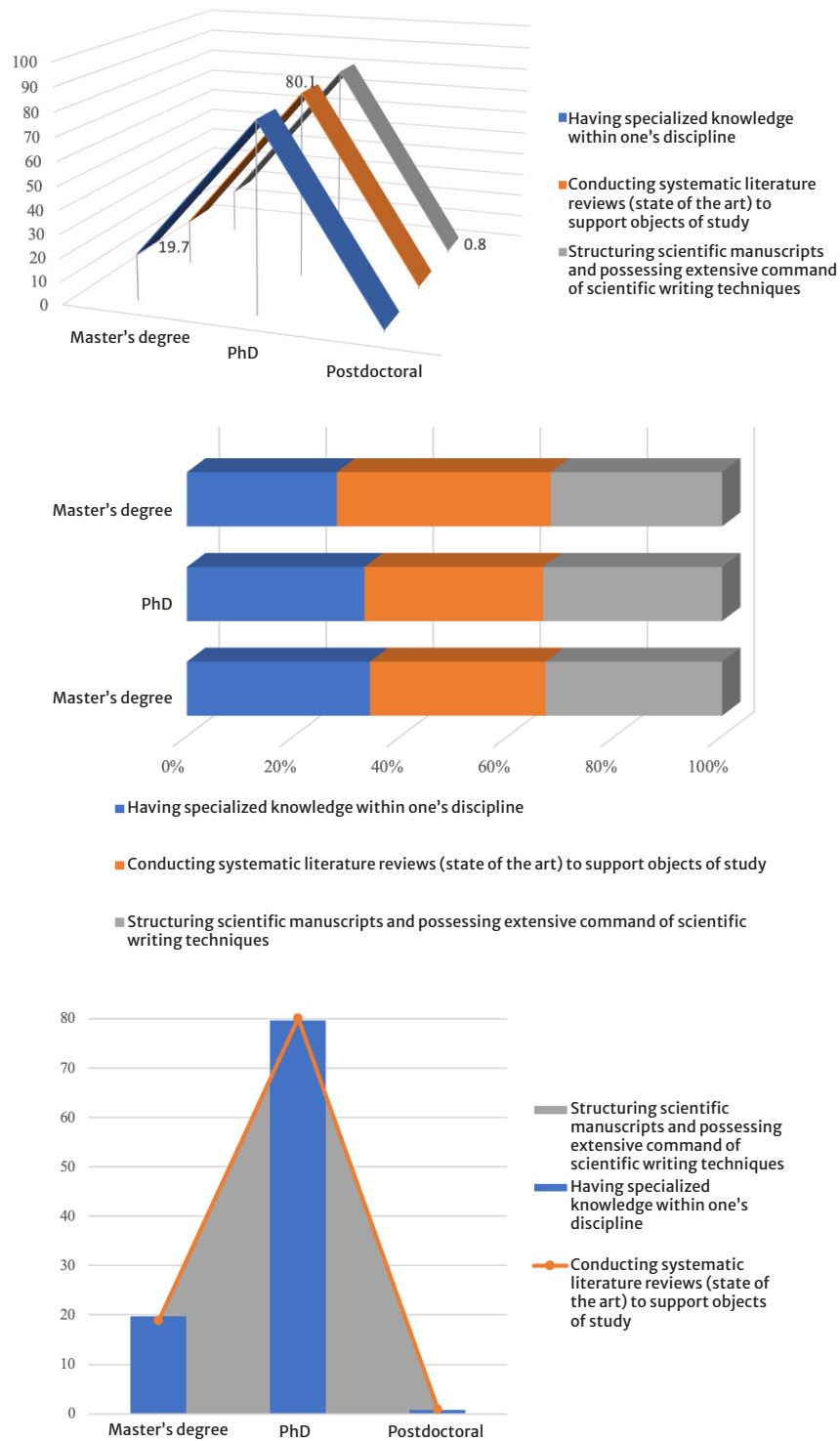


Figure 5. Key competencies for professional performance in educational research, based on the highest level of education attained by educational researchers. Source: Author's own elaboration

Figure 6 shows that the three competencies are proportionally related in the choices made by each group of participants, based on their level of education. For participants with a Master's degree, the difference in choice among the three competencies varied by only 0.45 percentage points on average. For the Doctorate and Postdoctoral groups, the difference is even smaller, with an average difference of 0.35 and 0.2 percentage points, respectively. Generally speaking, the three groups of participants rated these three skills as being of virtually equal importance or indispensable, as the differences between them were less than 1%.

Regarding the employment status of those conducting educational research who responded to the questionnaire used in this study, it is reported that 515 (41.3%) hold part-time positions, 481 (38.6%) hold full-time positions, 203 (16.3%) are employed on a per-course or hourly basis, and 47 (3.8%) have an unspecified employment status.

Figure 6 shows that the responses defining the importance of the three competencies for the professional performance of educational researchers—which are identified as the most important—are concentrated, in terms of employment status, among those in full-time positions, followed by those with contracts based on course load or hours, as well as those with unspecified employment relationships. Otherwise, the percentage share of responses from part-time researchers—who make up the largest group among all participants—shows a considerable decrease. This situation is similar across all three competencies considered.

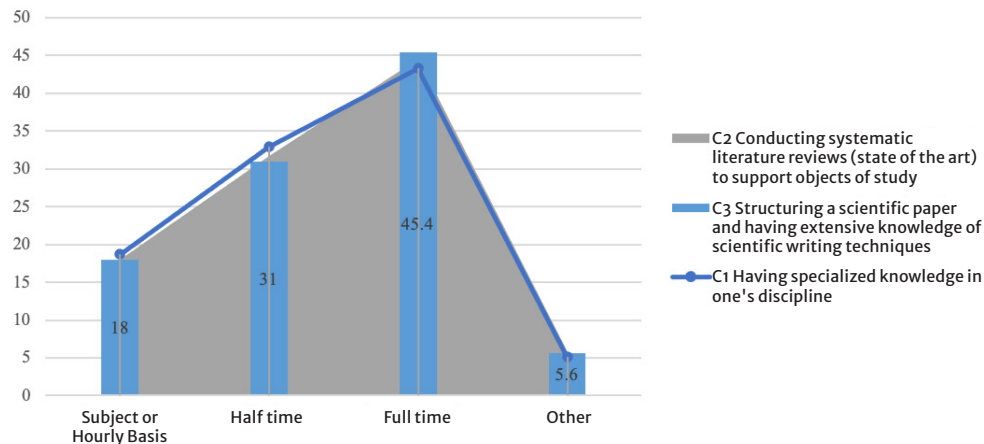


Figure 6. Most Important Competencies for Professional Performance in Educational Research According to the Employment Status of Educational Researchers. Source: Author's own elaboration

The figure above again shows consistency in the selection of the three most important competencies based on the type of contract. For subject teachers, two competencies were directly selected: those related to the structure of the work, the review of the current state of the art, and the writing of scientific papers. There was

a slight tendency to place greater value on the competency involving specialized knowledge of the discipline (0.7% higher).

A similar situation applies to part-time employees; for the same two competencies, C2 and C3, the differences are less than 1%, and in the case of C1, the difference is more pronounced at 2%. However, this trend did not hold true for full-time employees, as there were significant differences among the three competencies, with competency C3 being the most highly valued for this group.

An indicator of the recognition that researchers have in Mexico is their participation in the National System of Researchers (*Sistema Nacional de Investigadoras e Investigadores* [SNII]) of the National Council of Humanities, Sciences, and Technologies (*Consejo Nacional de Humanidades, Ciencias y Tecnologías* [CONAHCYT]). In this regard, it is observed that 868 (69.7%) of the surveyed educational researchers do not belong to this System, while the remaining 378 (30.3% of the total) do. The latter are distributed across the following levels of recognition:

Candidates = 95 (7.6%)
 Level I = 134 (10.7%)
 Level II = 116 (9.3%)
 Level III = 21 (1.7%)
 Emeritus = 12 (1%)

The responses provided in the questionnaire show that the share of those surveyed maintains percentages very similar to the total participation of each sector, being slightly higher for those who are part of the SNII, Level I and those who are not part of the System. Otherwise, the percentage share of responses that prioritize these three competencies as the most important for the professional practice of educational research is slightly lower for those with the highest levels of the SNII (II, III and emeritus), as shown in Figure 7.

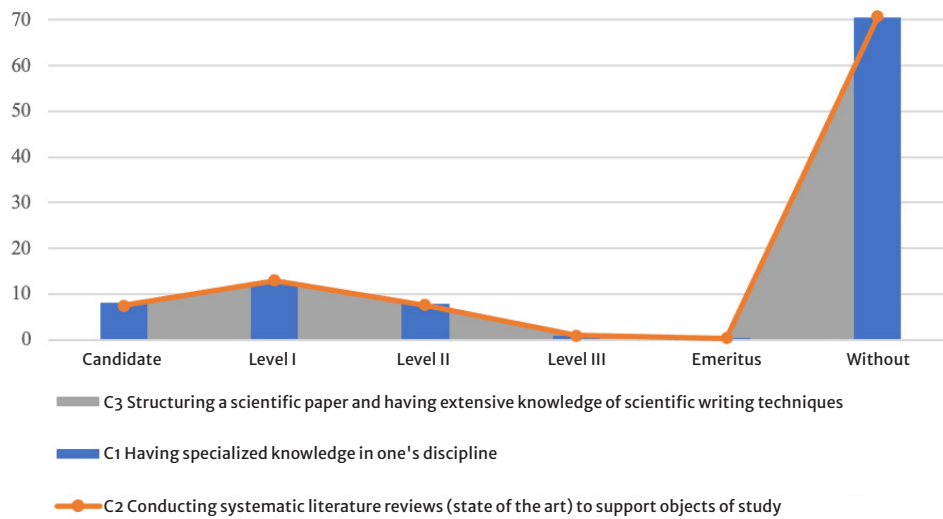


Figure 7. Most Important Competencies for Professional Performance in Educational Research According to Educational Researchers' Membership Status in the National System of Researchers (SNII).
Source: Author's own elaboration

In the distribution of choices for the three most important competencies among participants according to their SNII membership, there is a very equidistant preference. While Candidate and Level II and III view competency C2 as the most important. Peculiarly, participants who do not belong to the SNII and those who hold emeritus status are the only ones who value competency C3 as the most important. The average percentage differences for each category across the three competencies are shown in Figure 8.

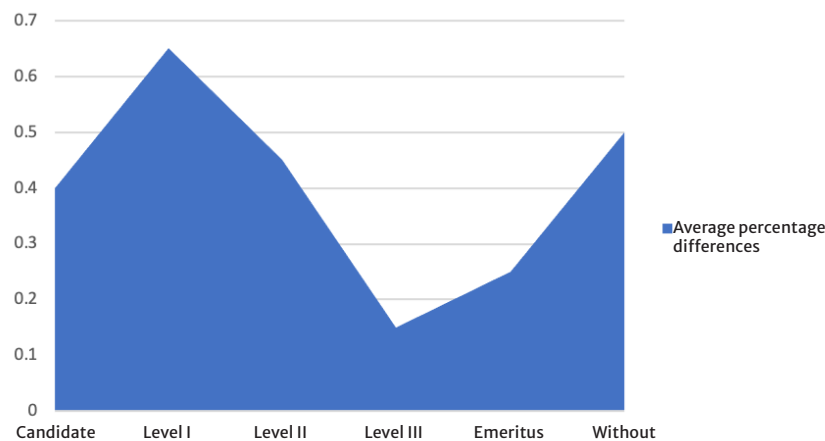


Figure 8. Differences in the Choice of the Most Important Research Competencies According to the Level Held in the SNII. Source: Author's own elaboration

Another indicator of the recognition of researchers in Mexico is their membership to one of the State Systems that exist in the entities in which they reside; in this case

there are 210 (16.9%) of the respondents, while 794 (63.7%) do not belong to any of these systems and 242 (19.4%) responded that they did not apply in their situation. Once the process of interviews with 9-year-old girls and boys studying in the municipalities of Huejotzingo, Libres, Puebla, and Teziutlán has been completed, it can be pointed out that educational policy still has a long way to go to ensure that knowledge regarding civic and citizenship education is based on the educational process.

Regarding how the responses regarding the most important competencies for conducting educational research differ from the three highlighted by the group, if we consider this indicator, we observe that the percentage of responses increases among those who indicated that they do not belong to a state research system and decreases among those who indicated that they do not belong, while it remains consistent among those who do participate in two of the three highlighted competencies: *Having specialized knowledge in one's discipline* and *Structuring a scientific paper and having extensive knowledge of scientific writing techniques*.

For this last group of researchers, the only decrease observed is in the percentage of responses regarding the task of conducting systematic literature reviews (state-of-the-art) to support research topics (see Figure 9).

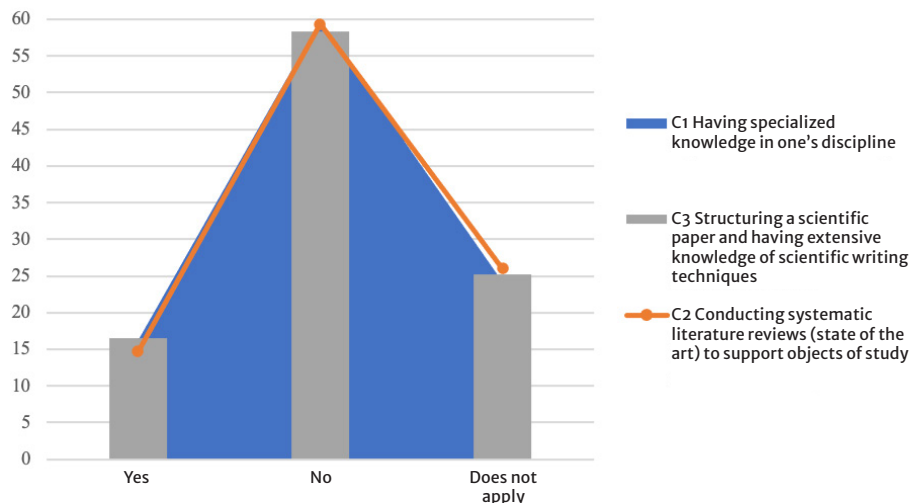


Figure 9. Most Important Competencies for Professional Performance in Educational Research According to Educational Researchers' Membership Status in State Research Systems. Source: Author's own elaboration

In relation to the most important competencies according to the classification of participants by their membership status in the State System of Researchers, a marked difference is observed in the choice of competencies C1 and C3. While those who belong to the SNE value C3 as the most important, those who do not belong privilege competency C1; particularly, those to whom this category does not apply were the only ones who placed C2 above the other three competencies. The average percentage distribution of the difference among each of the three most important competencies is represented in the following Figure (see Figure 10).

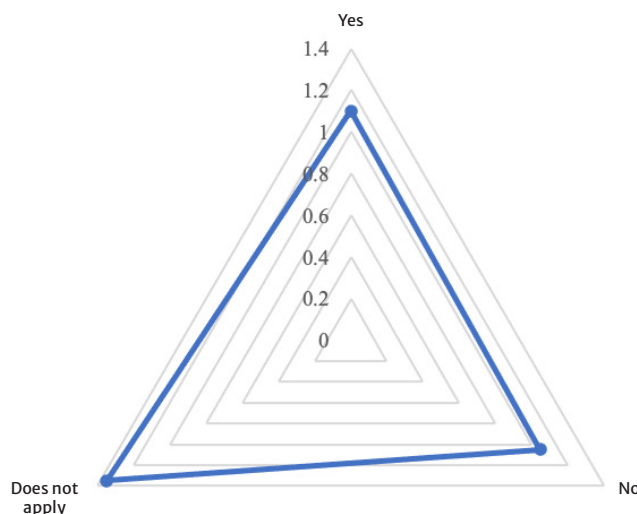


Figure 10. Differences in the Choice of the Most Important Research Competencies According to the Level Held in the SNII. Source: Author's own elaboration.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Given the need to update training processes across all fields of knowledge to respond to new socio-professional dynamics (Schwab, 2016), it is considered timely to conduct research such as the present study. This study seeks to analyze which professional competencies are valued by communities dedicated to the generation and application of knowledge, particularly in the field of education, where severe problems prevail worldwide (PNUD, 2023). Mexico is no exception, and the improvement of its SEN requires relevant research and professionals who possess the competencies needed to face this challenge.

In the research conducted, educational research is highlighted as a complex network of operations among which none of the 19 competencies presented in the instrument used to collect the information are absolutely discarded. Those classified as having little or no importance were not shared by more than 29% of the respondents. Among the least valued competencies, the following stand out: *Holding a master's degree and Having completed at least one year of postdoctoral residency or studies* (with 28.7% of references in each case); followed by *Having completed national and/or international research residencies with highly prestigious academics in the educational field* (with 21.3% of references).

However, while there is no consensus regarding the little or no importance that any of the competencies considered in educational research might have, conversely, a consensus does emerge in favor of three competencies that are assumed to be the most important. This consensus encompasses more than 65% of the researchers who participated by answering the questionnaire. Regarding each of these three competencies, the following considerations can be made:

Having specialized knowledge in one's discipline.

Specialized knowledge stemming from specialized professional training guarantees the ability to know how to do what is necessary. This is the competency most valued by educational researchers, reaching nearly 70% approval. What is specific to the training of those dedicated to conducting educational research? According to Pérez-Reveles et al. (2014) and Vásquez-Villanueva et al. (2020), those who conduct educational research know how to design and coordinate research projects, know how to communicate the results of their research, and know how to train new specialists in the field. However, educational research is a multidisciplinary field in which pedagogues, educators, sociologists, and psychologists, among other specialists, collaborate. This complicates the definition of what is specific to the discipline of the educational researcher. Suffice it to mention the 18 thematic areas defined by the Mexican Council of Educational Research (*Consejo Mexicano de Investigación Educativa* [COMIE, 2023]), which demonstrate the diverse possibilities for incorporating specialists into the field (e.g., educational technologies, curriculum, educational policy, learning processes, etc.). Nevertheless, this specialized knowledge is recognized by those who conduct educational research.

Who values this knowledge the most? According to the collected information, this competency is most valued by female researchers, those aged 51 and older, individuals with a doctoral or postdoctoral degree, and those holding full-time positions (and, to a lesser extent, those who work on a course-by-course or hourly basis). It is also highly valued by those who are not part of the SNII or, if they are, are located in the lower levels (Candidate and Level I), as well as by those who consider that their incorporation into a State Research System does not apply due to lack of knowledge or its nonexistence in the state where they reside. In these cases, the percentages of responses in favor of this competency exceed the participation percentage of each sector in the total.

Conducting systematic literature reviews (state of the art) to support objects of study.

The fulfillment of this competency is linked, on the one hand, to a necessary know-how as the starting point of any research and, on the other, to the need to publish as an indicator of academic productivity. Regarding the latter, this aligns with the approaches of Acuña-Gamboa et al. (2023), Ocampo-Gómez et al. (2019), and Turpo Gebera et al. (2021), who suggest a certain orientation of educational research toward credentialism goals.

Who values knowing how to conduct systematic reviews to support objects of knowledge the most? According to the collected information, the behavior of the responses is similar to the previous competency, as approval is higher among female researchers, those aged 51 and older, individuals with a doctoral or postdoc-

toral degree, and those holding full-time positions (and, to a lesser extent, those who work on a course-by-course or hourly basis). It is also higher for those who are not part of the SNII or, if they are, are located at Level I, as well as for those who consider that their incorporation into a State Research System does not apply due to lack of knowledge or its nonexistence in the state where they reside.

Structuring a scientific paper and having extensive knowledge of scientific writing techniques.

This competency is linked to the previous one in the sense that it promotes practices related to the publication of research results. Who values having knowledge of scientific writing techniques the most? It is the same sectors identified in the previous competency, with slight percentage variations. The only notable difference is that this competency is also highly valued by the sector of researchers under 30 years of age, placing them as novices or individuals at the initial stage of their professional careers, for whom knowledge of writing techniques appears to be essential.

In general terms, it is observed that the most important competencies identified today as key to the practice of the educational researcher profession are being defined according to the conditions faced in their professional exercise, with the type of employment contract standing out as an essential attribute. Notably, participants holding part-time positions accounted for 41.3% of the total; however, this sector valued the importance of the three competencies highlighted by the other sectors the least. In this regard, the considerations of Lozoya (2017) and Pons Bonals and Espinosa Torres (2020) can be extrapolated regarding the fact that researchers interpret and explain phenomena from the space within which they are circumscribed.

To close this section, it is necessary to mention that what has been presented here constitutes an initial approach to understanding the conditions under which agents in the field of educational research carry out their professional practice, and how these conditions define their positions regarding the competencies they must possess. The analysis initiated with the three competencies that proved to be of greatest importance should be extended to the others to delve deeper into the matter and define the paths to follow in training future generations of educational researchers in Mexico through quantitative approaches and, perhaps, through approaches that delve deeper into academics regarding their stances, feelings, and thoughts concerning this object of study (qualitative approach). In addition to the above, complementary studies of a qualitative nature are also required to identify the problems and possible solutions that arise in each case to achieve the competencies that are currently considered important for conducting educational research in Mexico.

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The thousand faces of the school library: a regional diagnosis in public primary schools in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas

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— Abstract —

This study aims to describe the current state and presence of school libraries (SLs) in public primary schools in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, with the purpose of constructing a diagnostic overview of their existence and conditions. To this end, a qualitative methodology with a regional approach was employed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principals of each institution in order to analyze the symbolic, structural, organizational, and material conditions of 137 school libraries in the city.

The main finding of the study is the identification of six distinct configurations of SLs, revealing a diversity of meanings in the ways school actors use and understand the library space. This diversity responds to the particular dynamics of each school, as well as to local contexts, current public policies, and the regulatory frameworks that govern (or, in many cases, fail to address) their operation. Throughout the analysis, a widespread lack of awareness regarding the formally assigned functions of SLs within school communities was observed, which has led, in most cases, to their abandonment and marginalization.

In this context, the notion of *orphaned libraries* is proposed as an analytical category that makes it possible to name the institutional abandonment by the Ministry of Public Education (SEP). This category is grounded in the conception of the SL as a *region of knowledge*, understood as a symbolic and pedagogical space from which it is possible to explore and understand the practices, uses, and resignifications that primary school students and teachers in the city of Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, construct around school libraries.

Keywords:

School library, region of knowledge, primary school, uses and practices, school actors.

BETWEEN REGULATION AND NEGLECT: THE SCHOOL LIBRARY UNDER TENSION

SLs were established with a clear educational purpose: to nurture reading and writing practices among children as one of the school's core functions. Yet in practice, they have largely fallen short of this promise – failing to provide students with meaningful access to books or to cultivate a reading culture rooted in local life and knowledge. Achieving this would require transforming libraries into spaces where reading sparks expression, activates personal knowledge, and resonates emotionally with readers and writers within their own regional contexts. While the school library is broadly conceived as a pedagogical resource center one that plays a central role in democratizing access to information – it is equally recognized as a key space for fostering engagement with written culture, building reading habits, and supporting students' meaningful learning of curricular content (Bonilla, 2008; SEP, 2020).

The curriculum of the so-called Nueva Escuela Mexicana (2022, p.116) underscores the importance of SLs, highlighting their “significant role in students' academic¹ and personal development” as well as their function in promoting reading as a lasting habit. It is also acknowledged that SLs should fulfill “a compensatory role with regard to the cultural capital of less privileged students, thereby supporting the school's work in reducing inequalities rooted in students' background” (Munita & Bustamante, 2019, p.3). Yet this normative vision stands in sharp contrast to the actual conditions faced by many SLs in the city of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas. A growing body of research suggests that the potential of SLs is rarely realized, leaving them as underused pedagogical spaces (Vega, 2000; Ruiz, 2021; Zambrano & Bertoni, 2022). In many cases, the SL has become a neglected, peripheral, and marginalized space within the school itself – sometimes reduced to little more than a storage room, and commonly associated with boredom and disengagement (Serna et al., 2017).

To understand how this space came to be established within Mexican basic education schools, it is worth tracing some key historical background. SLs in Mexico began to take the shape we recognize today in 1986, when the SEP (Ministry of Public Education) launched the *Rincón de Lectura*² [Reading Corner] program

1 Academic training is typically associated with professional development (in a liberal sense), career opportunities, intellectual discipline, and specific skill-building – and is even linked to the cultivation of critical thinking; it refers broadly to what is learned throughout one's passage through formal educational institutions.

2 This is a formal educational strategy, supported by a curated book collection and structured activities, designed to encourage free, reflective and wide-ranging reading. It goes beyond the use of standard textbooks, bringing children into contact with rich and varied literary experiences. Implemented by the SEP, it operates through a dedicated physical space within the classroom and envisions teachers as active promoters of reading.

in primary schools. It was not until 2001, with the introduction of the National Reading Program (Programa Nacional de Lectura, PNL), that the *Libros del Rincón* [Books from the corner] collection was extended to preschool and secondary levels as well, bringing it to cover the full span of basic education. At that point, “school communities were invited to set up the SL with the aim of supporting teaching practices, enhancing learning, and contributing to the development of autonomous and critical readers and writers” (SEP, 2020, p.14). This policy gave rise to two distinct types of collections: the school library and the classroom library.

The *Libros del Rincón* collection was conceived as a key instrument for meaningfully shaping a generation of readers and writers within the school setting – a reminder that it is the school, above all, that bears responsibility for teaching children to read and write in modern society (Hebrard, 1989). Its distribution, however, came to a halt after 2012, when President Enrique Peña Nieto’s administration ceased allocating funding to the PNL, leading to its definitive cancellation in 2014. This decision did not merely interrupt a public policy aimed at nurturing readers and writers from an early age – it also stunted the growth of a school library culture that had barely begun to take root.

Today, the state of school library spaces remains deeply uncertain: little is known about the condition or scope of their collections, let alone the physical state of their furniture or the spaces allocated for their use. The cancellation of the PNL did more than suspend reading promotion efforts – it plunged SLs into a prolonged neglect, stripping away the visibility they had managed to build within the school community. Collections went without updates, and libraries were left without the policy backing needed to keep them functioning.

Against this backdrop, the present research was carried out between February 2024 and November 2025. It is grounded in a regional perspective that understands SLs not as uniform entities, but as spaces shaped by the subjectivities, contexts, interactions, conceptions, and representations that surround them. We see them as places where multiple voices, bodies of knowledge, practices, and meanings coexist – continuously transformed by historical, political, cultural, and social forces over time. These expressions take shape in specific regions, each with its own dynamics, where SLs emerge as heterogeneous spaces and become sites of cultural practice. We have termed this the *región del saber* – the region of knowledge – a space constituted through the appropriations, resignifications, abandonments, and acts of resistance that arise in the ways teachers and students inhabit the SL.

This *region of knowledge* is in constant flux, shaped by local contexts and by that complex web of cultural meanings which, as Geertz (1987), reminds us, must be interpreted from within, on their own terms, as they are lived and made meaningful by subjects embedded in specific cultures. Within this web, both school culture and public policy come into play, giving rise to diverse library practice that allow each SL to be understood as sociocultural microspace.

Thinking of the library as a *region of knowledge* allows us to explore and understand the practices that primary school students and teachers develop within the library space. This perspective enables us to analyze how these subjects configure such spaces, investing them with specific meaning through the ways they are organized and used (Merchand, 2007; Hernández, 2010).

The concept of *region of knowledge* draws support from a range of researchers who have characterized the library through metaphors that foreground its relationship with knowledge: temples of knowledge, cathedrals of knowledge, representations of knowledge (Gallo-León, 2022), centers of knowledge (Fernández, 2006; Ramírez, 2001), or storehouses of knowledge (Murray, 2014). These scholars conceive of the library space as “institutions that, among other things, safeguards the knowledge, ideas and intellectual that man produces to be recreated and increased” (Morales, 2003, p. 31).

METHODOLOGY

This project is grounded in a qualitative research approach, driven by an interest in exploring in depth how SLs actually take shape, recognizing the practices that unfold within them and observing how the meanings constructed by those involved give rise to a dynamic all their own. As Hernández-Sampieri and Mendoza (2018, p.9) note, qualitative research “allows us to understand phenomena from the perspective of those who live them”; in this sense, what matters is “reconstructing reality as it is observed by the actors within a previously defined social system”.

Qualitative research also embraces a naturalistic orientation, unfolding within the specific context where the phenomenon occurs, which makes it possible to analyze that phenomenon as a situated and historically constructed reality. For this reason, fieldwork was conducted directly in the SLs of primary schools in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas. The data gathered has allowed us to build our own interpretations, since through the meanings that those involved attribute to it (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018) as well as to observe what they do and how they do it within that space: the school library.

One of the guiding objectives of this research is to describe the current state and presence of school libraries in public primary schools in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, with the aim of building a diagnostic overview of their existence and conditions. The findings are presented in the sections that follow.

The primary sources of this research were school principals. For the diagnostic phase, semi-structured interviews were used, conducted both in person and over the phone. This approach made it possible to access the perceptions of those being studied and, through them, to understand their realities and views on the phenomenon in question (Lázaro, 2021, p.9). The flexibility inherent to this technique fostered open dialogue between interviewer and interviewee, allowing new questions to emerge naturally, clarifications to be sought when needed, and

relevant topics to be explored in greater depth. This created a conversational and approachable tone that brought us closer to a more meaningful understanding of the phenomenon under study (Lázaro, 2021, p.12).

The research instrument used was an interview guide, designed to gather information about the physical existence of the school library, the characteristics of its book collection, the use of the space, and the technological conditions of each school. The questions asked were as follows: 1) Does the school have a school library? 2) Is the library space exclusively dedicated to that purpose, that is, not shared with any other service or activity? 3) Does the school have a physical space that could be used to house a school library? (Asked only of those who indicate they did not have one) 4) Could you tell us about the school library's collection? For example: How many books does it have? Are they textbooks or literary works? 5) Does the school have a computer lab? 6) Does the school have internet access?

As noted earlier, the semi-structured interviews were directed at the principals of public primary schools in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, spanning both federally and state-administered institutions. In cases where schools did not respond by phone, in-person visits were made, which allowed for direct observation of the conditions of the SLs.

Another key source of information was the National Transparency Platform. Through this channel, a complete list of primary-level institutions in the city was requested, including their addresses and phone numbers. This database, received by email after a three-month wait, allowed us to contact schools directly and conduct interviews with their principals, with the aim of determining whether a SL was present or absent, and if so, assessing its material and functional conditions.

Drawing on the information obtained through the National Transparency Platform, a registry of 164 public primary schools in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas was compiled: 113 under federal administration and 51 under state administration. However, when attempting to contact schools using the phone numbers provided, it became clear that the majority were no longer in service. This made it necessary to visit each zone's school supervision office directly in order to update the phone directory and establish contact with school principals. As a result of this process, interviews were successfully conducted with 137 principals, who provided key information about the presence, absence, and current conditions of their respective SLs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research offer a preliminary diagnosis, and the analysis of the data leads us to conclude that SLs in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, have been quietly disappearing. What makes this all the more striking is that, despite the SEP's continued rhetoric positioning school libraries as fundamental spaces for the democratization of education and the promotion of reading habits, no resources are being allocated for their proper management and strengthening (SEP, 2020; SEP, 2015; SEP, 2010).

In the course of analyzing the 137 interviews, six distinct types of school libraries were identified, a finding that speaks to the absence of legislation capable of adequately regulating and managing these spaces. This regulatory gap stems from a broader institutional unfamiliarity with the roles and functions that SLs are meant to fulfill within the educational context, a vacuum that has given rise to a wide variety of ways in which they are used across schools. These observations prompted a categorization exercise aimed at classifying the different types of SLs encountered during fieldwork. The differences among them, and the dynamics they exhibit, reflect the particular needs of each school community, the regional contexts in which they are embedded, and the cultural capital of principals and teachers alike. Building on these elements, we proceeded to name and classify the distinct types of SLs identified throughout the interviews. Table 1 presents the categorization framework that emerged from the qualitative analysis of the 137 semi-structured interviews conducted with principals of public primary schools in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas.

Table 1

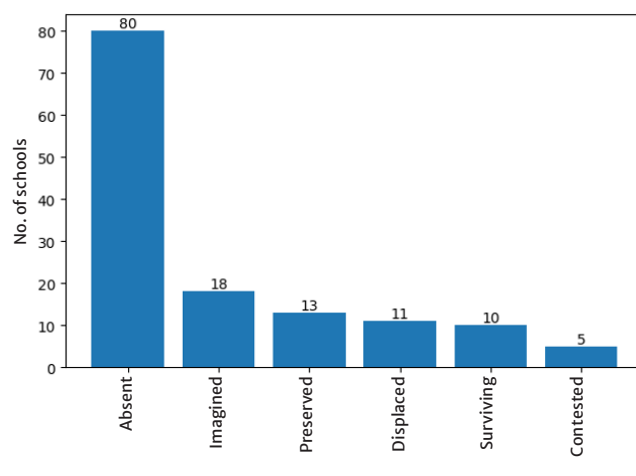
Proposed categorization of school libraries in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas

Type of SL	Physical space	Collection	Person in charge	School use
1. Absent	Yes/No	No	No	No
2. Displaced	Yes/No	Sometimes	No	No
3. Preserved	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	Limited
4. Surviving	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5. Imagined	No	Limited	No	No
6. Contested	Yes/No	Yes	Sometimes	Limited

Note: Interviews conducted with principals of federal and state public primary schools in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, during the period from May 2024 to July 2025. Authors' own elaboration.

Each of these interviews provided information that made it possible to place SLs within the categories built from the narratives and field observations. It also became evident during analysis that some SLs shared more than one category – library classified as contested, for instance, could simultaneously be considered a surviving one. This overlapping of shared characteristics reveals the complexity and heterogeneity of the practices and meanings that coexists within these spaces of knowledge.

Figure 1 presents the typologies of SLs found in public primary schools in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas. The data are arranged in descending order of frequency, and the numerical values accompanying the chart represent the number of schools in which each typology was recorded.



Note: Authors' own elaboration based on data obtained from the 137 interviews conducted with principals of public primary schools in the city.

Figure 1. Typologies of school libraries

TPOLOGY OF SLS

- 1) **The absent library** refers to the 80 primary schools that have no SL whatsoever. The lack of dedicated space for a book collection points to an institutional shortcoming and reflects the symbolic exclusion of books and reading from school life. In doing away with the space meant for these cultural practices, the right to imagine and build knowledge through reading has also been quietly pushed to the margins. The fact that 80 schools lack a SL speaks to a troubling reality: more than half of these institutions do not guarantee access to free, democratic, and pleasurable reading. In doing so, they deprive the school environment of a tool designed to shape critical citizen, spread culture, and cultivate reading habits as a core part of students' education.
- 2) **The displaced library:** refers to those SLs whose space was repurposed (effectively taken over) by other, more pressing school needs. In some cases, the space was occupied by Special Education Support Units (USAER), converted into administrative offices, adapted as additional classrooms, or turned into storage rooms. What had once been a library became a site of institutional contestation, a reflection of the structural precariousness running through the national education system. It also revealed how that space was perceived as expendable – something that could be sacrificed whenever the schools' other needs demanded it. This symbolic displacement of written culture lays bares a deeper truth: in terms of institutional priorities, this cultural asset was simply not valued,

and its fragility was there for all to see. This situation was observed in 11 of the schools surveyed.

- 3) The **preserved library**: SLs were once meant to transition away from merely safeguarding knowledge toward actively facilitating access to it. Yet in a number of the institutions visited, the old practice of restricting access to books persisted – keeping them out of inexperienced hands for fear of damage. Many remained locked to prevent unauthorized use, and only teachers, on rare occasions, made use of the space. Rather than being treated as a right, the democratization of knowledge remained contingent on asking for permission. This category encompassed 13 schools, where both the space and the books were perceived as fragile objects in need of custodianship. This institutional practice – a legacy of the colonial era – turned reading into a guarded privilege requiring authorization; and yet, troublingly, this custodial dynamic remains alive and well into the twenty-first century.
- 4) The **surviving library**: refers to those library spaces that have endured without the institutional backing of the educational authorities that originally created them (namely, the SEP) and that have been kept alive through the individual commitment of teachers, principals, and parents, who have enriched their collections through donations. Ten school libraries with these characteristics were identified, all of them with a teacher-librarian in place. In these cases, reading had taken on significant cultural value within the school community and had been woven into the educational curriculum. Moreover, the principals maintained a close relationship with written culture and recognized the library as an essential pillar in the formation of their students.
- 5) The **imagined library**: encompasses 18 cases in which principals claimed to have a SL, but upon further inquiry, what they referred to as a library turned out to be a cardboard box with a handful of books, or a shelf in the principal's office holding around 50 volumes. What became evident was not only a lack of understanding of what a SL should actually be (a dedicated space, a specialized collection, and adequate furniture (IFLA/ UNESCO, 2015) but also a fundamental confusion about the very concept of a library, reduced here to little more than a symbolic label. This exposed the gulf between the SEP's institutional discourse and actual school practice. As Carlos Ortiz aptly put it: "If we call a box of books in a classroom a library, we might as well call a first-aid kit a hospital" (Ortiz, 2023).
- 6) The **contested library**: emerged in contexts where morning and afternoon shifts shared (and competed over) the same institutional space. More often than not, the morning shift would stake a territorial claim over the library area, demonstrating that infrastructure alone does not

guarantee access and that certain school practices can actively generate exclusion. In five schools, this dynamic played out in particularly telling ways: the library space ended up being fragmented, with a separate shelf assigned to each shift, and no agreements ever reached for efficient, shared use. This finding underscores the importance of establishing clear management guidelines as the absence of any shared framework in these cases fostered institutional tension rather than collaboration.

In light of the abandonment that SLs endured, this work proposes referring to these spaces, left to fend for themselves within the very system that created them, as *orphaned libraries*. The metaphor speaks to their condition of marginalization within an educational system that brought them into existence but has since cast them aside. Many survive only through the efforts of parents and teaching staff. The six library types identified all share this condition of orphanhood, since each lacks some essential element: dedicated space, a person in charge, a collection, adequate furniture, and so on. In different degrees and forms, all of them are, at their core, orphaned libraries.

The orphanhood of SLs also serves as an invitation to reflect on the urgent need for these spaces to receive meaningful support from educational authorities and policies that guarantee their functioning. It is essential that such policies not only define their roles with clarity, but also recognize and strengthen the work of teacher-librarians – promoting the integration of the SL as an everyday practice and as a living space for cultural construction.

The findings represented here invite scrutiny of the official narratives that emphasize the importance of SLs as tools for democratizing knowledge and fostering reading habits, while overlooking the structural gaps that hinder or altogether prevent their functioning.

These results make clear that the challenges facing SLs go well beyond infrastructure, they are equally a matter of cultural capital, educational practices, public policy, and regulatory frameworks. The SL emerges as a contested territory where local appropriations, institutional omissions, and political indecision all leave their mark.

From a regional perspective, SLs are understood as a region of knowledge, a space where school actors, practices, disputes, public policies, and acts of resistance converge, and where each SL type identified in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, reflects the particular conditions of the context in which it operates. What we are faced with is a heterogenous phenomenon that invites us to rethink educational policy through a regional lens, to bring to light the historical narratives that continuously reshape school spaces, and to build legislation that is genuinely responsive to the diversity of local contexts. SLs are not merely physical spaces housing a literary collection, they are indicators of how knowledge circulates, is distributed, or is restricted within a region. These findings make clear that designing public policy

without a regional perspective risk producing decontextualized projects that ignore the specific needs of each region and the people who inhabit it. Regional understanding is indispensable for implementing strategies that are viable, culturally relevant, and truly inclusive. At the end of the text, a table is included in the form of a list presenting the school libraries surveyed and the typology to which each corresponds: absent, displaced, preserved, surviving, imagined, and contested.

CONCLUSION

SLs remain an underreached topic in Mexico and a virtually absent one in Chiapas. As Munita and Bustamante (2019, p.7) point out, “the school library continues to be one of the contexts least addressed by the scientific literature.” This gap in the research limits our ability to understand how these spaces are being used and what practices take place within them, and by extension, to reflect on how they might be strengthened. We also underscore the need for regional studies that explore whether SLs are genuinely responding to the specific needs of each region, and that generate, from a regional standpoint, proposals capable of engaging with these realities in a more meaningful and effective way.

These library spaces (displaced, forgotten, or locked in permanent conflict) lay bare an underlying tension that has received little scholarly attention: the one produced by the intersection of diffuse public policies, absent regulatory frameworks, precarious infrastructure, and limited teacher cultural capital around reading. Against this backdrop, the SL emerges as an institution crumbling slowly under the weight of the orphanhood in which it finds itself.

SLs are surviving on the individual will of school actors rather than on any institutional policy. The lack of familiarity with even the most basic guidelines for managing a library, from understanding what these spaces should be, to recognizing the importance of the librarian’s role, points to a deep gap in training and a profound absence of institutional support. Sending out book collections is not enough; what must come first is a commitment to strengthening, from within the school community, the cultural, symbolic, and pedagogical meaning of these spaces. The abandonment of this *region of knowledge* also lays bare how society as a whole value or dismisses, reading books, and libraries.

Table 2*List of public primary schools surveyed and their corresponding typology*

Name of school	Type	Does it count with a school library?	Does the school have a physical space to house a school library?	Library typology
1. Escuela Primaria Federal Emiliano Zapata	Federal	No	Yes	Displaced
2. Escuela Primaria Urbana Federalizada Emilio Rabasa Estebanell.	Federal	No	Yes	Displaced
3. Escuela Primaria Federal Niños Héroes	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
4. Camilo Pintado	Federal	Yes	Yes	No librarian
5. Belisario Domínguez Palencia	State	Yes	Yes	Superviving
6. José Vasconcelos Calderón	State	No	No	Absent
7. Juan Sabines Gutiérrez	State	Yes	Yes	Preserved
8. Lázaro Cárdenas del Río	State	No	Yes	Absent
9. Cinco de mayo	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
10. Gral. Lázaro Cárdenas del Río	Federal	Yes	Yes	Absent
11. Octavio Paz Lozano	State	No	Yes	Absent
12. Héroes de Chapultepec	State	No	No	Absent
13. Tierra y Libertad	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
14. Justo Sierra Méndez	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
15. Mariano Matamoros	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
16. Juan Aldama	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
17. Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez	Federal	Yes	Yes	Preserved
18. Rosario Castellanos	Federal	Yes	Yes	Preserved
19. Niños Héroes de Chapultepec	State	No	No	Absent
20. Carlos Maciel Espinosa	State	Yes	Yes	Imagined
21. 20 de Noviembre	Federal	Yes	Yes	Imagined
22. María Gutiérrez Carbajal	Federal	Yes	Yes	Preserved
23. 7 de octubre	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
24. Escuela Coordinación de la enseñanza	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
25. Gustavo Díaz Ordaz	State	No	Yes	Displaced
26. Adolfo López Mateos	Federal	Yes	Yes	Surviving
27. Raúl Isidro Burgos	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
28. Club Rotario	Federal	No	No	Absent
29. Daniel Robles Sasso	Federal	No	No	Absent
30. Restauramiento de la República	Federal	No	No	Absent
31. César Cruz Soto 2	Federal	No	No	Absent

32. Benito Juárez García	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
33. José María Morelos y Pavón	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
34. Constitución de 1857	Federal	Yes	Yes	Imagined
35. Educación popular	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
36. Aquiles Serdán Alatríste	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
37. Francisco Villa	Federal	Yes	Yes	Imagined
38. Benito Juárez García	Estado	No	No	Absent
39. Dr. Belisario Domínguez Palencia	Federal	No	No	Absent
40. Justo Sierra Méndez	Federal	No	No	Absent
41. Felipe Carrillo Puerto	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
42. Juan Sabines Gutiérrez	Federal	Yes	Yes	Imagined
43. Club de Leones	Federal	Yes	Yes	Preserved
44. Francisco J. Grajales	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
45. César Cruz Soto	Federal	Yes	Yes	Preserved
46. Voz de mi patria.	Federal	No	No	Absent
47. Ignacio José de Allende y Unzaga	State	No	No.	Absent
48. Manuel Aguilar Juárez	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
49. Fernando Castañón Gamboa	Federal	No	No	Absent
50. 14 de septiembre	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
51. Bernal Díaz del Castillo	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
52. Cámara Nacional de Comercio	Federal	Yes	Yes	Displaced
53. Armando Duvalier Cruz Reyes	Federal	Yes	Yes	Imagined
54. Jaime Sabines Gutiérrez	Federal	Yes	Yes	Imagined
55. José Emilio Grajales	Federal	Yes	Yes	Imagined
56. Manuel Jesús Martín Braga	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
57. Ricardo Flores Magón	Federal	No	No	Absent
58. José María Morelos y Pavón	Federal	No	No	Absent
59. Centenario de Tuxtla	Federal	No	No	Absent
60. Marcos Enrique Becerra	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
61. Daniel Delgadillo	Federal	No	No	Absent
62. Alberto González Blanco	Federal	No	No	Absent
63. Juan Sabines Gutiérrez	Federal	Yes	Yes	Imagined
64. Plan de Ayala (vespertino)	State	Yes	Yes	Preserved
65. Francisco González Bocanegra (vespertino)	State	No	No	Contested
66. Francisco González Bocanegra	State	Yes	Yes	Contested
67. Juan Benavides (vespertino)	State	Yes	Yes	Contested
68. Organización para la educación la ciencia y la cultura de las naciones unidas (vespertino)	State	No	No	Absent

69. Amado Nervo Ordaz (vespertino)	State	Yes	Yes	Surviving
70. Juan Benavides	State	Yes	Yes	Surviving
71. 15 de mayo	Federal	No	No	Absent
72. Profesor Eliseo Palacios	Federal	Yes	Yes	Surviving
73. Belisario Domínguez Palencia	Federal	Yes	Yes	Preserved
74. Romeo Rincón Castillejos	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
75. Organización para la educación la ciencia y la cultura de las naciones unidas	State	Yes	Yes	Surviving
76. Jaime Torres Bodet	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
77. David Gómez	Federal	Yes	Yes	Imagined
78. Romeo Abelardo Rodríguez Espinoza	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
79. Fray Víctor María Flores Fernández	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
80. Profa. María Rincón Coutiño	Federal	No	No	Absent
81. Francisco Ignacio Madero González	State	Yes	Yes	Surviving
82. Ángel Albino Corzo Castillejos	State	Yes	Yes	Imagined
83. Fray Matías de Córdova	State	Yes	Yes	Preserved
84. Anexa a la normal de estado	State	Yes	Yes	Displaced
85. Enrique Rodríguez Cano (Vespertina)	State	Yes	Yes	Preserved
86. Enrique Rodríguez Cano	State	Yes	Yes	Surviving
87. Plan de Ayala	State	No	Yes	Absent
88. Jorge Tovilla Torres	State	No	Yes	Absent
89. Rosario Aragón Coss	State	Yes	Yes	Displaced
90. Salvador Urbina	Federal	No	No	Absent
91. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz	Federal	No	No	Absent
92. Manuel Velasco Suárez	Federal	No	No	Absent
93. Artículo tercero Constitucional	Federal	Yes	Yes	Preserved
94. Naciones Unidas (vespertino)	Federal	Yes	Yes	Displaced
95. Ángel Albino Corzo (vespertino)	Federal	No	No	Absent
96. Benito Juárez García (vespertino)	Federal	No	No	Absent
97. Jaime Sabines Gutiérrez	Federal	Yes	No	Imagined
98. Rafael Ramírez Castañeda (vespertino)	Federal	No	No	Absent
99. Joaquín Miguel Gutiérrez (vespertino)	Federal	No	No	Absent
100. Primero de Mayo (vespertino)	Federal	Yes	Yes	Imagined

101. Ignacio Manuel Altamirano Basilio (Vespertino)	Federal	No		Absent
102. Fray Víctor María Flores Fernández	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
103. Amado Nervo Ordaz	State	Yes	Yes	Surviving
104. Manuel Aguilar Juárez (vespertino)	Federal	No	No	Absent
105. Plan de Ayala (vespertino)	Federal	Yes	Yes	Contested
106. Profesor Alfredo Aguilar Juárez	Federal	Yes	No	Displaced
107. Ignacio Manuel Altamirano (vespertino)	Federal	No	No	Absent
108. Mi Patria es primero (vespertino)	State	No	Yes	Absent
109. Juan Enrique Pestalozzi	Federal	Yes	Yes	Preserved
110. Doroteo Arango (vespertino)	Federal	No	No	Contested
111. Leona Vicario	Federal	No	No	Absent
112. Cuauhtémoc	Federal	No	Yes	Absent
113. Dr. Belisario Domínguez Palencia	Federal	Yes	Yes	Surviving
114. Francisco González Bocanegra (vespertino)	Federal	No	No	Absent
115. Octavio Paz Lozano (vespertino)	State	No	No	Absent
116. Asunción de la Cruz Vázquez	State	No	No	Absent
117. Niño Artillero	State	No	Yes	Absent
118. Emiliano Zapata Salazar	State	Yes	Yes	Displaced
119. Centro de Educación Básica del Estado de Chiapas Belisario Domínguez Palencia	State	Yes	Yes	Preserved
120. Rodolfo Figueroa Esquinca	State	No	Yes	Absent
121. Juan Escutia Martínez	State	No	Yes	Displaced
122. Romeo Rincón Castillejos	Federal	No	No	Absent
123. Juan de la Barrera e Inzaurraga	State	No	No	Absent
124. Emiliano Zapata Salazar	State	No	No	Absent
125. José María Morelos y Pavón	State	No	Yes	Absent
126. Primaria Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (vespertino)	State	Yes	Yes	Imagined
127. Rosario Aragón de Coss (vespertino)	State	No	No	Absent
128. Ángel Albino Corzo (vespertino)	State	Yes	Yes	Displaced
129. Joaquín Miguel Gutiérrez (vespertino)	State	No	No	Absent
130. Emiliano Zapata Salazar	Federal	No	No	Absent

131. Belisario Domínguez Palencia	Federal	No	No	Absent
132. Niños Héroes de Chapultepec	Federal	Yes	Yes	Imagined
133. Gral. Ignacio Zaragoza (vespertino)	Federal	Yes	No	Imagined
134. Jaime Sabines Gutiérrez (vespertino)	Federal	No	No	Absent
135. Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez	Federal	Yes	Yes	Imagined
136. José María Morelos y Pavón (vespertino)	Federal	No	No	Absent
137. Miguel Álvarez del Toro	Federal	Yes	Yes	Imagined

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Migrant Waiting Territories in Emerging Urban Areas: A Theoretical Proposal and Analytical Perspective from Southern Mexico

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— Abstract —

This article proposes a theoretical, methodological, and conceptual expansion of the term territory of waiting, originally formulated by Alain Musset (2015), based on the analysis of the experiences of people on the move in emerging cities of southern Mexico. The objective is to highlight how, in non-border urban contexts such as Tuxtla Gutiérrez, migratory waiting becomes a structuring dimension of everyday life and precarious territoriality. Using a qualitative ethnographic approach, including semi-structured interviews and field observation, the study explores how the city has been reconfigured by recent migratory flows, such as the 2018 caravans and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, turning it into a space of forced immobility. The analysis reveals that waiting in these cities does not imply passivity, but rather an active process of transit reorganization, physical and emotional recovery, and the creation of support networks. The article argues that migrant waiting territories in emerging cities like Tuxtla Gutiérrez represent new forms of inhabiting, where people on the move exercise agency, resignify urban space, and produce temporary structures with symbolic density. This study proposes a reconfiguration of the concept of territory of waiting, extending it beyond border zones to include intermediate cities not designed for migrant reception. This allows for a critical, territorial, and situated understanding of mobility in southern Mexico.

Keywords:

Migrant waiting territories; emerging cities; people on the move; forced immobility; migrant agency; migratory waiting.

International migration in countries such as Mexico has historically been characterized by the transit of people on the move who seek to achieve the so-called “American Dream” in the United States. However, over the past decade, the country has ceased to be merely a transit zone and has also become a destination and a place of forced residence. This transformation has substantially reshaped the spatial, social, and political dynamics of the national territory, generating new geographies of containment and mobility.

In this process, a central paradox emerges: immobility within mobility. People in transit encounter bureaucratic, structural, or voluntary delays that force them to wait, transforming their migratory experience into a sequence of uncertain pauses. This waiting, far from being a mere interruption of physical movement, affects subjectivity, lived time, and everyday strategies. As Appadurai (2013) argues, waiting exacerbates the imagination of survival: that human capacity to project oneself toward an uncertain future. In these transitional territories, people on the move build connections, reorganize their trajectories, and redefine space through vulnerability and agency.

In particular, so-called “emerging cities”—towns that were not part of the traditional migration route—have begun to appear as strategic nodes on the migration map. Cities such as Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, have become areas where migrants wait following the tightening of immigration policies, the 2018 caravans, and the social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In these non-border urban contexts, waiting is not a passive act, but a complex social practice involving adaptation, conflict, support networks, and new ways of living.

From this perspective, this article aims to expand the concept of the waiting territory, originally formulated by Alain Musset (2015), through an analysis of the experiences of people on the move in emerging cities in southern Mexico. Using a qualitative and ethnographic approach, the study seeks to understand these territories not only as spaces of bureaucratic containment but also as settings where subjectivities, forms of resistance, and forms of territoriality in motion are produced.

Thus, waiting emerges as a structuring phenomenon that redefines both migratory trajectories and the urban environments that host them. Through the concept of migrant waiting territory, this article offers a critical and situated analysis of forced immobility and its spatial, political, and symbolic implications in non-border contexts, with a focus on the city of Tuxtla Gutiérrez.

METHODOLOGY

Design of investigation

This research adopts a qualitative, ethnographically oriented approach focused on understanding the experiences of people on the move in waiting territories that are emerging in non-border cities in southern Mexico. It is a case study conducted

in the city of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, which has recently been recognized as an emerging hub on the new regional migration map.

The ethnographic approach made it possible to document the daily reality of waiting from a situated perspective, taking into account not only the narratives expressed by migrants but also the practices, silences, and spatial appropriations observed during their stopped transit. Fieldwork was conducted in 2024 and 2025, at different times of high migratory activity, in key areas of the city.

Participants and sampling

Four semi-structured interviews were conducted with people on the move from Venezuela who were selected through purposive sampling based on criteria of theoretical relevance. The sample included men and women of various ages, with diverse migration histories, living in makeshift camps and public squares.

The interviews were carried out in person, in urban transit settings, and had an average duration of 20 to 40 minutes.

Table 1

Characteristics of the individuals interviewed in the study

Country of origin	Age	Gender	Country of destination	Waiting territory
Venezuela	25	Woman	USA	Plaza Sol Parking Lot
Venezuela	28	Man	USA	Torre Chiapas Bridge
Venezuela	30	Woman	USA	Torre Chiapas Bridge
Venezuela	40	Man	USA	Torre Chiapas Bridge

Source: Author's own elaboration based on interviews conducted in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, 2024–2025.

Data collection techniques and instruments

Three main techniques were used:

- Semi-structured interviews, with emphasis on the meaning of waiting, stopped traffic conditions, support networks and the perception of urban space.
- Ethnographic observation, carried out in informal camps, streets, public squares, bus terminals and temporary shelters. Interactions, settlement dynamics and forms of collective adaptation to immobility were documented.
- Documentary review, including institutional reports, press releases, and social media material, which allowed for the triangulation of narratives and the construction of a broader contextual overview.

These techniques complemented one another to capture not only explicit discourse, but also the sensory, symbolic, and spatial ways of experiencing the wait.

Data Analysis strategy

The data were analyzed using a categorical thematic analysis approach, following the methodology proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Based on an initial open coding, three broad analytical dimensions were identified: (1) subsistence strategies during the waiting period, (2) migrant solidarity networks, and (3) the precarious territorialization of transit.

For example, within the category of subsistence strategies, practices such as informal street vending, food sharing, and the shared use of public spaces for sleeping or personal hygiene emerged. The triangulation of research methods, combined with the use of field notes and analytical reflection, strengthened the interpretive validity of the study, enabling a situated and critical analysis of the phenomenon.

EMERGING CITIES: NEW SCENARIOS OF MIGRANT WAITING

The concept of waiting territories takes on a key dimension when analyzed in the context of so-called emerging cities—defined as inland towns that, beginning in 2020, began to undergo significant structural transformations due to a sustained increase in migratory flows. These cities, traditionally unaccustomed to the international movement of people, have become strategic hubs for temporary waiting, route reorganization, and bureaucratic processing, generating new social, economic, and territorial dynamics.

Historically, migration in Mexico has been concentrated in two major areas: the southern border, particularly Tapachula, and the northern border, including cities such as Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, and Reynosa—linked by the well-known “traditional migration route” (Massey et al., 2005). This route, mainly used by Central American individuals in an irregular situation, provided a direct link to the United States via established transit corridors. However, several structural factors have disrupted this pattern: the tightening of United States immigration policies, the emergence of caravans beginning in 2018, and, most significantly, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Border closures and health restrictions imposed during the global crisis forced a shift in migration routes. People in transit began stopping in cities that had not previously appeared on the migration map. This territorial redistribution gave rise to new migrant centers, that is, inland cities that began to serve as places of waiting, containment, shelter or regrouping. In these places, streets, parks, sidewalks, public buildings, and low-cost hotels were converted into makeshift living spaces. Most of these spaces, streets, parks, sidewalks, public buildings and low-cost hotels were converted into improvised territories of stay (Escobedo et al., 2025).

In these scenarios, *waiting territories* do not solely constitute of involuntary detention, but rather living territories where migrants engage in daily activities such as informal work, intermittent access to health or education services, and interaction with local institutions. Initially, many of these cities responded with gestures of solidarity and humanitarian aid networks, especially from civil society. However, the breakdown of institutional capacities and the saturation of public services have generated social tensions, punitive responses, and even discourses of criminalization toward migrants (Silvey & Lawson, 2021).

Municipal governments, lacking prior experience in migration management, have improvised assistance mechanisms. A common strategy has been the installation of support offices for individuals in mobility, aiming to streamline procedures and reduce visible flows. However, these measures have generated a new form of waiting: *bureaucratic waiting*. Document processing can extend for weeks or even months, transforming these spaces into sites of forced temporary fixation (Escobedo, 2025).

Unlike cities historically linked to the migratory phenomenon, emerging cities present more fragile contexts: they lack institutional infrastructure, trained human resources, and specific regulatory frameworks to assist this population. Nonetheless, their consolidation as migratory nodes have been reinforced by the migrant networks themselves. Through 'word of mouth,' social media messages, or messaging applications, these cities become reference points where 'you can wait for a few days,' 'there are INM offices,' or 'you can reunite with acquaintances'.

Analyzing these cities requires moving beyond classical territorial frameworks. It becomes indispensable to incorporate variables such as local conflicts, racial or xenophobic tensions, institutional response capacity, as well as the ways in which migrants themselves reproduce, occupy, and resignify urban space. Waiting territories are not solely the result of state control or omission, but also of migrant agency—of their capacity to build ways of inhabiting the unstable and the contingent in the midst of a peripheral capitalism that marginalizes and invisibilizes.

Table 2*Comparison between border cities and emerging cities as territories of migrant waiting*

Dimension	Border cities	Emerging cities
Migrate history	Long-standing tradition of transit and migrant destination.	Recent addition to the migration map.
Institutional infrastructure	Presence of shelters, NGOs, and specialized government offices.	Limited or non-existent infrastructure for migrant assistance.
State response	Greater operational experience and established protocols.	Improvised responses and inefficient bureaucracy.
Habitability conditions	Greater reception capacity, although saturated.	Occupation of public spaces, extreme precariousness.
Type of waiting	Strategic containment, border waiting.	Bureaucratic, legal, and prolonged waiting in the interior.
Relationship with local population	Conflictual coexistence but stabilized in some cases.	Recent tensions, outbreaks of xenophobia, and stigmatization.
Role within the migratory system	Final point or crossing point toward the USA.	Intermediate node for regrouping or detention.

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Escobedo (2025), COMDHSM (2024), OIM (2024), Musset (2015), Silvey & Lawson (2021).

Emerging cities are now nodal scenarios for understanding the new geographies of human mobility in Mexico. They are unexpected points within the cartography of transit, where multiple forms of waiting condense: institutional, legal, economic, emotional. Within them, migrant waiting territories not only represent the forced displacement of bodies, but also profound social transformations that reconfigure both migrant communities and receiving societies. They can no longer be thought of outside the migratory phenomenon: in their streets, schools, hospitals, and markets, waiting resonates as a way of life, a structural tension, and a future possibility.

One: territory

"And perhaps the only way to begin to understand these dark years for migrants crossing Central America, Mexico, and the United States is to record as many individual stories as possible. To listen to them, again and again. To write them down, again and again..." — Valeria Luiselli, *Tell Me How It Ends*¹

1 Translator's note (T.N.): The source text cited the Spanish edition of this book (*Los niños perdidos*, Sexto Piso). This quote has been replaced here with the author's original English phrasing from Valeria Luiselli, *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions* (Coffee House Press, 2017).

Luiselli's words open an ethical and political dimension that runs through this discussion: understanding the waiting territory not only as a spatial category, but as a narrative device that demands memory, listening, and critique. This first section proposes a theoretical-conceptual reflection on territory, understanding that naming it as such implies recognizing it as an active, conflictual, and socially situated construction.

In the context of this research, a key question challenges us from the very beginning: is it legitimate and necessary to designate as a 'territory' the spaces inhabited by individuals in mobility during their transit? To answer, it is necessary to turn to a genealogy of the concept, which has evolved from classical physical geography to become an analytical tool in critical social sciences.

Authors such as Bosque Maurel and Ortega Alba (1995) remind us that there is no single geography, but rather a constellation of geographical knowledges that shape territory as something more than a natural delimitation. In the modern tradition, from Ratzel (1897) to Sack (1986), territory has been understood as a space appropriated by a social group to ensure its material and symbolic reproduction. This appropriation, which implies control, identity, and use, allows for a differentiation between a simple space of passage and a territory endowed with meaning.

The concept of territory has played a fundamental role in shaping the discipline of geography. However, it was in the 19th century that this concept underwent a significant transformation. Its emergence coincided with the advent of modernity, causing this disciplinary approach to territory to extend into other fields of study, thereby spreading its influence to various academic disciplines.

Every territory of a State is equally, as a portion of the earth's soil, a natural territory. Its natural properties associate with those of the nation and those of the State to form the sum of the general characteristics of the State [...] Each people applies to its territory the totality of its forces and resources in order to obtain the maximum possible benefit for its cultural and political development [...]. The ethnic collective tends to transform into a natural entity. (Ratzel, 1897: 158-159)

Sack, for instance, defines territory as 'any space whose access is controlled.' This is especially useful for understanding waiting territories as spaces where individuals in mobility manage their presence within geographical and symbolic boundaries marked by institutional control, but also by their own practices of subsistence and coexistence.

From this perspective, migrant waiting territories cannot be reduced to 'spaces of passage'; rather, they must be understood as lived spaces, however precarious, where social, affective, and political relations are formed. Musset (2015) emphasizes that these territories are 'constructed from below,' emerging from the practices of the migrants themselves who temporarily inhabit them. Within them, an ephemeral yet no less powerful territoriality is produced: networks of care, exchange, rest, play, faith, and agency. These are territories inhabited from a standpoint of contingency.

“We’ve been traveling for a month, I’m here with my husband and my children, we want them to sell us a ticket so we can keep moving forward, but they tell us they can’t sell it to us, and well, we’ve ended up staying here. We had to spend the night on the street, and right now the sun is really harsh and here we are, still waiting.” Hernández, M. (Personal communication, July 16, 2024).

By exercising control over the spatial and material access of various flows—whether of commodities, individuals, or capital—the formation of a territorial space is consolidated. This notion addresses the previously raised question regarding the distinction between waiting spaces and waiting territories (De Souza Miranda et al., 2025). Although similarities between both concepts may initially be perceived, their differentiation will become more evident as the subsequent analysis in the text deepens.

“It’s hard, especially for the children because we don’t have help from anyone; the children go hungry, sometimes people humiliate us, they insult us, but there are also other kind-hearted people. The only thing we are asking for right now is support to get to Mexico City.” Cruz, K. (Personal communication, January 30, 2025).

This experience reveals that, even in urban margins—parking lots, squares, under bridges, or in budget hotels—children and adolescents on the move engage in a form of spatial appropriation, generating meaning and minimal relational structures. As Haesbaert (2013) argues, territory is also a relational form, not merely a physical one, where the material and symbolic conditions of the subjects who inhabit it intersect.



Note: Author's own photography

Figure 1. Torre Chiapas Bridge in the City of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas. Provisional Camp April 2025

The concept of heterotopia, introduced by Foucault (1984), is also key to this discussion. These "other spaces" operate as parallel realities within a city: spaces that, although locatable, do not entirely belong to the hegemonic order. In this sense, territories of waiting function as urban heterotopias: marginal places, simultaneously visible and invisible, where life in transit is experienced as a disruption of the normative order. They are not "non-places" in the sense of Augé (1992)², but rather "tense places" where life continues, albeit fragmented.

This testimony evidences the temporary suspension that defines the migrant waiting territory. This migratory waiting is not merely a pause, but a way of inhabiting time and space marked by uncertainty. As Santos (2000) points out, the territory is the foundation of life, work, and exchanges. And in this case, it is also the foundation of waiting as an everyday experience.

In short, the migrant territory of waiting must be understood as a social production that transforms the urban landscape. It is not solely a physical place delimited by borders, but a form of temporal organization of migrant life under adverse conditions. Unlike the "space of waiting" as a transitory notion, the territory

2 For Marc Augé (1992), "non-places" are spaces of transit characteristic of modernity—such as airports, highways, shopping malls, or stations—that do not generate identity, belonging, or lasting relationships. They are functional, anonymous, and depersonalized spaces where individuals remain temporarily without building deep symbolic bonds. Unlike the "anthropological place," the non-place is defined by the absence of collective memory, shared history, and rootedness.

of waiting consolidates itself through migrant agency, as it generates bonds, meanings, and symbolic structures that give sense to the experience of being stranded.

In more precise terms, territory—beyond its physical, abstract, or symbolic connotations—can be defined as a portion of geographic space that acquires social meaning when differentiated political, cultural, economic, or affective relationships are established within it, distinguishing it from surrounding spaces. These relationships produce both physical and symbolic boundaries, generating a differential appropriation of space. As Taylor (1993) points out, "not all territories are sovereign States," suggesting that territories should not be understood exclusively under institutional geopolitical frameworks, but also as dynamic social constructions that emerge from situated practices.

Spaces are transformed into territories when they are inhabited, lived, and resignified. This transformation gives rise to a territoriality, understood as the latent structure of everyday life, shaped by the interpersonal and social relationships that are reproduced within that environment (Bresso and Raffestin, 1982). In the case of migratory transit, the migrant territory is configured as a network of functional places—streets, stations, shelters, squares—where individual and collective practices give meaning to what is lived. However, territory transcends function; it also expresses systems of representation, symbolic disputes, and infrastructures of power. From this perspective, territory constitutes a dimension of space that gains relevance when analyzed through power relations, thus becoming a nodal concept in critical social geography.

In this way, migrant waiting territories are constructed through a constant tension between those who inhabit them and those who deny or regulate them. Their dynamics are not defined solely by their spatial location, but by the way in which time—that prolonged, uncertain, and forced migratory waiting—is inscribed into the everyday life of people on the move. Waiting is not neutral: it organizes life, reconfigures expectations, and redefines trajectories. Consequently, this paper proposes understanding the migrant territory of waiting in emerging cities as a relational and temporal production, where the invisible structure of daily life—its rhythms, bonds, and disputes—shapes the migratory experience. It is within this fabric that a migrant territoriality emerges, marked by containment, but also by migrant agency and social creativity.

Table 3
Typology of experiences in migrant waiting territories

Dimension	Description
Temporal	Prolonged or indefinite stay in non-border cities; bureaucratic waiting for migratory procedures.
Spatial	Occupation of parks, sidewalks, shelters, budget hotels, streets, and public squares.
Emotional	Anxiety, uncertainty, frustration, hope, nostalgia.
Social	Generation of support networks among migrants, tensions with the local population, social visibility and invisibility.
Political	Conditions of forced immobility; institutional containment and lack of full legal recognition.
Economic	Search for temporary income to continue migratory transit (informal sales, occasional work).

Source: Author's own elaboration based on observations and interviews conducted in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, 2024-2025.

Two: Transit and stay

The celebrated epic *The Epic of Gilgamesh* begins with the verse: “He who has seen everything the depths of things and of the earth, / and has lived all things to teach others, / will propagate his experience for the good of everyone.” This ancestral poem, considered one of humanity's earliest literary narratives, chronicles the journey of a man who, in his search for immortality, ultimately confronts his own vulnerability, his limits, and his relationship with death. Gilgamesh embodies a universal experience: that of those who are forced to leave the known behind to face the unknown and the condition of transit. This ancient and mythical figure resonates powerfully within the trajectories of contemporary people on the move, who, like him, leave their homeland not only in search of a destination, but as part of a journey where their identity, rootedness, and possibilities for the future are also contested.

Within the framework of this research, the dichotomy between transit and stay is revealed as a permanent tension. From a physical perspective, migrants are temporarily housed in waiting territories. However, in symbolic and emotional terms, their situation is deeply ambivalent: they live in transit, they think about movement, they plan the next step. As the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC 2020) warns, migration in transit implies a condition of constant mobility, where subjects are placed in an intermediate between departure and arrival. Waiting, then, does not deny movement: it suspends it.

“Migration, had been saying that they were going to evict us, but really here there are families who do not have to pay a rent, we want them to understand that the people

who are here are not bad ones, we do not want to harm the country, we want to reunite with our families in the United States”- Ramos, H. (Personal communication, January 30, 2025)

This testimony reveals how, even in spaces that are provisionally occupied, practices of temporary entrenchment develop: waiting territories become lived spaces where networks are built, resources are accessed, and survival takes place. Musset and Vidal (2016) propose to think of these territories as places where waiting itself gives rise to new territorialities. Whether institutional, such as hostels and care centers, or informal, such as squares, budget hotels or sidewalks, these spaces function as containment areas that structure not only mobility, but also everyday life.



Figure 2. Plaza Sol parking lot in the City of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas. Provisional Camp July 2024. Source: Author's own photography

The notion of stay, in this sense, cannot be understood as mere permanence. It derives from the Latin *stare* (to stand, to remain), and refers to a way of occupying space that is mediated by power structures, access to resources, and agency capacity. Spíndola Zago (2016) points out that territories are not given, but managed, built and inhabited in tension. In the waiting territories, the stay becomes the space where migrants negotiate their existence: they rest, plan, care for one another, and resist.



Figure 3. Villaflores Highway in the City of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas: Provisional Camp, July 2024. Source: Author's own photography

However, traffic continues to operate as a horizon. As Carling (2002) points out, migratory transit is a process of displacement that is not limited to the geographical: it also implies a construction of meaning, an expectation, a promise. For people on the move, this promise is mediated by multiple factors, the economic one being one of the most decisive. Obtaining money for transportation, for the coyote, for the next passage, profoundly conditions the duration of the stay.

“We have a case, they grabbed one of the girls who is living under the bridge, the police took her and kidnapped her, we need our version to be heard, she is a mother of three children”. Ramos, H. (Personal Communication, March 28 2025)

Thus, waiting is not merely a suspension of movement. It is a state of vital reorganization, where the challenging present coexists with a longed-for future and an idealized or repressed past (Musset, 2015). In this sense, the waiting territories are spaces of transit where dwelling becomes a pedagogical and political act. As Gennari argues (Kaiser, 2001), “inhabiting the journey implies thinking of the place not as a mere stopover, but as a world-of-life”. This transformative experience configures a temporary territoriality, which is by no means superficial. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that these experiences of transit and stay are not homogeneous. From a gender perspective, the experiences of migrant girls and women differ significantly from those of men. The so-called “feminization of migration” has

shown that an increasing number of women migrate alone or with their children, generating specific needs and exposing them to differentiated risks. According to data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM 2024), women represent 48% of the international migrant population, a reality that demands responses sensitive to gender inequalities in both transit and stay.

Living in the journey and during the journey, “inhabiting it for what it is and not for what it entails (...) implies thinking of the place as a world-of-life and not as a place of transit” (Gennari, in Kaiser, 2001, p. 57). It is through discovery that one is educated, an education that takes place within the embodiment related to the territory through which the journey unfolds (cited in Planella, 2006, p. 272).

In short, the duality between transit and stay should not be thought of as the opposite, but as complementary. In the waiting territories, the transit stops, but does not disappear: it is projected, it is planned, it is dreamed. The stay, on the other hand, does not imply definitive rooting, but a form of minimal, precarious and, nevertheless, significant habitability. Both processes coexist, and their analysis allows us to understand the migratory experience as a *continuum* in which movement and waiting, route and pause, desire and survival are intertwined.

Table 4

Comparative dimensions between transit and stay in migrant waiting territories

Dimension	Transit	Stay
Temporality	Continuous or planned displacement	Indefinite or prolonged permanence
Emotionality	Expectation, anxiety about the future	Frustration, adaptation, hope
Spatiality	Movement between territories	Partial appropriation of urban space
Social relations	Brief and mobile interaction	Construction of temporary support networks
Legal status	Temporary irregularity	Procedures before institutions or waiting for paperwork
Agency	Active search for next destination	Daily reorganization for survival

Source: Author's own elaboration based on the qualitative analysis conducted in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, 2024-2024.

Three: The waiting

The notion of waiting transcends its conventional meaning to become a central analytical category in the study of contemporary migrations. This article proposes to shift the axis of analysis from movement towards immobility, understood not as an absence of action, but as a complex state in which temporal, spatial, affective and political dimensions converge. Waiting, as a situated social practice, reveals an intense interaction between mobile subjects and their environment. More than a passive pause, it constitutes a scenario for the production of meaning and the reconfiguration of living.

Waiting implies anticipation, desire and projection of the future. It is closely linked to hope, as a symbolic justification of the present. This dimension is evoked in the poem by Luis Ángel Orellana Esquivel, a Salvadoran migrant, written during his stay in a shelter:

*“Between tears and hugs is difficult to forget
to my old lady that I had to leave my house...
I made a campfire, it’s a little warm.
I miss my dear little place, El Salvador...
I am comforted by the desire to see you again,
however, I have to escape from death”* (Orellana Esquivel, 2023)

This poetic testimony embodies the emotional and political experience of waiting: a suspended time that does not translate into inaction, but into imagination, resistance and the daily construction of precarious bonds. From phenomenology, Heidegger argues that Dasein, being-in-the-world, is always projected outwards, towards what is to come. Waiting, from this perspective, is not only a state, but a way of being: the subject is always "outside", inhabiting anticipations and uncertainties (Heidegger, 1927/2006).

During waiting, time acquires an elastic texture: it expands, becomes imprecise and ungraspable, while space contracts and is encapsulated. Einstein explained it metaphorically: “When you court a beautiful girl, an hour seems like a second. But if you sit on red-hot charcoal, a second feels like an hour.” In this experience, as Ana points out:

“When my sister came to the United States, she only lasted a week in Mexico, the appointment came out in 3 days, and she told us that it didn’t take long. We took the risk coming here without knowing anything and we have already spent 5 months here and the appointment does not come up. We stayed here.” Martínez, A. (Personal Communication, January 30, 2025)

Waiting affects body, mind and bonds. In the territories of migrant waiting, new forms of sociability, hierarchy, community and informality emerge. What is proposed is that these spaces are not just points of detention, but social scenarios where networks of affection, survival strategies and disputes for recognition are configured.

Waiting imposes a new management of time; an ephemeral society is temporarily built, based on the exchange of feelings related to boredom, interest, tiredness, anger or conflict, according to very peculiar modalities, since it is organized from cars, that is, private places immobilized in a public space (Musset, 2015).

In contrast to the "non-places" of Augé (1992) ³, waiting territories are inhabited spaces, full of symbolism and agency. In these spaces, life does not come to a standstill, but rather is reconfigured. As evidenced by the interviews and field observations, waiting becomes a form of territoriality in transit, where bodies, emotions, and everyday strategies occupy the space beyond its formal function.



Figure 4. Villaflores Highway in the City of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas. Provisional Camp, July 2024. Source: Author's own photography

From an intersectional perspective, waiting also generates specific inequalities. The so-called "feminization of migration" makes visible the differentiated experiences of women, girls and adolescents, who face particular forms of violence, exclusion and risk during their stay. Far from being passive subjects, many of them articulate support networks between women, reconfiguring waiting as a space of affective containment and resistance.

3 In contrast, the migrant waiting territories —although they too are located in transit spaces —cannot be understood as non-places. On the contrary, they are intensely lived spaces, charged with emotion, conflict, memory, and the production of meaning, where waiting gives rise to form of territoriality that are precarious yet socially significant.



Figure 5. Plaza Sol in the City of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas. Provisional Camp, January 2024. Source: Author's own photography

The question underlying this section is key: Can we consider those spaces frequented by individuals who know they are —or wish to be —in transit to be true territories? For Musset (2015), this paradox is precisely what gives the concept analytical density. Waiting does not deny movement: it transforms it into a way of dwelling. Finally, it is necessary to emphasize that people on the move not only go through waiting, but actively configure it. They are both actors and authors of the territories that waiting produces. By constructing, occupying, and re-signifying urban space, they transform the margins into social stages imbued with historical, affective, and political density. Territories of waiting, then, are not merely transitory: they are spaces of contention over the right to exist, to remain, and to continue.

Table 5
Analytical Dimensions of Migrant Waiting

Dimension	Description
Temporary	La espera se extiende de forma indefinida; se experimenta como suspensión del tiempo y de los proyectos.
	The wait drags on indefinitely; it feels like time and plans have come to a standstill.
Spatial	It takes place in makeshift shelters that lack adequate conditions: streets, bridges, squares, and overcrowded shelters.
Emotional	It evokes feelings of anxiety, hope, frustration, and fear, as well as solidarity and a sense of community.
Politics	The waiting process is managed by institutions, becoming a mechanism for controlling and obscuring rights.
Economy	It limits access to transportation, food, and resources; a lack of money prolongs the stay.
Social	During this waiting period, support networks, hierarchies, conflicts, and new forms of collective organization emerge.

Source: Author's own elaboration based on the theoretical-conceptual analysis of the *article Migrant Waiting Territories in Emerging Urban Areas: A Theoretical Proposal and Analytical Perspective from Southern Mexico*. 2024-2025

TUXTLA GUTIÉRREZ AS MIGRATORY WAITING TERRITORY: URBAN EMERGENCY AND SPATIAL RECONFIGURATION

The territorialization of space is an inevitable process for people in contexts of mobility and immobility. The spaces inhabited by people in transit are not given but constructed out of immediate human needs: the need to pause, to reorganize one's journey, and to withstand uncertainty. On Mexico's southern border, this process has generated urban enclaves that, though not planned for this purpose, have been transformed into temporary homes for people on the move. These are spaces born of waiting, of forced pauses, and of the structural absence of public policies designed to guarantee the right to dignified human mobility.

This phenomenon reflects a changing and complex reality: in the absence of designated institutional spaces, people on the move occupy a variety of areas—sidewalks, stations, overcrowded shelters, and seedy hotels—creating temporary arrangements that oscillate between visibility and neglect. The proliferation of these spaces is not the result of urban planning, but rather of a logic of survival that highlights the state's lack of or inadequate intervention in the territorial management of mobility.

In this context, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, the capital of the state of Chiapas, has emerged as a destination city for diverse migratory flows. Beginning in 2021, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of migrants arriving not only from the Northern Triangle of Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador), but also from Central Africa, the Caribbean, and South America. This diversification

of profiles has made Tuxtla a key city within the central migration corridor, where the migrant waiting period is marked by conditions of extreme precariousness.



Figure 6. OCC Bus Terminal Parking Lot. Provisional Camp in the city of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, 2023.
Source: Author's own photography

The area occupied by people on the move within this city reveals serious shortcomings in shelter infrastructure. There are no adequate institutional spaces to guarantee rest, medical care, food, or information. The government's response has been partial or nonexistent, which has led to widespread homelessness, especially among families, women with children, and people seeking international protection. This situation is not only a social problem but also constitutes a public health emergency.

Various civil society organizations, such as the Colectivo de Observación y Monitoreo de Derechos Humanos en el Sureste Mexicano [Collective for Human Rights Observation and Monitoring in Southeastern Mexico] (COMDHSM), have documented this critical situation in municipalities along the Chiapas migration corridor, including Frontera Comalapa, Comitán, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapa de Corzo, and Tuxtla Gutiérrez. Their reports document multiple human rights violations: excessive use of force, arbitrary detentions, repression, institutional violence, and the criminalization of people on the move and their support networks.

At a regional level, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has defined migration corridors as cumulative processes of population movements over time. In its World Migration Report 2024, it highlights that the Mexico-United States corridor continues to be the busiest on the planet, with more than 11 million people on the move. However, this global data renders invisible the intermediate points where waiting becomes a structural practice. Cities such as Tuxtla Gutiérrez, on the fringes of formal borders, transform into migrant waiting territories within a

non-institutionalized emerging city, where mobility is halted and life is reinvented under conditions of high vulnerability.

The research is relevant, since it makes visible the migratory routes, feelings and life within their stay in the Southern Border, as well as the perception of the city of Tuxtla Gutiérrez as a city that does not allow them to leave itself, which faces similar and even more complex challenges than the Darien jungle.

Hanny, a Venezuelan man who travels alone with his two children, says he feels confused under the context they are living in, since his destiny is to continue advancing to settle in a city where they can work and eventually reach the United States, bearing in mind that the misnamed “American Dream” has already vanished, it no longer exists.

In this sense, the waiting territory on Frontera Sur (Southern Border) is greater than those established, they are prolonged waits that the mobile population does not know in transit, but determines it in Mexican territory. Reaching people in these contexts was determined between the complexity and simplicity of the approach, from the need to listen, to express the feeling. The narrative was demonstrated in public spaces with greater traffic in the capital city, this made them feel in a “safe” space, under a bridge with children’s spaces or in parks in the center of the city, outside the Instituto Nacional de Migración [National Institute of Migration], developing their day to day, in that leisurely life, but happening.

“The only thing we were clear about, or half clear, was the jungle pass. That it was difficult, indeed it is difficult to cross the jungle, but not impossible, we are here. But what has been harder for us is not crossing the jungle, but the journey after the jungle through here. More than anything, here in Mexico. Because from Tapachula, they brought us all the way here, to Tuxtla. The biggest problem is here in Mexico, where they put up so many obstacles; from here you move forward and they send you back, because migration enforcement sent me back, they threw me back in Tapachula. In other words, the biggest problem is here in Mexico, and nobody tells you that. Because we went through other countries, but nothing compares to Mexico”. Cruz, K. (Personal communication, January 30, 2025).

Cruz, K.’s personal communication reinforces the idea that waiting is a deeply relational and affective experience. In his story, the place of stay, although transitory, is configured as a space where feeling, thinking, and inhabiting are articulated. Thus, waiting is not experienced solely as forced immobility, but as a form of territorial construction that, despite being precarious and temporary, produces meaning, momentary rootedness, and forms of collective care.

BORDER WAITING TERRITORIES AND EMERGING CITIES: GEOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTRASTS OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH

The notion of waiting territory has developed widely in relation to traditional border spaces, such as the border cities of northern and southern Mexico. However, it is necessary to problematize and expand this concept to understand how waiting operates in non-boundary urban contexts such as the so-called emerging cities, which have recently begun to form part of the regional migration network. This differentiation is not merely geographical; it implies significant contrasts in terms of institutionality, social visibility, containment strategies and territorial configurations.

In border areas, such as Tapachula (south) or Tijuana (north), waiting territories are marked by greater institutionalization of migration containment. These spaces have the active presence of the National Institute of Migration (INM), migration stations, formalized shelters, offices of the Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados [Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid] (COMAR), international agencies and civil society organizations with experience in humanitarian care (Casillas, 2020). This infrastructure has historically been shaped by sustained migratory flows, which has generated regulatory frameworks, reception protocols and institutional routines, although often insufficient or in violation of rights.

In contrast, in emerging cities such as Tuxtla Gutiérrez, migration is a recent irruption that has overwhelmed state and community capacity. These cities were not prepared to receive numerous and diverse flows, so the waiting territories are configured in an improvised, fragmented and vulnerable way. Spaces such as sidewalks, public squares, parks, road margins and bridge bottoms are transformed into temporary enclaves where containment occurs without formal structure, without legal accompaniment and with ambiguous visibility: migrants are both hyper-visible as bodies occupying public space and institutionally invisible as subjects of rights.

Martha, a woman traveling alone with her children, comments that:

“The situation is very difficult because we cannot rent a room, we have to sleep on the street and I am worried about the rental costs of public toilets that are \$20 or \$25 for one to bathe, for children, buy food, water because everything is bought. One did not come with a budget to get stranded, the idea was to follow the path, as we were doing right now. But well, it’s time to wait and hope that it’s many days of waiting”. Hernández, M. (Personal communication July 16, 2024)

At the northern border, waiting is usually linked to the expectation of crossing into the United States, which entails dynamics such as hiring coyotes, waiting for CBP One appointments, contact with family networks already established in the U.S. and greater circulation of economic resources. The wait in this area, although uncertain, is oriented towards the imminence of crossing. Meanwhile, in emerging cities in the south, such as Tuxtla Gutiérrez, waiting is longer, less articulated and

with less access to humanitarian infrastructure. In these contexts, waiting is mediated by bureaucratic migration procedures, arbitrary detentions and more severe precarious conditions (COMDHSM, 2024).

In addition, emerging cities in the global south face a double marginality: on the one hand, the institutional weakness to manage flows; on the other, their peripheral position within the national and international economic system. This generates contexts where government responses are late or punitive, support networks depend almost exclusively on civil society and migration is perceived as a disturbing phenomenon of urban “normality”. In Tuxtla Gutiérrez, for instance, the presence of thousands of people on the move has revealed a profound lack of public reception policies, highlighting the structural inequalities of the territory and the limits of the State in southern Mexico.

In short, while waiting areas in border regions tend to be more institutionalized, monitored, and well-known within the migration landscape, in emerging cities they take the form of unstable, invisible spaces that lack official recognition. This difference is significant: it radically transforms the experience of waiting, access to rights, and opportunities for agency for people on the move. Recognizing this distinction is crucial for understanding the new geography of migration in Mexico and for promoting territory-sensitive policies that recognize waiting as a structuring phenomenon rather than an accident of mobility.

MIGRANT WAITING TERRITORIES: CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REFLECTIONS

This research has shown that migrant waiting territories in emerging cities should not be understood solely as transitory spaces or mere stopovers within migratory flows. On the contrary, they constitute complex environments, densely laden with meaning, where material, symbolic, social, and political dimensions converge, profoundly shaping the experience of those on the move.

Far from representing a passive phase of the journey, waiting reveals itself as an active way of inhabiting time and space. It is a social and vital practice, criss-crossed by uncertainty, but also by agency, daily reorganization, the production of bonds, and the emergence of precarious territorialities. In this sense, waiting becomes a form of resistance and of meaning-making, even within contexts of forced immobility.

The research carried out in cities such as Tuxtla Gutiérrez allows us to identify a key phenomenon: the displacement of the centrality of borders towards cities in the interior of the country, which until a few years ago did not appear as relevant points in migration routes. These emerging cities have acquired an unexpected role as nodes of reorganization of the journey, bureaucratic containment and territorial rearticulation, evidencing a reconfiguration of traditional migratory geographies.

In these non-border urban territories, waiting adopts multiple expressions: legal, emotional, economic, institutional. This plurality of forms makes visible the complexity of the contemporary migratory phenomenon, which cannot be understood without taking into account the structures of immobility imposed, but also negotiated along the way. Furthermore, it is observed that the migrant crisis not only transforms the experience of people on the move but also the urban dynamics of host cities, generating pressures on public services, social tensions, responses of civic solidarity, and territorial reconfigurations.

In theoretical terms, this work proposes an expansion of the concept of the waiting territory beyond its border-centric definition, in order to recognize its deployment within non-institutionalized spaces in the interior of the country. From this perspective, migrant waiting territories are relational and contingent constructions, generated by the social practices of the migrant subjects who inhabit them and by the explicit or implicit frameworks of containment that surround them. Waiting, as a multidimensional phenomenon, thus positions itself as a central analytical category for understanding how people on the move resignify space, transform cities, and reorganize their lives.

Finally, this study opens up several avenues for future research. Among them, the following stand out: (1) deepening the understanding of the relationship between migration policies and the territorial configuration of waiting; (2) analyzing the role of local governments and civil society in the face of the challenges of forced mobility; and (3) gaining a deeper understanding of the economic, affective, and political effects of waiting on both migrants and receiving communities. Advancing toward a critical, ethical, and territorially situated reading of these processes is urgent in order to design more humane and sustainable responses to the challenges of contemporary mobility in the Global South.

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Cartographies from the South: the telluric as a regional sociocultural construction

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— Abstract —

This article presents a theoretical and methodological proposal developed within the field of regional studies, aimed at examining the diverse ways in which public space has been intervened as a form of social protest during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This process of regionalization was termed the telluric region in the South-South and was configured through expressions of symbolic insurgency characteristic of social movements that emerge from confrontations with the prevailing colonial matrix. This region was constructed from a decolonial epistemology and a qualitative historical methodology grounded in observation and documentary analysis. Thus, the telluric region in the South-South integrates a symbolic regional system based on the South as a concept. This system transcends geographical limitations insofar as it does not encompass only the Southern Hemisphere of the globe, but is instead delimited by specific social, political, economic, and power relational conditions in relation to the North, understood as another symbolic regional system. Although historically transformed, the North, whether conceived as Europe, the West, Euro USA, or the Global North, has, since the period of Colonization and Conquest, maintained diverse forms of domination, exploitation, and oppression over the South.

The results of this research exemplify regional construction from a socio-cultural perspective and reveal a dynamic cartography of space and time, actors, actions, agencies, motivations, iconographies, and discourses generated by the complexity of sociocultural regional knowledge and by the shaping role of history, not as an event of the past, but as one of the forces that continues to mark practices and interregional and intraregional power relations in the present. In this way, the telluric region in the South-South constitutes an example of a constructed symbolic region that emphasizes a complex and transdisciplinary analysis of a reticular system of power relations, interpellation, and the circulation of information, people, and resources at different scales. This system is connected regionally along South - South axes as well as in South - North directions.

Keywords:

Regional construction, regional studies, south, telluric.

A TELLURIC REGION FROM A SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

The telluric region as a decolonial region within the sociocultural paradigm seeks, as Haesbaert (2021) proposes, to move away from conceptions of region rooted in the Western tradition, conceptions shaped from the outset by geopolitical interests of various kinds, as was the case with colonial geography, which was concerned with documenting goods, resources, places, and peoples for economic, political, and domination-driven ends. In this type of study, the author notes that newly explored and unfamiliar territories were labeled “natural regions” so that they could be declared “no man’s land”, a move that erased the presence of indigenous peoples and their diversity, thereby allowing property to be assigned to others. It was, in essence, a regionalization exercised from above, shaped by administrative, military, and commercial needs, and sustained by an instrumentalized idea of region that served colonial expansion. By contrast, from a decolonial perspective, the region is understood as a category of practice, one that is lived by the social groups that make it up (Haesbaert, 2021, p. 248). In this sense, the telluric region emerges from below, where a:

Regionalization or region articulation “from below” [is] a way of thinking/representing - and acting in - space based on an integrated reading of its multiple dimensions. In this case, new articulations, both intra and inter- regional, can serve as the essential foundation for the construction of new spatial practices of power, that is, a more alternative territorialization [...] we may encounter difficulties when attempting to regionalize within a standard framework that recognizes the agency not only of hegemonic groups, but also of subordinated ones (Haesbaert, 2021, p. 262).

In this way, decolonizing the concept of region is a matter of revisiting and “contextualizing the construction of our epistemologies in space and time, and of problematizing the often excessively universalizing character of a certain Eurocentric rationalist reading” (Haesbaert, 2021, p. 241). To conclude and guide regionalization practice toward this end, the author identifies three aspects necessary for building a decolonial region: a. Questioning the overly generalizing claims of the coloniality of power, which imposes a universal standard criterion of regionalization without accounting for different spatio-temporal formations. b. Valuing other “local/regional” bodies of knowledge and expertise in a regionalization that is also “from below”. c. Incorporating, with greater emphasis, ethnic and gender dimensions into regionalizations, precisely those that, especially in Latin America, are most closely tied subordinated groups (Haesbaert, 2021, p. 263).

Along the same lines, Albán-Achinte (2013) is brought into the conversation as a complement to the conceptualization of the region from a telluric standpoint, as a form of emancipation from Eurocentric universalism and rationalism:

If modernity emancipated the subject from its beliefs, I propose then that we emancipate ourselves from Western emancipation so that the telluric may construct meaning, emotions may flutter without established limits, imagery may furrow into our very depths, and the enigmatic may become a possibility of glimpsing other ways of existing (Albán-Achinte, 2013, p. 449).

In this way, the telluric region takes on a character of emancipation and rupture in relation to the classical conception of region. It is telluric because it makes itself present when structures tremble – and it is at this point that a focus on human agency becomes necessary. To understand this region, it must be recognized that what is needed is not only a shift in how region is conceived, but in how the indissoluble bond between territory and its communities is analyzed.

Within this framework, personal and community processes influence and transform territories – and it is here that agency and human action take on central importance. For this reason, the concept of *corazonar* (*reasoning with the heart*) proposed by Guerrero-Arias (2010) offers a way of connecting with these processes within the telluric region. The author develops this concept upon observing that the colonial-imperial matrix extended its control far beyond territory, reaching into knowledge, bodies, subjectivities, affectivities, and life itself. He proposes that the path toward decoloniality, not only of knowledge, but of every dimension of human being, is charted through the recognition of affectivity and emotion as a response to the Cartesian imposition of separating emotion from reason, and calls into question the pretense of objectivity underlying science. In this way:

Corazonar constitutes an insurgent political response to the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being, as it displaces the hegemony of reason and reveals that our humanity is built upon the interrelation between affectivity and reason, with existence itself as its horizon. Hence, to corazonar the meaning of dominant epistemologies through insurgent wisdoms can contribute to the construction not only of a distinct academic and epistemic proposal, but above all, of other ways of making sense of existence (Guerrero-Arias, 2010, p. 83).

It is for this reason that the telluric region is built upon a rupture with the prevalence of rationality, and connects equally through affectivity and emotionality, so as to account for the diverse ways of living space and within space. Reclaiming “corazonar” as one of the theoretical foundations for conceiving the telluric region carries a deeply political meaning, insofar as it is precisely the interrelation between affectivity and reason proposed by Guerrero-Arias (2010) that enables empathy, understanding, and above all, the unraveling of the logics driving expressions of symbolic insurgence.

To explain the political meaning of corazonar as applied to reason, it is necessary to recall its relationship with the concept of *sentipensar* (*sensing-thinking*),

which, put briefly, proposes thinking with the heart and feeling with reason, an epistemological stance that demands a reconfiguration of Western rationality. This concept became central to the decolonial tradition after it was taken up by Fals-Borda (2007) in the 1970s, when he discovered it as a fundamental axis of thought among the communities living along the riverbanks of the Colombian Caribbean.

In this way, *sentipensar* and *corazonar* constitute two essential orientations in the construction of the telluric region, a region that, on one hand, departs epistemically from the traditional concept of region and from established ways of studying it, and on the other, demands a different reading of the phenomenon under analysis, without losing sight of the political meaning of symbolic insurgencies and the need to decolonize space, memory, and history. Guerrero-Arias (2010) argues that coloniality has determined, and continues to determine, the existence of colonized peoples, despite the widespread assumption that colonialism ended with independence. To support this, he draws on the clear distinction between colonialism and coloniality proposed by decolonial theory, in which colonialism “refers to a historical moment marked by the domination and political, economic, cultural, and other forms of administration of certain metropolises over their colonies, but which did not acquire a universal character and which, supposedly, came to an end with independence” (p. 84), while coloniality

Refers to a process of domination that has not conclude, one that began with the conquest and remains in force to this day. It is a reality of domination and dependence on a planetary and universal scale, one that outlasted the colonial period, persisted through the emergence of nation-states, and continues to operate in the present under global-imperial capitalism (Guerrero-Arias, 2010, p. 84).

From the decolonial epistemological standpoint of the telluric region, and in line with Guerrero-Arias (2010), although colonialism is assumed to have ended, coloniality was not extinguished by the processes of independence and nation-building. Administration changed hands, but power relations did not, elitist creole coloniality persisted under new administrative forms and strategies of expropriation and exploitation at the national level, and was subsequently internationalized and globalized through the alliance of these same elites with imperialist and neocolonialist nations of the Global North. Additionally, within the telluric region of the South-South, the structuring condition of coloniality and its continued relevance are acknowledged, giving rise to the need for decoloniality, which seeks to

Radically transforming subjectivities, imaginaries, and sensibilities. It therefore takes existence as its horizon, in pursuit of the recovery of the humanity and dignity denied by coloniality. Decoloniality thus stakes out the struggle for another horizon of civilization and existence (Guerrero-Arias, 2010, p. 84).

In this sense, the telluric region in the South-South is decolonial because it is emotive – within it, being moved, feeling indignation, recognizing pain and joy, euphoria and frustration, nostalgia, sorrow, and grief, but also hope, utopia, and longing, are all constitutive parts of its existence, its being, and its reason for being. Courage and valor make themselves present; the impulse to struggle, the weight of the symbolic, the performative, the body in action. The telluric region emerges and is lived through the body, and through the bodies that come together, press forward, defend themselves, and confront. They move with resolve, crossing the thin line between life and death.

In the telluric region, blood that has been spilled is mourned; justice is demanded in shouts and in song; dignity and humane treatment are insisted upon; candles are lit for those who are no longer here; streets, walls, and barricades are blanketed with poster bearing the names and faces of the disappeared; crosses are planted for those who never came home, for those who died fighting; flags representing freedom are raised, held aloft, and embraced; monuments become vessels of memory – but the memory of the forgotten. Conceiving the region through the telluric opens the possibility of experiencing it, moving through it, and coming to know it, by perceiving and observing the movements that shape its landscapes and the forces that converge within them.

It is thus from within the complexity of this decolonial sociocultural region that sensitive and empathetic reading become possible, reading capable of grasping the meanings of memory, the importance of remembrance, the necessity of not forgetting so as not to repeat, or repairing, of holding and accompanying. The demand to recognize unfinished mourning and the open wounds left by silencing, concealment, and cover-up.

DECOLONIZING THE HISTORICAL-DOCUMENTARY METHOD IN THE TELLURIC REGION: SENTIPENSAR, INDISCIPLINAR [INDISCIPLINING] AND CORAZONAR

The telluric region in the South-South is a region that, epistemologically and theoretically, moves across three related paradigms within Regional Studies: oppositional postmodern participatory, postcolonial and decolonial. Methodology, methods, techniques, and instruments must therefore remain in alignment in order to achieve the stated objectives, as Sautú (2005) explains:

Theory-objectives-methodology must be articulated with one another. Theories carry methodological implications; it is therefore essential to take them into account when evaluating our research objective. These are general dimensions that transcend specific theories or epistemological positions, although each specific theory or theoretical-methodological position explicitly assumes or adheres to stances within each of them (p. 18).

In this way, the methods were designed to address the question that gave rise to this research: how is the telluric region in the South-South conceptualized, constitutes, and configured? It is worth noting at this point, however, that the telluric region in the South-South is composed of multiple social movements that share a direct confrontation with the practices derived from the modern-colonial-capitalist-patriarchal matrix. For the purposes of this study, regionalization was therefore built around expressions of symbolic insurgency produced by the intersubjective agency of Latin American indigenous communities in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

The unit of analysis of this qualitative historical research was documentary observation situated in archival sources, press, official publications, and bibliographic texts. While the historical-documentary method corresponds to traditional ways of doing history as a discipline that records and studies past events, it can be employed from a decolonial episteme, provided that this construction of history is critical of the modern/colonial/ capitalist matrix, adheres to the postulates of the decolonial turn, and, in the case of the study of indigenous peoples, takes into account the principles proposed by their own scholars and researchers for the analysis of sources and the production of findings.

In this sense, for the study of the telluric region in the South-South as a regional study, the methodology moved through three stages:

1. Thinking toward a regional historical method different from the traditional one

To this end, the starting point was what Miño-Grijalva (2002) proposes for the achieving integration and consensus in regional historiography, for which he identifies five fundamental aspects: a) studying historical processes by systematically introducing space as an analytical element; b) the object of study of regional historiography will be regional society; c) regional space would be determined by regional society and not the other way around; d) regional society and the space it occupies are segments of a broader society and a broader space; and e) regional society and the space it occupies change over time. The author further highlights the importance of globality and the multi-determination of social processes as a relevant aspect in the construction of regional history.

2. Designing a decolonial regional historical method

Three guiding concepts from decolonial theory and methodology were incorporated into the method proposed by Miño-Grijalva (2002): *sentipensar*, *indisciplining*, and *corazonar*, concepts that, broadly speaking, seek to interrogate the prevalence of reason in the Western academic world in order to open pathways toward sensibility and other ways of being, dwelling, and thinking the world.

Today, the concept of *sentipensar*, which has its origins in the amphibious communities of the Colombian Caribbean as a way of conceiving existence, and which Fals Borda (2007) drew upon for his sociological explanations, has become widespread, embraced by indigenous and Afro-descendant scholars and activists, as well as by environmentalists and feminists. One such example is found in decolonial feminisms, which propose *sentipensar* as applied to gender, in which indigenous researchers such as Georgina Méndez Torres, Juan López Intzín, Alicia Lemus Jiménez, and Mónica Elena Ríos, among others (Méndez, López, Marcos & Osorio, 2013), consider that

It is essential to know, analyze, reflect upon, discuss, learn from, question, and make visible the strategies that women have developed to awaken from the colonial lethargy of oppression, without thereby denying the multiple dimensions of oppression and the subalternation of knowledges. Today, women have created spaces for dialogue, for learning about other worlds; they have built methodologies rooted in feeling, in the awakening of creativity, in the sensing of the senses, in the *corazonar* of methodologies (Méndez, 2013, p. 36).

On the other hand, scholars such as Arturo Escobar (2014) have drawn on *sentipensar* with the earth to address environmental issues arising from the human-nature divide and the consequences of developmentalist campaigns on ecosystems; or Catherine Walsh (2019), who reflects on her place in the world and radicalization of her *sentipensar* in the face of a dominant system indifferent to death. She also points to the institutional university and its “white-mestizo, masculine, and heteropatriarchal ethos, its intellectual indifference, its blindness to reality, and its growing complicity with the violence-war-death system that today is modernity/coloniality/global capitalism” (p. 95).

In this way, a concept that was once born in the midst of everyday life has become the foundation of multiple theoretical, practical, and methodological reflections among scholars across different fields of knowledge, as well as among artists, writers, and thinkers, what Fals Borda called an active and *sentipensante* generation. It has also become, in the present moment, a vertebral notion for decolonial thought and practice.

Indisciplining the social sciences is another proposal that has been central to the study of the telluric region, since

It refers to the need to make visible the disciplining, the disciplines, and the disciplinary formations that have been built within the social sciences since the nineteenth century, and especially through their institutionalization in Latin America in the twentieth century, and to bring to light their colonial legacy (Castro-Gómez, Schiwy & Walsh, 2002, p. 13).

This indiscipline calls into question the coloniality of power that marks ethnic-racial differences; that conceives of a single path of development following Europe as a model and places all other projects on a temporal scale of backwardness; that validates scientific knowledge as the only legitimate form and considers the rest to be in a pre-scientific state; and that, privileges writing over orality. In this sense, “indisciplining means unleashing the borders of the social sciences that fence in the production and distributions of knowledge and the ‘ontological regions’ of the social, the political and the economic” (Lander, 2000 as cited in Castro-Gómez, Schiwy & Walsh, 2002, p. 13). Indiscipline reconfigures relationships, “it proposes breaking with the modernist tendencies of the social sciences that divide and distance the subject and the object of knowledge, thereby reconfiguring the dialect relationship between subjects and structure” (Castro-Gómez, Schiwy & Walsh, 2002, p. 14). It also calls for a transformation in the North-South relationship within the geopolitics of knowledge. On one hand the South ceases to be a passive consumer of theories and becomes a producer of them, generating a new pole within these geopolitical logics of knowledge. On the other hand, the circulation of information in the South-South direction is actively promoted. “Making visible” is one of the indiscipline activities. Making sexism visible, ethno-racial hierarchies, the colonialism of power, the geopolitics of knowledge, Eurocentrism, and the contempt for affectivity.

On this last point, affectivity, it is understood that from the modern/colonial episteme, instrumental to power, anything that does not serve it is denied, rendered invisible, and discarded. And “one of the most perverse forms of the coloniality of power and being has been the negation of affectivity in knowledge, through the fragmentation of the human dimension in the name of hegemonic Western Cartesian reason” (Guerrero-Arias, 2010, p. 83), what the author terms “the coloniality of affectivity”. It is therefore through *corazonar* that other epistemological pathways of existence and re-existence are sought, pathway that are insurgent in the face of the domination of reason, and which constitute, for this very reason, a political response to this coloniality of power, being, and knowledge.

Guerrero-Arias (2010) speaks of the force of affectivity and the insurgent force of tenderness, forces that keep hope alive, that give meaning to the will to go on living in spite of adversity, to reclaim one’s voice. Forces that sustain the desire to sing, to dance, to love, and to believe. These are the struggles of which the Viejo Antonio speaks, the Zapatista indigenous leader from Chiapas, struggles that can only “be waged from the deepest place of love: love for humanity, love for our land, love for our dead” (p. 93).

Communities such as the Kitu Kara “make affectivity the center of their political proposal in their struggle to exist” (Guerrero-Arias, 2010, p. 92); the gathering to *corazonar* life (2010) is an expression of “the spiritual dimension of political struggle and the political dimension of spirituality” (p. 92). Within these multiple meanings of the affective among indigenous peoples, for the Nasa people the heart

is an essential part of existence and of the healing of the earth: “It has been said by the liberators of Mother Earth [...] that healing the illness of the earth depends on healing the heart of us, her daughters and sons” (Zamora-Sánchez, 2018, p. 112), for to them, “it is the heart sick with capitalism that sickens Nabgwana. It is the capitalist hydra inhabiting our heart from where it can operate at will” (p. 109).

3. Alignment with the principles proposed by indigenous peoples for research

Finally, to complete a decolonial method focused on indigenous peoples and their actions, the principles proposed by indigenous collectives for adapting research methodologies to decolonial purposes and perspectives were incorporated. In brief, these principles concern the ways of working during research and study processes with indigenous communities. They establish how relationships between researches and communities should unfold; how to avoid disrespectful, extractive, and violent practices; how to evaluate the contribution that participating in research processes represents for indigenous groups; and they orient research practice toward active participation in the construction of knowledge, dialogue between different ways of knowing, and active listening. It is an invitation to abandon the idea of the researched as a passive object of study and instead to build a network of exchange of ideas, knowledge, and ways of knowing, mediated by affection and respect (Meza-Gzmán, Delgado, Shuñaqui-Sangama, Vásquez- Fernández, Castro-Mayo & Reserva Comunal ECA Amarakaeri, 2021).

In this way, the theoretical and methodological construction of the regional historical method for the telluric region was carried out, with the purpose of reading actions and interventions on monuments and public space through a lens other than vandalism or iconoclasm, of uncovering the logics and motivations behind symbolic insurgencies, and of understanding their diverse manifestations.

CARTOGRAPHY OF THE TELLURIC REGION ON THE SOUTH-SOUTH

The telluric region in the South-South is the application of the telluric region as a form of regional study, spatially and temporally situated, focused on explaining the intervention, modification, and toppling of monuments in the Global South, particularly in Latin America, a region that forms part of and remains connected to other regional systems. Identifying its regional systems and scales therefore allows, on one hand, for its contextualization, and on the other, for the identification of regional tectonics, landscape morphology and its structures, sedimentations, cycles, actors, objectives, and motivations. It is the means of understanding how it functions, how it operates, what its intra- and interregional dynamics are, its connections, networks, forms of information distribution, and its reach.

Regarding regional systems and scales (Figure 1), this region is located within the symbolic regional system of the Global South, in counterpart to the Global

North as another symbolic regional system, their correlation and coexistence configures in a bilateral and bidirectional manner, mediated by an asymmetrical power relationship in which the Global North positions itself in a place of ontological and epistemological superiority, exercising its dominance and authority vertically. The Global South, meanwhile, confronts and calls into question the practices, pretensions, and conceptualizations that the Global North holds toward it.

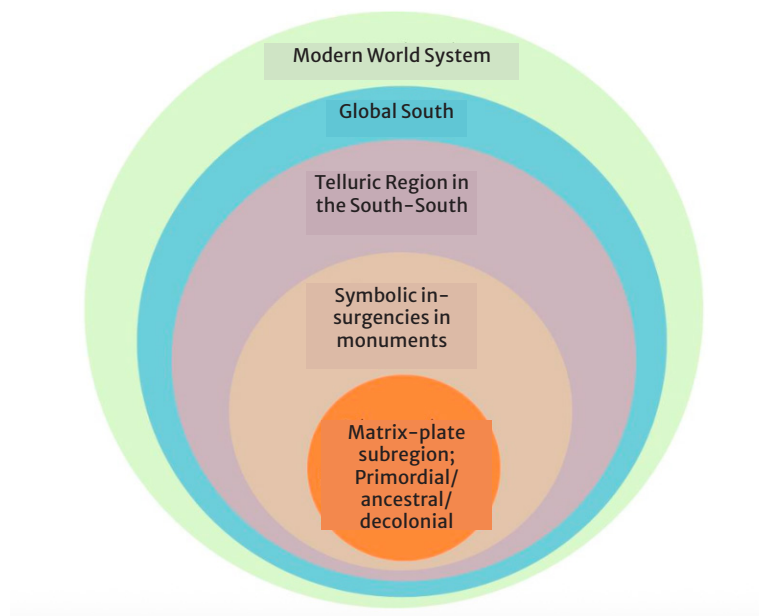


Figure 1. The regional scale in the South-South region. Source: Author's own elaboration

This regional configuration finds its origin in what Wallerstein (2005) has characterized as the modern world-system or world-economy, a global economic and political formation that consolidated in the sixteenth century following the overseas expansion of the Spanish empire and which served as the foundation for the establishment of capitalism. This world-systems analysis is related to other economic studies and to the concepts derived from them.

In the first place, it drew upon Fernand Braudel's (1970) analysis of the establishment and expansion of European capitalism and its relationship with long-duration structures.

Subsequently, it was complemented by two other economic theories proposed by a group of economists from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC): the first, led by Raúl Prebisch, is the center-periphery relationship, which posits the division of the world's countries into core and peripheral nations, according to historically established economic conditions regarding production processes, markets, capital accumulation, and technological development. This bears a close relationship with the formation of the current Global South and Global North.

And the second: dependency theory, a proposal that complements the former and explains the systematic subordination of “underdeveloped” countries to “developed” ones, while questioning the idea of an inevitable transition from feudalism to European capitalism independently of the relationship with peripheral countries. It exposes the unequal power relations between such countries, not limited to the economic sphere, but extending to the political, cultural, educational, and any other aspect of human development, and demonstrates why it is in the interest of powerful nations to keep poorer countries in a state of dependency, as these provide resources, cheap labor, and serve as commercial targets for obsolete goods and technologies.

It is in response to these unjust, unequal, and oppressive relations that social movements emerge to confront, challenge, and take action; this is why in the Global South the telluric region has a constant and active presence.

It is important to clarify that this Global South is not limited to a geographical location in the southern hemisphere of the planet, nor to an arbitrary relationship with the peripheral and semi-peripheral countries of the world-system; on the contrary, as De Sousa (2014) explains, it refers to a condition. It encompasses all those individuals and collectives subalternized by the colonialist, imperialist, capitalist, or neoliberal system, under the different names or historical connotations it has carried. Notably, the relationship between the North and the South, since it began in 1492, has been, to a considerable extent, one of exploitation and dispossession.

Within this system, the Global South has received different name throughout history: colonies, Third World, Underdeveloped Countries, Developing Countries, Non-Aligned Countries, South, South- South. The Global North, for its part, has referred to itself as: First World, Developed Countries, or the West, generally associated with core countries, imposing a universal model of civilization and an ideal of development, while the South, under this model, finds itself at a clear disadvantage according to these standards.

Figure 2 provides a brief characterization of the Global South and North and their most fundamental differences, with the aim of highlighting those aspects relevant to understanding the unequal relationship they maintain.

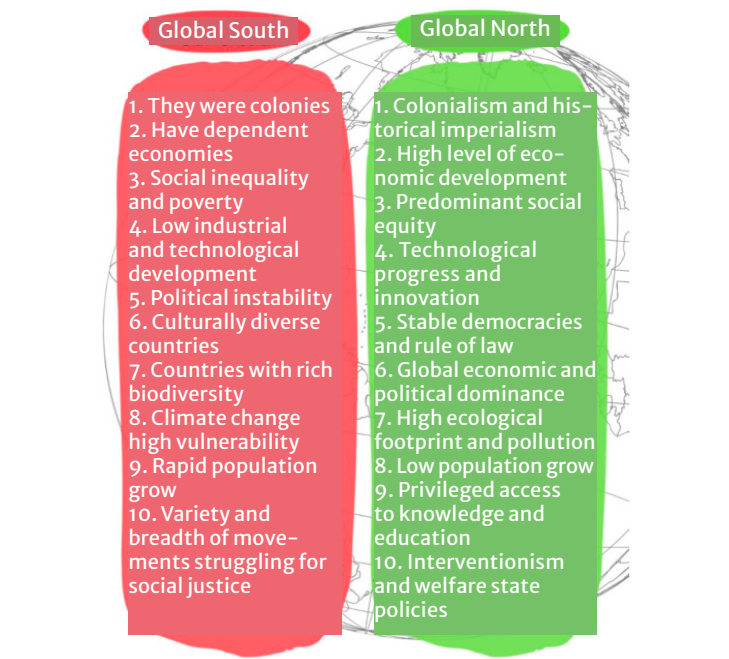


Figure 2. Source: Author's own elaboration

It should be noted that these two regional systems are neither monolithic nor homogenous, as each country of the South or the North has its own social and cultural singularities and historical particularities. However, general features can be observed that allow for a regionalization grounded in this historical division that has shaped both the North and the South in various ways.

In the South, the colonial condition has left an open wound; it is a fact that colonialism remains active, and that the colonality of being, knowledge, and power is present in all aspects of our lives. This is where the true *raison d'être* of the telluric regions of the South, such as that of South Africa with the Rhodes Must Fall movement and Black Lives Matter in the United States, Canada and Europe.



Figure 3. Interconnection map between the southern telluric regions. Source: Author's own Elaboration

Three regions that protest for social justice, for the revision of history and memory, so that figures who committed countless crimes and abuses against indigenous peoples and African and Afro-descendant communities in their colonialist campaigns are no longer honored. These are movements that struggle for the revaluation of heritage; however, these actions are only the visible part of the invisible, that is, all those claims of inequality and structural violence, discrimination, poverty, and exploitation, as well as all those concealments, as Dussel (1996) calls them, of being and knowing.

These regions in some cases interact, reinforce one another, influence each other, and form associations; certain alliances can be found among them, such as between Black Lives Matter and Rhodes Must Fall, which, in order to make their voices heard more powerfully, call upon one another and convene other regions that stand in solidarity with their cause. In any case, even where there is no direct relationship between regions, coincidences can be found in their objectives and motivations, insurgent actions, ideals, hopes, and historical claims, as in the case of the telluric region in the South-South and Rhodes Must Fall, which share more symbolic bond.

Black Lives Matter, as a telluric region, exerts a significant influence on the telluric region in the South-South. Its existence, like that of all telluric regions, has its origin in a seismic event, an occurrence that shakes history and social sensibility. This time, the epicenter was the United States, where the Afro-American/anti-racist tectonic plate collided with the modern/colonial/capitalist matrix plate in its iteration of justice having a color, following the acquittal of George Zimmerman in 2013 after the murder of Trayvon Martin in 2012.

At that moment, Alicia Garza, one of the three Afro-American activists who founded the movement, posted the hashtag #blacklivesmatter on social media, which resonated widely and drew a large number of people to the cause. In 2014, the region was shaken again by the deaths of Michael Brown in Misuri and Eric Garner in New York. In 2015, the movement joined and strengthened the Rhodes Must Fall movement in South Africa, and the first national convening was held in Cleveland. In 2017, the movement transformed into the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation, which currently has offices in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States, where Alicia Garza works alongside Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi.

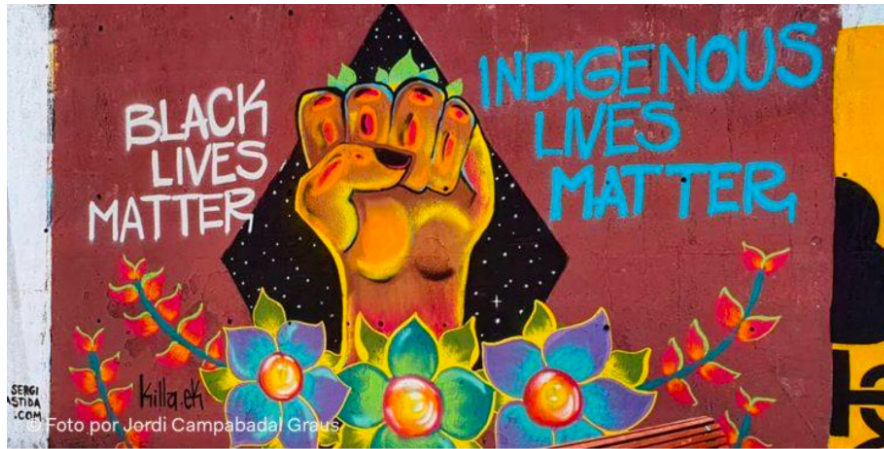


Figure 4. Mural of union in the struggle of the Black Lives Matters movement and indigenous peoples. (Campabada-Graus, 2020). Source : <https://diagonalciep.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/blacklivesmatter-750x379.jpg>

As for the regional tectonics of the telluric region in the South-South, these are explained metaphorically as analogous to the Earth's crust, which is made up of tectonic plates in constant motion. The telluric region may be constituted by two or more matrix-plates that experience collision interactions, resulting in a will toward change in the established order, which, in this case, manifests through the modification, intervention, or toppling of one or more monuments. In this sense, it is important to consider that telluric regions may have different matrix-plate configurations, which would produce disruptive effects taking the form of symbolic insurgencies, acts of resistance, armed struggles, opposition political parties, revolts, revolutions, entrenchments, terrorism, and various other ways of expressing discontent in the face of domination, oppression, authoritarianism, exploitation, exclusion, and discrimination, among others.

It is essential to bear in mind that these have been called telluric regions, among other reasons, because they are structural movements that arise from below, from the social base, in a bottom-up direction rather than from the ruling, privileged, or powerful classes, which would constitute a top-down movement. This

is an important clarification when differentiating the motivations for destroying or preserving a monument, and the treatment given to it after being modified, intervened upon, or demolished. As movements that emerge from the base, the landscapes of the telluric region are configured by alternations in the relief of the social and cultural surface, produced by the upheavals that occur when tensions accumulated over long periods of time are released, much like the telluric movements that give rise to various formations in the earth's crust, permanently and irreversibly transforming the landscape.

In this way, in the telluric region as a methodological tool, a first step is to identify its tectonics, that is, which matrix-plates are interacting and how. In the case of the telluric region in the South-South as part of a regional study, symbolic insurgencies and indigenous movements could be examined as a situated subregion, though not an exclusive one, since it can coexist with other telluric subregions within the same space.

In this sense, the telluric subregion or tectonic fragmentation analyzed responds to the specific need to explain the motivations and forms of symbolic insurgency expressed by indigenous communities in relation to monuments, through which they give shape to their own expressions, languages, feelings, symbols, and meanings. It has become evident that within this region there exists a set of matrix-plates that coexist and associate with one another, sister or contiguous matrix-plates that collide with the modern-colonial-capitalist matrix-plate, such as the matrix-plates of feminist movements, Afro-descendant communities, LGBTTTBIQ+ groups, youth, students, workers, laborers, peasants, and environmentalists, among others.

In this context, an image of what the cartography the telluric region in the South-South might look like has been proposed in Figure 4, as if it had a physical space, as if it had a territory. It imagines how the different tectonic fragmentations might be represented, with each emerging social group constituting a fragment. And yet, united, they all together form the unity of the region against the great modern/colonial/capitalist matrix, which appears implacable and powerful, uniform and indestructible. In this exercise of graphic representation of the tectonic configuration of the telluric region in the South-South, the small plates are identified as ones that move constantly, change, collide with one another, become displaced, associate without losing autonomy, emerge, expand, and contract, but do not disappear. They may continue through other forms of struggle or pull back in order to survive repressive movements.

Each subregion is identified by a color and a category under which different causes, purposes, and motivations are grouped according to a broad criterion. Within this framework, each subgroup could be said to operate as a locality, with its own cycles, actions, forms of struggle, ideologies, and landscapes.

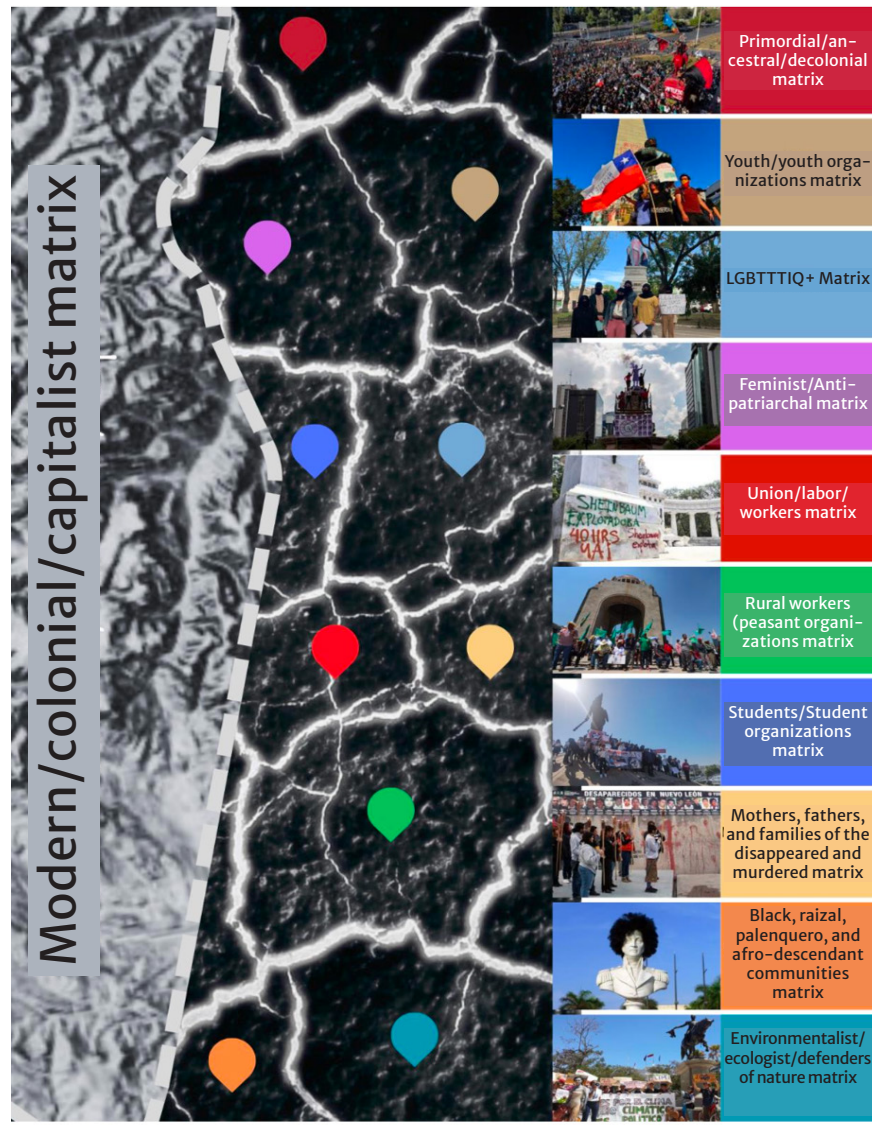


Figure 5. Mapping of the South-South telluric region. Source: Author's own elaboration

The movement of tectonic plates is not uniform, there are zones where it is very slow and other where it is rapid, just as there are zones where plates collide and other where they do not. These tectonic movements within the Earth's crust "are responsible for the formation of mountains, volcanoes, earthquakes, folds and geological faults, the expansion of oceans, the displacements of continents, and are also associated with mineral and oil deposits" (Servicio Geológico Mexicano, 2017, p. 2). Even when plates do not collide, they are in constant motion, generating modifications in the Earth's crust.

This theory also explains that the lithosphere rests upon the atmosphere, a semi-plastic and heat-generating surface produced by the permanent activity of the Earth's core and mantle. In this framework, that core would be human activity itself.

It is worth noting that the telluric region always emerges from an original earthquake, it forms when matrix-plates collide, meaning it is necessarily confrontation: a symbolic region that emerges from acts of power dislocation, transgression, and tension in the face of authority. What takes place within the telluric region is not possible outside of it. Within it, agents are in constant confrontation with power and authority. Outside of it, however, power relations are different and tactics of resistance take other forms. Beyond its boundaries, there exist other kinds of movements and therefore other social effects, such as borrowings, adaptations, reinterpretations, and cultural appropriations that occur through mediation and negotiation, and that do not interfere with the course of conflict. This generates contradictions, poly, and ambivalences, as actors engage on multiple fronts that may appear mutually incompatible.

In the case of the telluric region in the South-South, it emerged from an original earthquake triggered by the collision between the modern-colonial matrix-plate and the primordial ancestral matrix-plate in 1492. Subsequently, as a result of repeated collisions, the latter fragmented and gave rise to other matrix-plates, generating the current landscape of the telluric region, a liminal region where the most intense activity manifests, and in which the landscape of protest serves as the primary. Though not the only, stage upon which symbolic uprisings manifested in monuments and associated public space.

According to the groups that comprise it and their causes, the telluric region in the South-South is divided, as previously explained, into subregions that share in common the confrontation and fracturing of the modern/colonial/capitalist matrix-plate, and which derive from these differentiated matrix-plates in terms of actors, cycles, objectives, and motivations. Being contiguous, these plates affect one another, share sedimentations, and can even collide with each other and also fragment. As subregions, they can generate connections, alliances, agreements, joint actions and strategies, and establish spaces of fluid and porous borders, in which actors can move between them to become polyvalent agents.

The telluric region in the South-South is a decolonial region in two senses. First, it emerges with a clear decolonizing intention in direct and confrontational response to a modern/colonial/capitalist matrix, in which the documentary analysis reveals that monumentalism is part of its traditions, since the monument has a synthetic character, condensing values, symbols, and meanings. Indigenous peoples begin to manifest themselves through the modification, intervention, and demolition of these monuments, within a politicized context initiated in 1992 with the commemoration of the fifth centenary of Christopher Columbus's arrival on this continent. On the other hand, it is decolonial because the telluric region as a theoretical and methodological tool draws from decolonial theory, since it is from there that a critical stance emerges, no longer directed at the modifications, interventions, and demolitions of monuments, but at the historiography and the

concepts of history, memory, and heritage that sustain and maintain the relevance of monuments regardless of the values that they represent.

It is from the modern/colonial matrix that the monument is preserved solely by virtue of being one. It is imposed as a symbol of identity, of unity, of national values that are supposed to represent an entire nation, that represent the universality of historical narratives, and furthermore, a memory that was assumed to be unquestionable.

CONCLUSIONS

The landscape of the telluric region has a highly irregular morphology, given the high degree of seismic activity produced by the frequency and intensity of collisions between plates that are in permanent motion. As a result, different forms of social action emerge, insurgency, resistance, and activism, that shape landscape. This, along with the identification of different subregions, was one of the findings encountered while traversing and observing the telluric region in the South-South, since it was initially thought that the study of this subregion could be limited to symbolic insurgencies, which due to their visibility were associated with volcanoes, and that in this sense its extension and limits could be determined. However, it was found that they cannot be understood independently or in isolation, neither from the other subregions nor from the various elements that shape the morphology of the landscape, as they are frequently associated with other practices of insurgency, resistance, or activism.

Which are not self-contained or static, but are connected and influenced by each other and sit on the same base sediments.

On the other hand, structures are all those institutions, ideologies, political positions, and attitudes that serve the regeneration, reproduction, and expansion of the modern/colonial/capitalist matrix. They are all those mechanisms that allow for the stability and permanence of this system, it is which perpetuates the status quo. Therefore, the objective of the seismic activity of social movements is to fracture it, destabilize it, and ensure that in the wall of which the Zapatistas speak through the voice of Subcomandante Insurgente Galeano (2015), the crack of resistance remains open.

The sedimentations in the South-South region are all those elements that settle over time and form the substrate that supports and orients present-day practices: beliefs, forms of thought, knowledges, ideologies, cosmogonies, discourses, narratives, foundational myths, practices, scientific paradigms, social imaginaries (Restrepo, 2012), the precedents referred to by Marisol de la Cadena (2007), or what Fernand Braudel described as long-duration structures. These sedimentations are what keep the colonial wound open, with different forms and manifestations, but essentially with the same colonialist and imperialist practices, now identified as neocolonial or neoliberal, which are merely a new mask for the same thing: deep sedimentations such as racism, patriarchy, male chauvinism, sexism, cisgenderism,

anthropocentrism, adultcentrism, ageism, classism, ableism, mercantilism, scientism, political and religious extremism, among others. These are sedimentations that continue to mark the present and leave behind profound pain and trail of death wherever they manifest, but which in the telluric region emerge, are questioned, are confronted, and transform landscapes by displacing structures.

The telluric region opens the possibility of observing and constituting, from the symbolic, not one but many telluric regions, which can even coexist in the same space simultaneously; for while it must be situated spatially and temporally, it transcends its spatial and physical subjection and nests within the meanings, memories, values, and cultural practices of the communities that make them possible.

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Mobile Scientific, Technological, and Humanistic Outreach Initiatives for Educational Inclusion Across Nine Socio- Educational Regions Of The Colegio De Bachilleres De Chiapas

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— Abstract —

The purpose of this paper is to present selected results obtained during the development of the project entitled “Itinerant Cultural and Artistic Center for Scientific, Technological and Humanistic Outreach with Populations in Vulnerable Conditions in the State of Chiapas” (CCyAI). The project was implemented from 2021 to 2022 across nine regional coordination offices of the Colegio de Bachilleres de Chiapas (COBACH), and funded by the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT), currently the Ministry of Science, Humanities, Technology and Innovation (SECIHTI). The relevance of this project lies in its response to the need for inclusion and informal science education as a means of fostering scientific vocations among upper secondary education (EMS) and promoting equitable access to knowledge among the general population in communities with high and very high levels of marginalization in the state of Chiapas. The methodological approach adopted was Participatory Action Research (PAR), which enabled a multisited and multilocal intervention structured around the administrative educational regions known as COBACH regional coordination offices.

The main objective of the project was to establish mechanisms for educational and community inclusion in scientific, technological, humanistic, and cultural knowledge through artistic practices, while also promoting the revaluation of local and regional knowledge systems. The project was carried out in nine educational sites selected based on the following criteria: location in communities with high or very high levels of marginalization; prioritization of indigenous, rural, and peri-urban populations; the presence of children of primary education age; and the existence of at least one upper secondary education institution. These educational spaces functioned as open community venues aimed at fostering informal learning processes, with particular emphasis on children, women, and older adults, who are more likely to experience conditions of vulnerability regarding access to academic and scientific knowledge.

Keywords:

Educational inclusion, science outreach, local culture, knowledge.

The Colegio de Bachilleres de Chiapas (COBACH) is the Upper Secondary Education (EMS) subsystem with the largest territorial presence in the state and each year, according to INEE (2019), enrollment is usually almost 50% of the student youth population of different municipalities; its 338 educational centers are distributed in urban, rural and indigenous contexts of 105 municipalities with populations in very high and highly marginalized conditions. Since 2019, due to the health contingency caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the causative agent of the COVID-19 disease, the inequalities and historical precariousness of many of the communities where COBACH educational centers are located intensified. This exposed the existing social, educational, technological, and information and communication access gaps.

Faced with these conditions of health emergency, it became important to establish strategies implemented from the higher secondary education centers themselves, since they act as educational institutions and at the same time as spaces of community social cohesion, which facilitates ensuring access to scientific, technological, humanistic and artistic knowledge for the general population at the local, regional and global levels.

Since then, COBACH has actively collaborated in different projects aimed at solving socio-educational problems with other higher education institutions and research centers, which subsequently allowed the institution to apply for the project entitled “Itinerant Cultural and Artistic Center for Scientific, Technological and Humanistic Outreach with Populations in Vulnerable Conditions in the State of Chiapas” (CCyAI) implemented in COBACH and funded by the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACyT), currently the Ministry of Science, Humanities, Technology and Innovation (SECIHTI). Other higher education institutions also participated, alongside nine municipal governments with their respective cultural centers (casas de la cultura), 27 schools from different educational subsystems and levels, and 76 COBACH educational centers, achieving an educational reach and intervention across 30 municipalities and 124 localities in the State of Chiapas.

The objective of the project was to promote democratic access to science, technology, humanities, art and culture for those populations that have historically suffered conditions of vulnerability in the state of Chiapas, Mexico, through the implementation of a model of itinerant cultural and artistic center that favors processes of participation and social appropriation of knowledge and knowledge, educational inclusion and strengthening of the community fabric.

The research was developed under a qualitative approach based on Participating Research, which is characterized by directly involving communities in all phases of the research process, privileging the production of collective knowledge from shared experience and critical reflection on practice. This type of research is not limited to describing social phenomena, but rather seeks to generate processes of social transformation through the participation of the stakeholders

involved; furthermore, it is considered a relevant path to understanding complex socio-cultural dynamics and promoting significant changes through collective action (Leaman & Cárcamo, 2021).

In the same vein, participatory research through a Participatory Action Research (PAR) method allowed for the articulation of educational and cultural intervention with situated analysis processes, in which methodological decision-making was adjusted to the specific conditions of each site. An example of this methodology was observed at one of the sites where artistic workshops were implemented with children and youth populations; in this context, the activities were adjusted based on direct dialogue with teachers and parents, who proposed thematic adaptations aligned with local cultural practices.

During the development of the action research, the observations of the facilitators, the narratives of the participants, as well as exit surveys of the user population of the workshops offered, were recorded as inputs for collective reflection and continuous improvement of activities. Similarly, in another venue, the planning of artistic exhibition was built jointly with local actors, who defined the contents and forms of presentation, which allowed to recover community knowledge and strengthen the sense of belonging. These examples show how the participating research favored the contextual adaptation of the intervention and the generation of contextualized knowledge, adhering to the principles of inclusion, interculturality and active participation described in the project.

FROM ADMINISTRATIVE EDUCATIONAL REGIONALIZATION TO SOCIO-CULTURAL REGIONALIZATION

In this section provides a contextual overview of the territorial, social and administrative organization of COBACH, that is, a region with an administrative plan for higher secondary education. In the state of Chiapas, the administrative division is based on territory, politics, and population density, but at the same time, other cultural, linguistic, and knowledge-based regions overlap or intertwine, forming a diversity of constantly interrelated elements that are also marked by conflict.

When referring to an established region or planned region, such as the fifteen socio-economic regions into which the state of Chiapas is divided or the twenty-four electoral districts that in turn are located with fifteen other health jurisdictions, it does not mean that they are irrevocable regions. However, they can serve as a starting point, insofar as these historical divisions, organizations, and boundaries help us understand the frameworks of meaning, the meanings themselves, and the multiple relationships of interweaving, continuity, exclusion, and inclusion. (Castillo, 2018, p.70).

The Colegio de Bachilleres de Chiapas is the Colegio de Bachilleres with the largest number of schools nationwide (338 schools), distributed across 105 of the state's 124

municipalities. Most of these schools are located in rural (184 schools) and indigenous (112 schools) communities with high and very high levels of marginalization. In fact, the largest percentage of educational centers are not campuses, but are organized as Centers of Upper Secondary Distance Education (CEMSaD), which means they lack the necessary infrastructure, teaching staff, and services to serve their student population; this coincides with the lack of access to basic services in the communities where they are established.

In 2020, Chiapas had a total of 5,543,828 inhabitants; 2,837,881 women and 2,705,94. Most of its population, 50.28%, resided in rural areas and 49.72% in urban areas (INEGI, 2020). In turn, in 2019, according to the Ministry of Finance of the State of Chiapas, 2019, 1,886,104 people self-registered as an indigenous population (36.1% of the inhabitants of the state); of which, 1,361,249 (26.10%) were speakers of an indigenous language and did not speak Spanish (Hernández et al., 2022, p.31)

The multicultural context with large gaps of territorial inequality undoubtedly demands such a large number of educational centers, but it also demands strategies of attention to diversity and coverage that, often, far from generating horizons of possibilities, become segregating spaces. Faced with this reality, one of the challenges of the subsystem, especially in a pandemic context, was to prepare socio-educational diagnoses and opt for a comprehensive and inclusive educational offer.

In 2019, one of the main issues to face the COVID-19 disease was the widespread misinformation and the risk that this meant for the communities where the COBACH educational centers were located, due to their wide territorial coverage; it was good to participate as a subsystem of higher secondary education in the project "Perceptions about COVID-19 in highly marginalized areas in Chiapas: design of information strategies on this emerging disease" in collaboration with the Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas (UNICACH). The application of a first instrument allowed to have as background the knowledge of the conditions of the most remote and vulnerable communities where some of the educational centers are located, as well as the first perceptions of the young people regarding the new health, educational and technological situation. At the same time, having a Cultural Center of Science and Technology in one of the area coordinations triggered the possibility of thinking about its itinerancy to reach other spaces that hardly have the opportunity to move to museums, artistic or technological centers.

The above allowed to base the project that was implemented from 2021 to 2022, in nine educational venues in which exhibitions, workshops and various events designed and executed jointly with the participating communities were carried out. These actions were based on active, collaborative and participatory methodologies, aimed at the inclusion of the population in general and from an intercultural approach, with a gender perspective and critical-reflexive thinking. In this way, the intervention transcended the instrumental nature of the activities

to consolidate itself as a formative and transformative process, in which local experiences, knowledge and contexts became central axes of the collective construction of knowledge and the revaluation of shared regional elements.

Current literature argues that active and participatory methodologies, such as project-based learning or collaborative learning, generate more inclusive teaching-learning processes, by promoting interaction, meaningful participation and joint problem solving, which increases educational equity in diverse contexts (Jaramillo-Martínez et al., 2024). Educational inclusion, understood as the possibility for the entire student population to participate equally and with a sense of belonging to this population, is favored when pedagogical practices incorporate adaptive and collaborative strategies that address the cultural and contextual differences of the groups in each locality (Yépez-Moreno, 2023; Matovelle-Zamora et al., 2023).

Similarly, the recovery and adaptation of the multisituated methodology with a contextualized research perspective made it possible to adjust the themes and strategies to the specific realities of each educational venue or region, which coincides with contemporary approaches to participatory research that recommend adapting methodological designs to the particularities of the field of study to better understand the dynamics of inclusion (Navarro-Montaño et al., 2022).

From this perspective, the integration of collaborative strategies, the active involvement of the community and the adaptation of educational actions to specific contexts contribute significantly to the strengthening of inclusive educational practices, by promoting learning environments sensitive to the cultural and social diversity existing in schools (Romero Parra et al., 2023). This approach thus contributes to the generation of reflective-critical knowledge in educational practice, which positively affects the quality of learning and the exercise of gender equity and intercultural respect in each of the nine contexts where the project was implemented.

The topics addressed during the project were: environmental stewardship, local and regional history, astronomy, the exact sciences and their applications in everyday life, laboratory setups, the use of ICT and devices that allow knowing how virtual reality works, prevention of violence and school harassment, gender violence, respect for diversity. To ground these themes, the formats of workshop, reading circles, observation of the medium, exhibitions, film-documentary sample, dance and dance representative of each region, use of mobile experimental laboratories and mobile devices that integrated apps or pre-loaded material were used.

These activities were carried out through inter-institutional collaboration, alliances that allowed the incorporation of film cycles by the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (National Council for Culture and Arts, CONACULTA by its acronym in Spanish), workshops on health and prevention of dating violence by ICATECH, plaster, health, painting and marimba workshops by the Organización Civil Misión Cultural 72, Misiones Culturales de Chiapas [Civil Organization Mission Cultural 72, Cultural Missions of Chiapas]. Workshops on gender and reflections on masculinity were also conducted by ninth-semester

education students from the C-IV Faculty of Humanities at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas in Tapachula.

From the perspective of innovation—a concept that originates in the business world—this study aligns with the view put forth by Schumpeter (1934/2008). For this author, innovation is a complex and non-routine process; it involves overcoming obstacles, inertia, and resistance inherent in the system, requiring exceptional abilities and the involvement of extraordinary individuals. In his words, “carrying out a new project and acting in accordance with an established one are as different as building a road and walking along it” (Nasar, 2014, p. 219). This distinction is relevant to the analysis of innovative processes in social and educational contexts, where the introduction of new practices often faces resistance comparable to that described in the economic sphere.

Applied to the field of education, this translates into the implementation of disruptive projects that seek to transform the traditional pedagogical paradigm, in line with the proposals of the Nueva Escuela Mexicana [New Mexican School]. This project explores the perceptions of the integration of technology into the classroom from the perspective of educational innovation. To this end, the use of technological tools such as tablets, augmented reality glasses, telescopes, interactive science labs, projection screens, and mobile apps was proposed. It is essential to note that these proposals were designed to operate in both connected and disconnected environments, addressing the need for implementation in locations with limited or no internet connectivity, and using open and easily accessible resources.

Finally, beyond addressing educational needs based on the political-administrative division of an educational subsystem, the CCyAI project made it possible to trace or superimpose a dotted line representing another possible sociocultural path, shaped by the interconnection of ethnicity, language, available natural resources, socially useful knowledge related to the countryside, climate, healthcare, and the administration of justice—but above all, the cultural and artistic knowledge shared among each host community.

RESULTS AND EXPERIENCES FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRAVELING CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC CENTER

An analysis of the attendance lists at each location of the Centro Cultural y Artístico Itinerante (CCyAI) revealed that the program reached 30 municipalities, 124 localities, and 76 COBACH schools. A total of 13,475 attendees were recorded, representing significant coverage given the baseline of 14,316 COBACH students enrolled at the various locations and an estimated general population of 67,253 people. It should be noted that an additional 10% of unregistered attendees is estimated (Hernández et al. 2022).

The participation of both older adults and children in early childhood education—including preschool and elementary school—is a key aspect of the project’s results. This demonstrates that the initiative was not limited solely to the COBACH

student body, but rather generated broader interest in the acquisition of knowledge across different social sectors, while also highlighting the interconnection between different educational levels or subsystems within the same educational level. This, in turn, opens up the possibility of understanding knowledge and wisdom beyond the classroom—that is, applying everyday knowledge in a school setting, but also to incorporate the knowledge, wisdom, and practices of communities into formal educational programs.

It was found that opportunities for accessing knowledge are not limited exclusively to the programs of the National Education System, but are also found in the survival practices of the women and men in each region. Thanks to the democratization of information, new ways of approaching and conceiving of knowledge are emerging—based on the principle of the right to access and justice—as exemplified by this proposal from CCyAI, which in a sense represented a period of educational “open house” and served to highlight and revalue other forms of knowledge that have been excluded from formal educational settings.

Through dramatic readings, puppetry, and art, young people can address and reflect on local and national social issues. At the same time, they explore cross-cutting themes from a socio-emotional perspective through art. In organizing each venue, every effort was made to ensure it served as an inclusive space for children, youth, and non-student seniors, opening up opportunities for learning, art, and recreation to the general public. An atmosphere of empathy and connection was fostered between each participating group and the CCyAI workshop facilitators.

Another notable outcome was the focus on strategies implemented through the use of playful and technology-based teaching techniques, which proved appealing to the participants. Guided by the principle of the reasonable use of technological devices, a model of educational support was proposed that enhances teaching and learning processes through the use of audiovisual resources that are engaging and relevant to young people.

CONCLUSIONS

Using a variety of outreach methods and implementing public address systems in the local language tailored to each region has had a significant impact, as it allowed us to engage the local population in each host city—not just the student body. Furthermore, according to the feedback gathered, in some areas this was the first time an event for the entire community had been held with the aim of disseminating scientific and technological knowledge, as previous events had tended to focus more on entertainment or politics.

It has been very rewarding to see how children and young people got involved in the various activities, and how the local community embraced the cultural center, with municipal governments and various organizations adding their own activities and workshops centered on local knowledge. Some of the workshops offered

focused on wicker weaving, embroidery, agricultural knowledge, crafts, dance, and more, with each location contributing what it deemed appropriate based on its own artistic and scientific knowledge and expertise.

One of the transformations in terms of technological tools was the shift in how cell phones are used—both for educational and recreational purposes—which helped bridge the digital and generational divides. This does not, of course, eliminate the gap that still exists in connectivity and access to certain technological resources, which has prompted us to closely monitor the projects proposed by COBACH that involve working with offline resources or school search engines providing access to scientific and technological information without an internet connection. This also enables participation in cultural and artistic activities through the use of technological tools such as apps, thereby integrating art, culture, and technology. The significance of this research for the field of regional studies in Chiapas lies, first, in bringing to light a sociocultural, educational, and artistic region that overlaps with a political-administrative region; and second, in the situated, sensitive, and dynamic exercise of regionalization based on a methodological interplay between Participatory Action Research, multi-local intervention, and other methods that enabled the recovery of experiences and reflections from the local population itself—where regions are not limited solely by administrative boundaries, but are constituted symbolically, historically, and culturally through the lived experiences of those who inhabit, traverse, and transform them.

Along these same lines, the implementation of this project and research made it possible to carry out a regionalization exercise at different times and levels. During the diagnostic phase, regionalization helped shape the initial proposal for establishing the intervention sites; subsequently, during the CCyAI's itinerant visits, it was possible to identify shared practices, discourses, knowledge, and imaginaries among the COBACH educational community (teachers on exchange, students from municipal or local centers, and centralized administrative staff), as well as among the local resident population and visitors.

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Youth Identities From An Intercultural Educational Regionalization: Student Trajectories At COBACH-UNICH

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— Abstract —

This text, developed collectively, aims to reflect on the reconfiguration of identities among young people pursuing higher education at the Universidad Intercultural de Chiapas (UNICH) and graduating from the Colegio de Bachilleres de Chiapas (COBACH). Among the elements taken into account for the reflection on identities are the territories, bodies, and spaces inhabited by university students. The theoretical approach of this work is critical interculturality and regional studies.

The student population studied was from the Bachelor's degree programs in Intercultural Communication and Sustainable Development at the San Cristóbal de Las Casas and Oxchuc campuses of UNICH, Region V Altos Tsotsil-Tzeltal. A qualitative methodology with a participatory approach was used, applying body mapping as a tool that contributes to the regionalization of identity through education. The document is structured in two sections. The first: The convergence between identities, territories, and inhabited spaces; the second: Identity reconfigurations from intercultural and regional perspectives. It concludes with conclusions.

Keywords:

Youth identities, interculturality, regionalization, educational trajectories.

Engaging with the topic of identities requires taking into account the multiple interactions that take place on a daily basis among diverse social actors, the forms of communication that are established, the territories in which they live, and the changes that occur in the various contexts surrounding them, which, in turn, affect both individual and collective identities.

Within school contexts, the dynamics that take place among members of the educational community, the contextual changes that students undergo upon entering the university, their interactions with classmates from their own programs and from other fields of study, and their recognition of the new spaces they become part of and the cultures to which they belong, can also have a direct or indirect impact on their identity-related changes.

Addressing the topic of identities through the theoretical frameworks of interculturality and regional studies allows for a more comprehensive account of the reflections generated through interactions with university students at UNICH, who come predominantly from rural or indigenous contexts, peripheral urbanized areas, and public education institutions.

It was found that the main upper-secondary institutions from which students typically graduate before enrolling at UNICH are COBACH and the Colegio de Estudios Científicos y Tecnológicos del Estado de Chiapas (CECyTE); on this occasion, we will focus on students currently enrolled at UNICH who graduated from COBACH, given that it is an Upper Secondary Education (EMS) institution with 338 educational centers distributed across 105 municipalities in the state and, according to the Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación [National Institute for Educational Evaluation] (INEE), served 44.59% of all EMS students in 2019, that is, nearly half of the state's youth student population at this educational level.

In this article, the positioning of the regional dimension is approached through an intercultural educational lens, taking into account, first, with regard to the regional dimension, that:

Within a region, then, subjects converge with their environment, establishing an interrelation that allows the region to be approached from a variety of perspectives, whether sociological, anthropological, historical, geographic, legal, or economic, to name a few. In this way, depending on the perspective from which it is studied, a region can be assigned a particular meaning and classification (López, 2012, p. 22).

In this regard, the starting point is a pre-existing planned or administrative regionalization, such as the state's territorial organization, divided into fifteen Socioeconomic Regions of Chiapas. Here, we focus on Region V – “Altos Tsotsil-Tseltal” – where two other administrative educational regionalizations converge: the COBACH Altos Zone Coordination, which oversees 42 educational centers operating as planteles or CEMSaD (Distance Upper Secondary Education Centers), out of a total of nine COBACH Zone Coordinations; and the UNICH's Multidisciplinary

Academic Units (UAM) in San Cristóbal de Las Casas and Oxchuc, out of a total of four UAM and two Multimodal Academic Units of UNICH.

However, it can be observed how the dynamics of the identities of young students from a palimpsest-type region shape an intercultural educational region grounded in a more phenomenological-hermeneutic approach; that is, based on their own lived experiences, regions emerge, are constructed, and acquire meaning insofar as they are constituted by subjects who, in their everyday lives, delimit the elements they share or do not share.

While the elements of the intercultural educational region proposed here, along with the interactions established among them, are developed from a theoretical-analytical dimension and are shaped by the capacity or creativity of those who formulate it, determining the relevance of certain practices over others, or identifying the substantive elements of the process, stems from the fact that context becomes significant as a starting point and as a point of articulation between the local, national, and global levels (Castillo, 2019, p. 260).

With regard to the intercultural approach, one of the contributions of Maya Lorena Pérez Ruiz is taken into account, drawing on her position that interculturality is a “field of research under construction” (2009, p. 280) and therefore, dynamic; it is also situated within the field of intercultural studies, where, as she notes, the central concern lies in cultural processes and in the social practices that render cultural change visible (2009, p. 282). Accordingly, the analysis adopts an intercultural approach oriented toward critical education, in which students interact with recognition of and respect for their biocultural, linguistic, and gender-based diversity, developing intercultural competencies through their interactions with peers, their academic activities, and the acknowledgment of their non-formal education, as well as through the cultural clashes they experience. In this regard, interculturality:

It goes far beyond respect, tolerance, and the recognition of diversity; rather, it points to and encourages a social and political process and project aimed at building new and different societies, relationships, and living conditions. Here, I am referring not only to economic conditions, but also to those related to the cosmology of life in general, including knowledge and ways of knowing, ancestral memory, and the relationship with Mother Earth and spirituality, among other (Walsh, 2008, p.140).

THE CONVERGENCE OF IDENTITIES, TERRITORIES, AND INHABITED SPACES

Through interaction with student groups from the Bachelor's Degrees in the Intercultural Communication and Sustainable Development at the San Cristóbal de Las Casas and Oxchuc, campuses in Chiapas, it is possible to identify elements

that characterize their diverse identities. In the daily interrelations they have with their classmates, students tend to form small subgroups with shared characteristics, based on factors such as personal interests, places of origin, languages spoken, and cultural, artistic, or sports-related activities, as well as gender; it is also important to note health conditions or other specific issues they may face. These latter elements are likewise part of the identities that students construct through these interactions.

Regarding interaction with others, Tostado notes that:

During the process of identity construction and consolidation, “others” play a determining role: society first addresses individuals or groups, proposing values and models to them; the individual (or group) then recognizes themselves as the recipient of these messages and identifies with the proposed values, ideals, and models, internalizing them and constructing, on that basis, an image or representation of themselves (Tostado, 1999, p. 295).

The interventions were centered on the theme of territorial mapping, highlighting the senses of space-making, practices, and identities within educational spaces, as well as the collective construction of an intercultural cartography of students’ educational trajectories in relation to their care and self-care practices. Two of the interventions were conducted with students from the Intercultural Communication bachelor’s degree program at the main campus in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, with two groups: one of 32 first-semester students and another of 20 fourth-semester students; the third intervention involved 17 fourth-semester students from the Sustainable Development bachelor’s degree program at the UAM in Oxchuc. In total, 69 students participated across the San Cristóbal de Las Casas main campus and Oxchuc, where at least half of this university population comes from educational center in the Altos, Selva, and Selva Norte educational regions of the Colegio de Bachilleres de Chiapas, as an upper-secondary education institution. As such, these are situated experiences that participate in the territorial and identity-related configuration of UNICH’s university youth, but do not represent the region of the Altos as a whole or a complete educational region, as doing so would erase other possible situated experiences from both the different campuses and the vast territory of Chiapas and the South.

With both campuses and degree programs, the activities were proposed in a workshop-talk format, drawing on participatory methodologies and incorporating experiences from teaching, research, personal engagement, and community outreach in both the design and implementation of these methodologies. In this way, the work engaged with territorial mappings, bodily cartographies, and certain autoethnographic elements from a critical interculturality-centered approach, which seeks to address, through an intersectional lens, the dimensions of ethnicity, gender, language, social class, body, health, sexuality, and territory. Beyond this, a key objective was to place at the center the practices, discourses, knowledge, affections,

and self-defined identity expressions of young students. As Walsh notes, “beings being, walking, moving, questioning, transitioning, crossing, thus fracturing the stability and immutability that the modern colonial gender system has imposed on us as the only possibility, the only truth” (2025, p. 18).



Note. Territorial mapping process. Source: Ana Laura Castillo Hernández (2025).

Figure 1. Territorial mapping, San Cristóbal de Las Casas Campus, UNICH, Intercultural Communication. Second semester



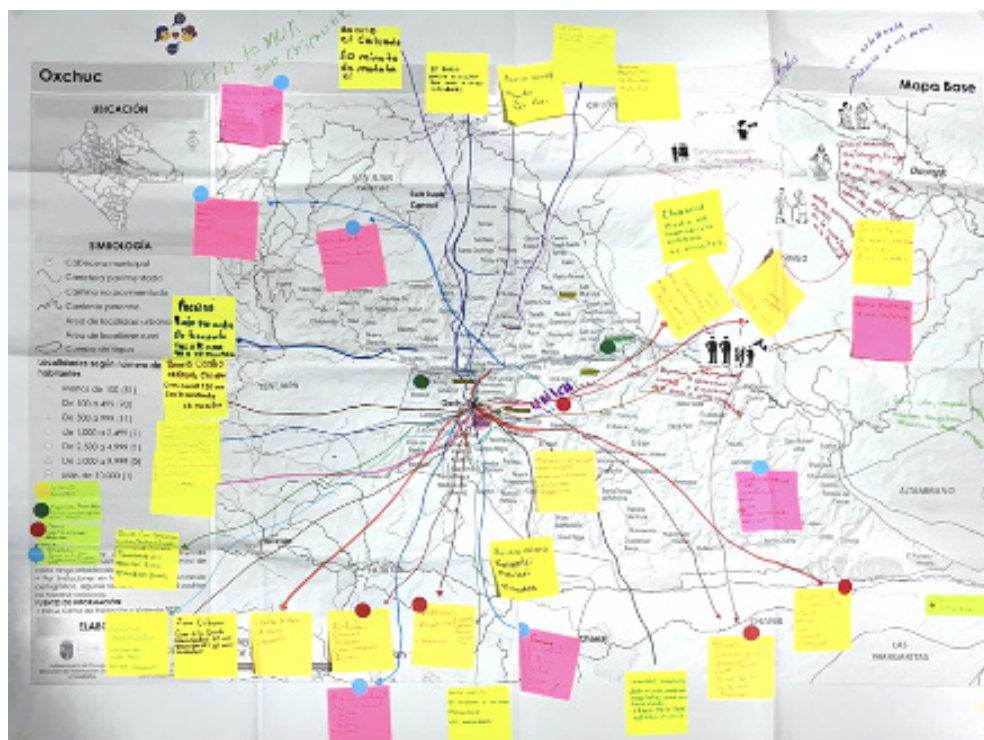
Note. Body mapping. Source: María Gabriela López Suárez (2025).

Figure 2. Territorial mapping, San Cristóbal de Las Casas Campus, UNICH, Intercultural Communication. Fourth semester

Students in the Bachelor's Degree program in Intercultural Communication in San Cristóbal de Las Casas identify, for instance, with having graduated from a COBACH educational center, primarily Plantel 11 San Cristóbal and Plantel 58 San Cristóbal Norte; However, another element present in their identity configuration is intraregional migration within the state, which means they also come from other

educational centers within the Altos Zone Coordination: Plantel 11 San Cristóbal, Plantel 58 San Cristóbal Norte, CEMSaD 120 Nachig' and Plantel 61 Chanal; from the Selva Zone Coordination: CEMSaD 160 Libertad Jolnishtie 2a Sección; and from the Selva Norte Coordination: Plantel 16 Ocosingo, Plantel 86 Tenango, and Plantel 156 El Corralito, the latter located in a community in Oxchuc within Region V Altos Tsotsil-Tseltal, but not administratively belonging to the COBACH Altos Zone Coordination.

This last condition, in which a COBACH plantel located outside the municipal seat, as in the case of Plantel 156 El Corralito, situated 10 kilometers from the municipal center, leads students to choose CECyTE 11 as their first option, given its closer proximity. This, in turn, shapes to some extent their possible higher education trajectories, as they tend to seek degree programs aligned with the graduate profile of this subsystem, which is more technical and agronomic in orientation, or alternatively, Sustainable Development in the case of the UAM Oxchuc programs at UNICH, which is located very close to CECyTE 11.



Note. Final result of the exercise. Source: Ana Laura Castillo Hernandez (2025).

Figure 3. Territorial mapping, UAM Oxchuc, UNICH, Sustainable Development. Fourth Semester



Note. Final result of the exercise. Source: Ana Laura Castillo Hernández (2025).

Figure 4. Final Group Photo, UAM Oxchuc, UNICH, Sustainable Development. Fourth semester

Identities are thus understood as relational, and these relations arise from the precondition of a space that also participates in identity configuration, while at the same time these relational identities constitute and dynamize such spaces.

Blanca Ramírez and Liliana López conceive that:

Space implies a series of coexistence relationships explained from different perspectives, within which bonds, relationships, and interactions take place that lead to the construction, transformation, perception, and representation of geography; all of this is expressed through factors such as location, placement, distance, surfaces or zones, direction, orientation, areas of influence, responsibility, domain, resistance, form, size, position (center-periphery, internal-external, near-far, north-south), distribution, proximity, accessibility, processes of agglomeration and dispersion, patterns, nodes, flows, and routes (2015, p.19).

Through the talks, workshops, and interactive work carried out during the mapping exercises, the groups expressed, as part of the working dynamics, highly significant elements that shed light on how the actors, territories, and spaces they inhabit are determining factors in the various roles they play beyond being students. Hence, as Tostado points out, “identity is constructed and transformed to the extent that it confronts other identities in social interaction” (Tostado, 1999, p. 295).

Part of this work with students leads us to reflect on the categories that emerge in the interactions between groups and subgroups, such as gender, place of origin, mother tongue, age, employment status, social media use, contexts of interaction, and the campus where they pursue their bachelor’s degree program studies.

While the majority of students enrolled in the Intercultural Communication bachelor's degree program in San Cristóbal de Las Casas come from general high schools, and those pursuing a bachelor's degree in Sustainable Development program in Oxchuc come from technical high schools, the way in which they significantly reshape their youthful identity linked to UNICH is through the recognition and revaluation of Indigenous languages and natural spaces; they also acknowledge the structural economic inequality that permeates their academic and life trajectories. In the reflection carried out, mother tongue was identified as a central element, for as Walsh points out, "language is a key sphere of intervention and invention not only at the linguistic level, but also with respect to what is felt-lived-carnal-corporeal" (2025, p. 17).

There is a questioning or concern regarding forms of agricultural production, the use and distribution of natural resources, and the generation of content and information; at the same time, however, students observe a discouraging landscape in the areas of public safety and safety for women, even within educational spaces, where harassment and sexual misconduct have been mentioned.

The exercise allowed us to gain insight into some of the students' perceptions regarding their awareness of spaces and their ability to distinguish between what they consider safe and unsafe environments; in all cases, school commutes represent a risk, for students in Oxchuc, due to the school being located alongside a highway, and in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, due to poor lighting and frequent flooding. In this regard, students also identify the position of inequality in which they live across most of their contexts, and find in university education a possibility for social mobility or for moving beyond their own family environments, which are often marked by precarity, toward other possibilities.

Regarding the theme of self-care, for instance, both campuses share a common orientation toward an athletic body ideal, expressed through participation in sports or gym attendance, as well as bodily transformation through aesthetic practices such as the use of artificial nails, pedicure and manicure treatments, or hair dyeing. Here we find the interrelation between body, gender, and identity; in this regard, Mari Luz Esteban also emphasizes the importance of crossing these with other categories that likewise cut across gender:

such as social class, given the economic accessibility to certain treatments, for example; ethnicity and culture; the activities carried out (work, sports, and so on); and the transformation that occur over time (2013, pp. 120-122).

Students also mentioned family or group embroidery as a safe space in which to set aside or process the negative or violent events in their lives. It is worth noting that these are also traditional forms of knowledge passed down through generations, constituting non-formal educational spaces that likewise shape their cultural, linguistic, and ethnic identity formation.

One element that undoubtedly distinguishes the configuration of university youth identities from others is the educational time-space, for the situation of being a “student,” as Pierre Bourdieu says:

it induces a whole range of things that are constitutive of the school situation: they have their bundle of books tied with a string, they are sitting on a motorcycle chatting with a girl, they are only among young people, boys and girls, outside of work, and at home they are exempt from material tasks in the name of the fact that they are studying (1990, p. 122).

For some students, this situation implies distancing themselves from or postponing entry into the workforce, and tends to bring generational conflicts into sharper relief, particularly in rural settings. However, in several cases across the three participating groups, students worked in the afternoons and on weekends in order to cover school or family expenses. For women in particular, receiving a scholarship represents an economic opportunity to support their families, especially when they have children, which is why many enroll two or three years after completing their EMS.

IDENTITY RECONFIGURATIONS FROM INTERCULTURAL AND REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

The overlaps presented above among the socioeconomic regions of the state of Chiapas, one of the UNICH Multidisciplinary Academic Units (UAM), and the COBACH zone coordinations provide a basis for not overlooking, both in educational policy and in curricula and programs, those migratory elements (international, national, and local), displacements (forced or otherwise), and gentrification processes that reveal dynamic youth populations in constant mobility and, it must be said, in situations of vulnerability, all of which are decisive factors in their identity reconfiguration throughout university educational processes.

Building on what has been presented above, we concur with Giménez’s assertion that “Identities are born, they grow, transform, die, and sometimes are reborn” (Giménez, 1995, p. 21).

During the mapping exercises, reflections emerged regarding the imaginaries associated with each COBACH educational center or UNICH campus, along with certain territorial attributes, which position San Cristóbal de Las Casas as a node to which other cities such as Oxchuc and surrounding communities are subordinated in terms of their sociospatial parameters. For instance, identifying EMS (COBACH) educational centers located in the northern part of San Cristóbal de Las Casas as the most dangerous, due to being perceived as spaces of drug sale and consumption, although the historic city center was also mentioned as a site of drug use, albeit less criminalized.

This is intrinsically linked to the migratory population dynamics and intra-regional displacements toward the norther part of the city, as well as the sense of insecurity perceived by the population. It also reveals the intense zoning of the territory based on economic and sociopolitical differences, but also cultural, linguistic, religious, and environmental ones.

For its part, the educational centralization in terms of services, information, and infrastructure can at times position the UNICH main campus in San Cristóbal de Las Casas as a space of ethnolinguistic erasure, where the two principal Indigenous languages of the area, Tseltal and Tsotsil, are predominantly learned, while lesser interest is generated in the other languages spoken by young students from other regions. To cite one example, at the UAM Valle del Tulijá, out of a total of 25 students enrolled in the bachelor's degree program in Language and Culture program and speakers of Ch'ol, two did not have Ch'ol as their mother tongue but rather Tsotsil and Tseltal — regional migrants as well — yet there was no way for them to have classes in their language, and they even mentioned feeling discriminated against in a degree program that is ostensibly meant to promote the knowledge and appreciation of all languages, which at times was reduced to only acknowledging one's own Indigenous language. This raises once again the question of how to generate intercultural linguistic educational processes so that, from these conflicts, possible strategies for linguistic diversity across different educational regions may emerge.

On the other hand, concerning identity-related elements, students' places of origin and mother tongue play a significant role in their interactions. In the case of the Intercultural Communication bachelor's degree program groups, the student body is composed predominantly of mestizo students, with a smaller number coming from Indigenous communities. It can be observed that place of origin and mother tongue influence the formation of subgroups, not only in terms of companionship and friendship, but also in the working dynamics that take place throughout their academic training. On several occasions, interacting with the rest of the group tends to feel somewhat forced and does not always occur voluntarily. This represents one of the key challenges when working collectively and turning attention toward the recognition of diversity, as well as fostering genuine interest in engaging with and learning from it.

In the case of the Sustainable Development group at UAM Oxchuc, the majority of its members are originally from that municipality or surrounding communities, are speakers of the Tseltal language, and a few do not speak it but understand it, except for one student from the municipality of Ocosingo who is not a Tseltal speaker and communicates in Spanish. Within this group, members make visible that they have felt discrimination, both inside and outside the university, on more than one occasion, due to being Tseltal speakers and because of their ethnic background.

Individual and collective identities are reconfigured. In the case of UNICH students, being part of an institution whose educational approach is grounded in the intercultural model, throughout their academic training and through the

dynamics within the university community (classes, courses, workshops, activities, and extracurricular events), they are encouraged to turn their attention back to their cultures, to revalue their origins and local knowledge, and to identify points of encounter and discord through situations they have experienced involving discrimination, insecurity, and exclusion based on ethnicity or gender, but also through the recognition of their spaces, interests, abilities, and knowledge, elements that can be regarded as a foundation for intercultural encounters.

CONCLUSIONS

This text reveals a space for reflection on educational processes from a regional perspective, drawing on the three interventions described above, which trace the embodied experiences of students. For this reason, the ideas put forward in this section cannot be generalized to other regions where similar dynamics of discrimination or linguistic exclusion may exist. Nevertheless, the work carried out here constitutes an opportunity to engage in a regionalization exercise — that is, to identify elements within a given space-territory in which social practices, discourses, imaginaries, and corporealities converge while others are excluded, insofar as another, somewhat homogeneous space takes shape. This, from an educational standpoint.

This is the first reported case of a GIST in a 9-year-old child, treated with surgery alone, who remains free of tumor activity 5 years after diagnosis.

On the other hand, addressing the topic of identities and youth identities through an intercultural lens with a critical focus is enriching and allows for the positioning of UNICH students from various EMS institutions, particularly COBACH, as youth agents who experience, intervene in, construct, and reconstruct spaces and, consequently, their identities. At the same time, it serves as an important call to make visible and to avoid reducing intercultural education to ethno-linguistic elements or biocultural and folkloric traditions, which are constitutive of living, changing, glocal, and intensely heterogeneous populations, even when they are organized within more or less homogeneous spatialities, as noted above. In other words, the practical implementation of the critical intercultural approach to education — not only in theory but through concrete actions — constitutes one of the tools that makes it possible to avoid the folklorization of education, by revealing the tensions, contradictions, negotiations, and shifting contemporary configurations of student youth within the context of intercultural university education.

Thus, we depart from bodily cartography with the understanding that geopolitical and regional configurations allow us to account for relations of power, aesthetics, consumption patterns, and forms of communication within university spaces and in the territories of students' communities of origin, from microsocial levels — that is, from the level of corporeality itself. These are mestizo and Indigenous student youth whose public education trajectories have moved across precarious and criminalized contexts, autonomous communities, peri-urban spaces, globalized

markets, and gentrified neighborhoods. Their academic backgrounds or family origins in indigenous communities enable them to reflect critically, to question, and to pursue other possibilities for self-identification, particularly in the cultural, communicational, and agricultural production spheres, as well as their ways of life. Stuart Hall (2010) argued in his analysis of identity that, in modern or contemporary societies, there is a rupture between identities as total experiences and identity fragmentation arising from the different sociospatial interrelations that move from the local and regional to the global, as well as from the private and individual spheres to the political and public ones. He illustrates this thesis through the relationship between the nation-state and identity:

On one hand, the nation and all its associated identities appear to have been reabsorbed into larger, overlapping communities that interconnect national identities. But at the same time, there is a movement from below. The peoples, groups, and tribes that were previously inscribed within the entities known as nation-states begin to rediscover identities that had been forgotten (2010, p. 343).

Finally, this text brings to the discussion and seeks to make visible the topic of university youth identities, drawing on participatory tools and the incorporation of qualitative methodological elements from interdisciplinary, intercultural, and regional perspectives, as well as the influence of feminist epistemologies. Together, these allow us to address a subject that represents a gap in the identification of an intercultural educational regionalization, one that it is important to continue exploring and, above all, contributing to through our teaching practice in collaboration with students and colleagues.

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EntreDiversidades and the Doctorate in Regional Studies: editorial trajectory, thematic convergence and contributions to the construction of knowledge from Chiapas

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— Abstract —

EntreDiversidades. Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades has played a central role in disseminating pluralistic knowledge and strengthening a critical perspective on regional processes in Chiapas and other parts of Latin America since its founding as the successor to the *Anuario de Estudios Indígenas* (Yearbook of Indigenous Studies). This article analyzes the journal's editorial trajectory and thematic convergence with the Doctorate in Regional Studies (DER) at the Autonomous University of Chiapas, on the occasion of its 17th anniversary. A systematic review of the titles and summaries of 22 regular issues and one special issue identified thematic coincidences and cross-cutting lines that highlight the role of the journal as a platform for situated knowledge. It is argued that both *EntreDiversidades* and the DER—as well as other UNACH graduate programs such as MEDCES and MEC—have functioned as spaces for the convergence of regional social and political realities, acting as mediating entities between academic knowledge and community praxis and contributing to the renewal of public cultural, educational, and territorial policies, as well as to the consolidation of human rights, environmental, and gender agendas. Finally, it is argued that their experience offers a valuable model for thinking about editorial practices committed to epistemic justice and academic innovation from the Global South.

Keywords:

scientific journals, cultural diversity, social spaces, regional studies, dissemination of knowledge.

EntreDiversidades. Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades [EntreDiversidades. Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities] is a university-based publishing project that, for more than a decade, has supported the processes of constructing, reflecting on, and articulating critical thought regarding cultural diversity in all its dimensions and across all social spheres in which it occurs. Emerging as a continuation and renewal of the Yearbook of Indigenous Studies (Anuario de Estudios Indígenas) ¹, the journal was launched in 2013 as an open-access publishing platform committed to the dissemination of scientific knowledge from an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspective, with strong territorial and institutional roots.

Published and edited by the Faculty of Human Sciences for Sustainable Intercultural Development —recently created from the merger of the Institute of Indigenous Studies (Instituto de Estudios Indígenas) and the School of Indigenous Management (Escuela de Gestión y Autodesarrollo Indígena) —at the Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas, the journal has successfully positioned itself as a key hub for disseminating research on regional knowledge and issues, not only in Mexico but also in other parts of Latin America. Throughout this journey, *EntreDiversidades* has maintained a close relationship with both the Master's Degree Program in Cultural Diversity and Social Spaces (MEDCES) and the Doctorate in Regional Studies (DER) at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas (UNACH), through both academic collaborations and shared thematic and methodological interests.

On the occasion of the 17th anniversary of the Doctorate in Regional Studies, this article aims to briefly reflect on the history of *EntreDiversidades* and its contributions to the academic dialogue on regional studies, as well as to analyze the main thematic areas of convergence addressed throughout its history. From a descriptive and analytical perspective, this study aims to understand the role that the journal has played as a vehicle for scientific communication, as a space for bridging the gap between academia and the local community, and as a platform for diverse forms of knowledge in a context characterized by the transformation of publishing models and the reconfiguration of debates in the social sciences and humanities ².

1 Editorial organ of the Centro de Estudios Indígenas [Center for Indigenous Studies] of the Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas, subsequently renamed Instituto de Estudios Indígenas (IEI). The publication comprised XVI volumes and primarily served to host the progress of social research on Chiapas and the Mexican southeast. These can be consulted at the following link: <https://iei.unach.mx/index.php/publicaciones/31-anuarios>

2 Over the years, many people have contributed with dedication and generosity to the growth of *EntreDiversidades. Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades*. On behalf of the editorial team, we extend our enduring gratitude to all those who, at different stages, have been part of this collective effort, contributing in various ways to the consolidation of this space for the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

THE EVOLUTION OF ENTREDIVERSIDADES

In the academic landscape of Mexico, peer-reviewed scientific journals have transcended beyond their traditional role as repositories to consolidate themselves as strategic nodes of legitimation, evaluation and epistemic sovereignty. Particularly in the field of Social Sciences and Humanities, these publications play a dual role: on the one hand, they seek to respond to the new standards of professionalization and internationalization promoted by the Secretariat of Science, Humanities, Technology, and Innovation (SECIHTI) and regional systems such as Latindex, Redalyc and SciELO; and on the other, they act as guarantors of the social relevance of the knowledge generated.

The impact of these journals is not measured exclusively by conventional bibliometric metrics, but by their ability to make visible problems and foster communities of interpretation in contexts where global hegemonic production is often insufficient. In this scenario, the public university edition assumes the challenge of supporting Open Access models that democratize science, functioning as critical infrastructures that connect specialized research with the transformation needs of their regional environments.

In this regard, the transformation of the models of circulation of academic knowledge prompted the renewal of the institutional publishing medium of the Instituto de Estudios Indígenas. In this context, in December 2013 the first issue of *EntreDiversidades*³ was published, a biannual magazine that takes up the legacy of the *Yearbook of Indigenous Studies*, but with a renewed commitment to open access, methodological transversality, and the strengthening of a plural and intercultural approach to the social sciences and the humanities.

Since its foundation, *EntreDiversidades* has maintained a commitment to the promotion of critical thinking about cultural diversity and social spaces, now expanding its vision from Chiapas to other regions of Mexico and Latin America. This geographical and thematic expansion was also associated with the emergence of the Master's Degree Program in Cultural Diversity and Social Spaces (MEDCES)⁴, with which it shared objectives, lines of interest and academic links from the beginning, forming together with the "María Elena Fernández-Galán Rodríguez" Library⁵ an ecosystem for the production and dissemination of knowledge.

The transition to a digital publishing environment involved not only the implementation of the OJS system (*Open Journal System*), but also the design of a

3 *EntreDiversidades*. Revista de Ciencias y Humanidades. (2026). History and Perspectives [Online]. <https://entrediversidades.unach.mx/index.php/entrediversidades/menu>

4 MEDCES Institutional Website: <https://medces.maestrias.unach.mx/>

5 Facebook page for the "María Elena Fernández-Galán Rodríguez" Library: <https://www.facebook.com/mariaelena.biblio>

graphic identity, the creation of a web platform, and the adaptation to the quality criteria of different national and international indices. These efforts allowed the journal to be incorporated in recognized reference systems such as Latindex, Redalyc, CLASE, DOAJ and, later, SciELO and the Mexican Journal Classification System of the former CONACYT. Its early adoption of standards such as the DOI and the XML-JATS format positioned it as a pioneer in the university publishing sector in Chiapas.

Throughout its development, *EntreDiversidades* has faced various challenges: from the transition from the printed format to a digital one to the transformation of its periodicity and the strengthening of its visibility, through different internal adjustments in its logistics processes and collaborative teams. In 2018, in accordance with recommendations for best publishing practices, the thematic section was eliminated and the journal adopted an open-access format. In 2023, a further step was taken by implementing the continuous publication model, which has allowed a greater fluidity in the management of manuscripts and a more agile response to the needs of authors and readers. In this way, the journal was inserted into broader scientific circuits under the principles of open access and the pluralistic nature of knowledge.

ENTREDIVERSIDADES IN DIALOGUE WITH REGIONAL STUDIES

Since its inception, *EntreDiversidades* has maintained a close thematic and academic connection with the fields of spatial, regional, and development studies, particularly those related to the state of Chiapas and southeastern Mexico, as well as, in a broader context, to Latin America. It is therefore easy to find common ground in the areas of study promoted by the Doctorate in Regional Studies (DER) at the Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas: 1. Communication, culture, and history; 2. Economy, society, and territory; 3. Educational and regional issues; and 4. Public policy, human rights, and sustainability.⁶ This proximity has not been solely the result of the natural overlap between institutional agendas within the same university, nor of the academic core's contributions to authorship, formal review, and participation on the journal's own Editorial Board, but rather of a genuine epistemological and political affinity: both initiatives share a commitment to thinking about territory from a situated perspective, to challenging the structures of hegemonic knowledge, and to reclaiming voices, processes, and forms of knowledge that span history, culture, communication, and social conflicts in regional contexts; they are present both in the curricula, colloquia, and theses produced by the graduate program and in the publications of *EntreDiversidades*.

6 According to the information obtained from the DER's official website: <https://www.der.doctorados.unach.mx/>

In addition, *EntreDiversidades'* transdisciplinary approach aligns with that of UNACH's graduate programs in the social sciences—in addition to the DER and MEDCES, the Master's Degree Program in Cultural Studies (MEC)⁷ is also worth mentioning—which seek to address socio-spatial dynamics beyond rigid disciplinary frameworks. In this sense, the journal serves as a natural extension of these educational initiatives, providing a platform for the publication of research findings by its students, alumni, and faculty, as well as for the dissemination of relevant debates in southern-southeastern Mexico, Central America, and Latin America as a whole.

In this regard, the synergy between *EntreDiversidades* and the curricula of graduate programs has enabled the journal to serve as a space that complements academic training by establishing links with state, national, and international academic networks and serving as a reference for the evaluation and validation of locally generated knowledge.⁸

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF PUBLISHING OUTPUT

Methodology and Thematic Framework of the Analysis

With the aim of examining the thematic links between *EntreDiversidades'* editorial publishing and the areas of interest of the Doctorate in Regional Studies (DER) of the Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas, a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the articles published between December 2013 and June 2025 was carried out. To this end, the titles and summaries of the texts included in the 22 regular issues and a special issue of the journal were codified. It should be noted that, out of a total of 219 materials listed, only articles, academic essays and documents were used, omitting reviews, sketches, interviews and other non-arbitrated materials, resulting in 184 publications being considered.

The process was carried out using the ATLAS.ti software, using a targeted coding strategy, based on a predefined matrix of analytical categories. These categories correspond to the XII themes distributed in the four training areas of the DER, which function as structural pillars of the academic program⁹. This methodological

7 Institutional website of MEC: <https://www.mec.maestrias.unach.mx/>

8 In this regard, in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, place where the journal is edited, there are approximately 15 graduate programs offered by public institutions, in addition to UNACH, including UNICH, ECOSUR, CIMSUR, CESMECA and Southern CIESAS. For the purpose of inter-institutional coordination, there is the SCLC's Public Graduate Programs Network: https://www.facebook.com/RedPosgradosPublicosSCLC/about?locale=es_LA

9 or the purposes of this research, the topics outlined in the "Call for papers for the Thematic Issue of the Journal Espacio I+D Innovación más Desarrollo Commemorating the 17th Anniversary of the Doctorate in Regional Studies (UNACH)" were taken into account; these topics generally align with the DER's areas of knowledge generation and/or application.

decision sought to highlight the degree of convergence and articulation between the research agendas promoted by the postgraduate course and the contents disseminated by the journal throughout its editorial trajectory.

Below, the thematic framework used for coding is presented (see Table 1):

Table 1

DER training areas and associated topics

DER training area	Associated topics
1. Communication, culture and history	I. Communicative, cultural and historical processes in Chiapas and Mesoamerica II. Representations, imaginaries and construction of regional identities III. Social actors and movements in regional contexts
2. Economy, society and territory	IV. Economic and territorial processes in Mesoamerica and Chiapas V. Globalization, migration and rural development impacts VI. Food sustainability and social economy
3. Regional education issues	VII. Educational phenomena in formal and non-formal contexts VIII. Management, evaluation and development of regional education projects IX. Equity, access and educational trajectories in the region
4. Public policies, human rights and sustainability	X. Public policy and regional governance XI. Human rights, diversity, and gender equity in the Mesoamerican region XII. Sustainability and environmental development

The coding was applied in a non-exclusive manner, allowing a single article to be associated with more than one topic. This flexibility responded to a transdisciplinary nature of many of the published texts, which is consistent with the general approach of both *EntreDiversidades* and the DER itself. The subsequent analysis allowed to identify patterns of thematic recurrence and areas of greater convergence between both academic spaces.

OVERALL RESULTS OF THE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The co-occurrence analysis clearly reveals the thematic links between the journal and the core training areas of UNACH's Doctorate in Regional Studies (DER). Overall, the 12 DER topics distributed across 4 areas were coded, showing a notable pattern of affinity. According to the matrix generated using ATLAS.ti, the most frequent topics were (see Table 2):

Table 2

Absolute frequency of the DER topics in relation to entries found in EntreDiversidades, ordered from highest to lowest.

DER Theme	Record frequency
V. Impacts of globalization, migration and rural development	51
III. Social actors and movements in regional contexts	51
X. Public policies and regional governance	49
I. Communicative, cultural and historical processes in Chiapas and Mesoamerica	40
IV. Economy and territory processes in Mesoamerica and Chiapas.	39
VI. Food sustainability and social economy	35
XI. Human rights, diversity, and gender equity in the Mesoamerican region	26
XII. Sustainability and environmental development	24
VIII. Management, evaluation and development of regional education projects	18
II. Representations, imaginaries and construction of regional identities	12
IX. Equity, access and educational trajectories in the region	7
VII. Educational phenomena in formal and non-formal contexts	6

Thus, the themes that account most for most of the entries indicate that the journal has a strong focus on processes of historical transformation, social exclusion, territorial conflict, critical communication, and collective rights; these areas show a strong convergence with the social, historical, and territorial processes that the DER also studies from its critical perspective, centered on the Mesoamerican macroregion and the microregions of Chiapas.

INTERPRETIVE READING BY DER ACADEMIC TRACK

Based on the quantitative results, it is possible to identify the thematic areas that are most and least represented in the EntreDiversidades journal corpus, which allows for a qualitative analysis of the correlation with the areas of study in the Doctorate in Regional Studies.

Track 1. Communication, culture and history, by concentrating coded around 100 coded records, can be understood as roughly the second strongest in terms of thematic presence, headed by the analysis of actors, phenomena and regional communicational, cultural and historical processes, that is, the way in which symbolic, narrative, aesthetic and identity practices are constructed, captured, transmitted and experienced in the contexts of the Mexican southeast and other Latin American micro regions.

There is a marked co-occurrence between the production of regional imaginaries and identities and socio-spatial dynamics, suggesting that many investigations not only describe symbols and reproduce discourses, but insert them into social struggles, collective memories and community resistances. The historical

dimension is frequently integrated as a background for the analysis of these disputed identities. Particularly, this area is aligned with contemporary debates on memory, interculturality, and epistemic pluralism, in a context such as Chiapas, where colonial history, indigenous movements, and linguistic-cultural policies remain central.¹⁰

The existence of this area can be explained by the humanistic and critical vocation of the DER, as well as by the priority of *EntreDiversidades* in giving voice to plurality and recognizing knowledge and historical processes as situated. Cultural and communication research operates as a bridge between academia and territories.

Track 2. Economy, society and territory, with 125 coded records is the most widely represented, and is linked to economic and territorial studies, which accounts for the academic commitment of both the DER and *EntreDiversidades* to critical studies on structural inequality, forced mobility, social exclusion and dispossession processes.

This track brings together a wide range of articles on migration, territorial transformations, the impacts of the neoliberal economy on micro-regions and forms of community resistance to the expansion of megaprojects, extractivism and environmental degradation. Thus, the integration of this field—which brings together territorial studies, globalization processes, and the social economy—addresses the DER's legitimate concern with studying the material conditions of life linked to regional development projects promoted by various agencies, both state and autonomous. In light of this, the entries show how the journal has been able to constitute a showcase for analysis, recovering experiences, tensions and proposals for development from local perspectives.¹¹

Track 3. Regional educational issues, although it is the least represented in terms of frequency (31 records only), includes significant contributions regarding intercultural education, community-based education, critical pedagogies and educational subjectivation processes. The low frequency may be due to the fact that educational issues have primarily been addressed as cross-cutting components within other subject areas, as part of contexts of displacement or cultural resistance, for example. It can also be explained by the specialization of the field of education, which has sufficient dedicated publishing platforms of its own.

10 Among the examples published in *EntreDiversidades* are "Narrative as a Methodological Approach for the Multidisciplinary Study of the Southern Border (Chiapas-Guatemala). Experiences and Reflections", "Bestialized and Oppressed: Figurations of Chicleros in 20th Century Campeche Short Stories", and "From the Symbol to the Ritual Experience: Sacred Mountains among the Mayas of Zinacantan, Chiapas", while the following are located in the UNACH repository: "Photojournalistic Depictions of the Feminist Protest in Chiapas", "Political communication of local representatives from Chiapas (Mexico) on Facebook during the 2018-2021 period" and "Concepts of Identity Among the So-Called Indigenous or Native Peoples of the Chiapas Highlands Rainforest Region", among other final products of the DER program.

11 In this field some articles can be referred as "Socio-environmental complexity, vulnerability

However, in different articles codified in this area, intercultural education curricula, participatory methodologies and other epistemologies are explored as a focus of research.¹² This suggests a future potential with the publication of research that addresses formal and non-formal learning processes and curricula from regional experiences. The DER program approach allows us to examine educational issues from multiple angles: as public policies, as cultural practices or as mechanisms of integration or social exclusion. Regional challenges regarding access, retention, and educational relevance are of interest to both academic platforms.

Track 4. Public Policies, Human Rights, and Sustainability has proven to be a prominent focus of the journal, where the articles in this section frequently address the milestones of social movements and the struggles for the rights of diverse groups. The nearly 100 coded records are sufficient to highlight the connection between the journal's editorial focus and the themes of the postgraduate program, which analyzes the processes of constructing citizenship, democracy, autonomy, and territorial governance¹³. As such, the journal stands as a bastion in the discussion of public policy and its enduring tension with the forms of organization and participation of grassroots communities. Furthermore, the overlap between sustainability and human rights is growing significantly, highlighting the urgency of the ecological crisis and its intersection with social agendas—such as the struggles to defend water and land—where critical reflection and applied research are gaining influence.

In addition to the formal classification of the graduate program, the analysis identified cross-cutting themes that, although not explicitly stated in the curriculum matrix, reflect the concerns that have guided the journal's editorial work throughout its volumes.

12 In *EntreDiversidades* can be found, as example, "A Look at Qualitative Research on Youth, Conflicts and Violence in Latin American High Schools", "Ethnography of Perceptions in An Autonomous School in The Chiapas Highlands, Mexico", "Learning and work experiences of graduates from the Intercultural University of Chiapas, Oxchuc campus" and "Management of Multicultural Citizenship: the Indigenous School in Chiapas in Face of Cultural Rights". Meanwhile, the UNACH Repository contains the doctoral dissertations produced by the DER program: "Experiences and meanings of basic education teachers about their practice, in the Chontal Alta context, Oaxaca: a regional study", "Socio-Regional Repercussions of the Teaching Practice of Graduates from Teacher Training Higher Education Institutions (IESFD) in Chiapas", "Virtual education and everyday life: construction of meanings about investigative practices in two master's programs in Mexico and Colombia", among others.

13 In this training area, related articles can be found in *EntreDiversidades*, such as: "New Electoral Regime' in Oxchuc, Chiapas", "Under Surveillance: Effects of Environmental Policies and Mechanisms on the Hunting Practices of Reserva de la Biosfera Montes Azules Inhabitants, Chiapas", and "Chimalapas Zoques: Identity Reconfigurations for the Defense of Territory", to name a few. Meanwhile, the DER has contributed works such as: "Food Environment Within the Framework of Public Policies in the Copoya Micro-region, 2022–2023", "The Region in Dispute over Equality and Social Justice Regarding Water in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, During the 2018–2021 Period: Human Rights and Public Policies", and "Public Policies for Tourism Management and Development: The Case of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Tourist Region of the State of Chiapas", also to mention a few.

Taking as its central pillars the two themes that *EntreDiversidades* primarily addresses: on the one hand, cultural diversity—not only as a subject of study, but also as a guiding principle of critical thinking and the dialogue of knowledge that encompasses all forms of otherness; and on the other hand, social spaces, insofar as they are multidimensional and complex. The contributions have highlighted a series of underlying urgent issues that run through current debates, such as epistemic justice, transformations in the dynamics of community life, and the ways in which lived space is shaped, networks of affection are built, and symbolic forms of territorialization are activated. Also noteworthy are publications on historical processes of resistance and memory, and particularly notable are those that explore coping strategies in the face of socio-environmental crises.

EntreDiversidades has served as a platform for reflecting on and through ethnographic, autoethnographic, and collaborative methodologies; for rethinking the dynamics of contemporary territoriality and social reproduction; and for evaluating alternatives to extractivist development, as well as efforts to defend life and territories, agroecological practices, local knowledge, and biocultural reserves. These areas are particularly important for strengthening the relationship between research, social engagement, and the situated construction of knowledge.

Thus, a significant body of work has focused on exploring emerging gender configurations from intersectional perspectives, such as diverse masculinities or feminist community economies. These approaches open the door to elucidating current forms of subjectivation, addressing them from both their sensorial and structural dimensions, and emphasizing the relational, symbolic, and territorial frameworks within which they develop.

Another line of research identified focuses on issues related to authority, conflict, and political disputes, at both the community and state levels. The studies gathered under this theme examine forms of organization, the negotiation of power, and symbolic mechanisms of legitimation, showing, for example, how customs and traditions, as well as expressions of autonomy and resistance, are articulated with regional governance. At this point, the need to examine these regional realities in relation to global phenomena—such as digital activism, sovereignty, and rights regimes—also becomes apparent.

Related to the previous category, another area that stands out for its analytical depth involves studies of communal ways of life, understood as complex systems that integrate economic relations, kinship structures, collective identities, and territorial practices. These studies view communities not as homogeneous, isolated entities, but as dynamic historical actors with their own political agency, who constantly devise creative responses to dispossession, discrimination, and the breakdown of the social fabric.

In terms of collective memory and testimony, there is a strong body of work that addresses historical trauma, the recovery of political memory, and processes of cultural resistance. These studies draw on the experiences of communities

affected by structural violence, forced displacement, or systematic exclusion, and constitute a significant contribution to debates on truth, justice, and reparations from the margins.

Complementary research has also been identified that focuses on popular religiosity, syncretism, and regional worldviews. These studies analyze religious practices not only as cultural expressions but also as forms of social organization aimed at resistance or the legitimization of power.

Finally, although less prominent, studies on community education and language revitalization stand out, focusing on literacy processes, the teaching and advocacy of indigenous languages, and the development of unique pedagogies or learning methodologies. These experiences allow us to envision educational alternatives from the grassroots level, in contexts of diversity and structural exclusion.

Taken together, these emerging themes form a critical map of the academic, political, and ethical interests that have revolved around *EntreDiversidades*, and they highlight its contribution as a publishing platform committed to the production of regional, pluralistic, and situated knowledge. However, given its notable absence, it would seem that we need to broaden our perspectives on the digital transformation of space, delve deeper into territorialities from the perspective of embodied experience, develop theories by forging more explicit connections with the humanities and the arts, and explore in depth the social fabric and local-global networks of interaction.

ENTREDIVERSIDADES' PUBLISHING OUTLOOK

Throughout its history, *EntreDiversidades* has established itself as a publishing platform committed to the production, dissemination, and mediation of knowledge. Its mission has not been limited to disseminating the results of academic research, but also to creating a space where diverse forms of knowledge can converge to contribute to a critical understanding of social, cultural, and political realities—initially in southern Mexico, but expanding to Latin America and the Global South. From this perspective, the journal has served as a strategic editorial actor in the dissemination of regional knowledge.

This role manifests itself in at least three dimensions: bridging the gap between academic and popular knowledge; potential contributions to the formulation of public policies on culture, education, and territorial development; and influencing human rights, environmental, and gender agendas through the visibility and positioning of many of the published articles.

Although *EntreDiversidades* has remained independent of any institutional agenda, many of the works it has published are part of research projects funded in response to social assessments, demands, and academic proposals with a social focus. At the same time, it constantly seeks to contribute to the validation of knowledge that has historically been excluded from formal academic circles. In this sense, it

acts as a bridge between the university and local communities, between analytical frameworks and community-based social practice, indirectly contributing to the development of agendas for the defense of rights at various levels.

This trajectory reinforces the journal's flexible, critical, and situated nature, highlighting its role as an editorial laboratory for alternative regional thought, open to multiple genealogies and territories of knowledge. Furthermore, *EntreDiversidades* is called upon to explore emerging forms of spatiality that conventional social theory has marginalized, thereby limiting and reducing the notion of space/territory to classical concepts. Given the so-called information society, the journal can take the lead at the regional level in the discussion of digital, open, dynamic, and deterritorialized spaces through publications that document the challenges to enclave logic, by addressing the theoretical and methodological challenges these spaces present. Examples of this include studies on urban issues, cross-border mobility, diasporic connections, linguistic and non-linguistic ethnic identities, digital articulations and territorialities, collaborative economies, and diverse hubs of cultural production. Following this path, it is essential to prioritize transdisciplinary dialogue that also integrates approaches from art, literature, and philosophy into its analyses and methodologies.

By adopting this paradigm, *EntreDiversidades* would not only update its editorial approach but also redefine the scope of what constitutes "regional." The focus would no longer be solely on studying what happens in Chiapas, southeastern Mexico, and other parts of Latin America, but rather on how these regions—given their specific characteristics—connect with global flows of people, knowledge, and technologies.

CONCLUSIONS

The editorial trajectory of *EntreDiversidades. Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades* demonstrates that academic publications can be much more than repositories of specialized knowledge: they can become living platforms for critical dialogue, epistemic mediation, and territorial articulation. Since its inception, the journal has maintained an ethical and political commitment to bringing visibility to diverse knowledges, fostering situated reflection on regional issues, and collectively building horizons of social justice.

The analysis conducted reveals a high degree of thematic convergence between *EntreDiversidades* and the research areas of the Doctorate in Regional Studies (DER)—a convergence that is organic in nature, not established a priori—which reflects a sustained institutional synergy that has fostered the emergence of an academic field with its own identity in southeastern Mexico, where the journal has served both as a showcase for disseminating research from public graduate programs in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, and as an educational space, a

living archive, and a strategic editorial framework in shaping a critical agenda for regional knowledge.

Through thematic mapping and the identification of codes, it was found that the journal has systematically promoted articles related to human rights, memory, territoriality, cultural diversity, migration, formal and non-formal education, and community organizing processes. This diverse body of work has given rise to a robust editorial framework, in constant dialogue with the conflicts and challenges faced by the peoples of Chiapas and other regions of southeastern Mexico and Latin America.

Furthermore, *EntreDiversidades* has successfully risen to the challenges of scientific publishing from the periphery, establishing itself as an institutional leader both for its editorial quality and for its open-access model, horizontal authorship structure, and commitment to knowledge as a common good. Its inclusion on prestigious national and international platforms has been accompanied by a sustained effort toward professionalization and technological adaptation, without losing its regional roots or its commitment to diversity.

In this regard, *EntreDiversidades* confirms that it is possible to build, from the Global South, a rigorous, critical, and context-specific publishing practice that does not compromise either academic excellence or a commitment to local communities and their history. Its track record speaks to a university-based institutional project that has been consolidated over various stages—a possible model for other journals that aspire to serve as platforms for transformation through the written word.

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Current context of Physical Education teacher training in Chiapas; regional analysis and review

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— Abstract —

The role of the teacher has undergone significant transformations over time. In this regard, one of the essential tasks for constructing the role of teacher is to understand the configuration and purposes of education through an understanding and analysis of educational systems. Therefore, this article conducts a historical contextual review and comparative analysis of data and graduate profiles of physical education teachers in Chiapas. Using a qualitative hermeneutic methodology, researchers analyzed national and regional teacher training, admissions records, and graduate profiles from training institutions. The main findings reveal a significant evolution in physical education teacher training, with a humanistic and contextualized approach starting with the 2022 curriculum.

Furthermore, in Chiapas, the coexistence of teacher training institutions and universities in the training of future teachers generates a diversity of approaches, both pedagogical and graduate profiles. Thus, although we identified challenges related to the quality and relevance of the programs, a discrepancy between the graduate profiles is also possible. In conclusion, the need for ongoing training, the importance of regional educational research, and the relevance of conducting comparative studies at the national and state levels highlight the need to strengthen knowledge in the area and eventually inform educational policies that benefit physical education.

Keywords:

Physical education; professional training; regional studies; teacher education.

The figure of the Physical Education Teacher (Docente de Educación Física, DEF, by its acronym in Spanish) has undergone a significant transformation over time, shifting from a more traditional and militarized role to one that is comprehensive and complex. Educational policies, in constant evolution, have demanded that DEFs continuously adapt to new contexts and challenges. This evolution has been driven by growing social awareness of the importance of physical activity and health, as well as the need to educate more well-rounded citizens capable of facing the demands of the twenty-first century.

While it is true that physical education (PE, by its acronym in Spanish) has been shaped by various pedagogical trends throughout its history, the application of this knowledge at the basic education level is guided by the general objectives of physical education at the primary level, objectives that were extended to the higher education level in teacher training through the 2022 *Curriculum Plan*, a proposal known as the New Mexican School [Nueva Escuela Mexicana, NEM] (Secretaría de Educación Pública [Ministry of Public Education, SEP], 2022).

Docoing (2020) highlights the importance of understanding the configuration and purposes of education through educational systems, as the teaching profession revolves around these objectives; for this reason, educational policies exert a decisive influence on the configuration and goals of school disciplines, including physical education (PE). In this way, the general objectives established in the 2022 Curriculum Plan within the context of the Nueva Escuela Mexicana (NEM) reflect a significant evolution in the conception of PE, which has moved from more traditional approaches toward a more comprehensive vision connected to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The NEM puts forward an educational vision centered on the comprehensive development of students, preparing them to face the challenges of an increasingly complex world. Physical education, by promoting the development of motor, social, and emotional skills, plays a fundamental role in this process. This new conception of PE implies a paradigm shift in teaching practice, which must be oriented toward developing key life competencies.

The NEM calls for a reconceptualization of education as a process that extends beyond the simple transmission of knowledge. In this sense, the DEF must approach teaching and learning reflectively, equipping students with the tools needed to navigate an increasingly complex and dynamic professional and social world. Future DEFs must therefore be shaped by a professional profile that aligns with the demands of educational policies and official training frameworks in Mexico (SEP, 2022). Beyond this, the contribution of regional studies proves invaluable, as it is essential to take into account the context in which teachers carry out their educational practice.

The set of characteristics, traits, and competencies that define the DEF's profile is outlined in the document *Marco para la excelencia en la enseñanza y la gestión escolar en la Educación Básica* [Framework for Excellence in Teaching and

School Management in Basic Education] (SEP, 2019), which is organized around four domains with corresponding indicator criteria: 1) Ethical Commitment: Professional Improvement, 2) Curricular Aspects, 3) Instructional Intervention, and 4) School Management and Community Engagement. In this regard, the DEF's practice must assume a role of accompaniment in the process of discovery, exploration, and development of students across the various contexts encountered throughout their professional trajectory. Regional studies and critical thinking thus become valuable tools for understanding the diverse educational challenges affecting the Mexican population.

This text aims to provide a contextual overview of physical education, tracing its historical development and describing its evolution in order to arrive at the current configuration of PE through a review of reforms, laws, and educational plans and programs within the Mexican context. It also examines the training of future physical education teachers at both the national level and the regional level in Chiapas.

THE TRAINING OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

The Reforma Integral de la Educación Básica [Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education] (RIEB) marked a milestone in Mexican education in 2011 with the introduction of the Basic Education Programs. These programs, conceived as a response to the demands of a constantly changing society, proposed a curricular restructuring aimed at aligning teaching and learning processes with the fundamental principles of education established in the Constitution and the General Education Law. The RIEB was put forward as an ambitious project whose objective was to strengthen the quality and equity of basic education throughout the country (SEP, 2011). According to Ruiz (2012), this reform was guided by the *National Development Plan 2007–2012*, as one of its objectives was to "raise the quality of education so that students improve their level of educational achievement, have access to greater well-being, and contribute to national development" (Ruiz, 2012, p. 52).

Following the 2012 Educational Reform, the introduction of the Professional Teaching Service Law transformed the dynamics and perspectives surrounding teacher performance in Mexico. In order to ensure the suitability of teachers, the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (INEE) was responsible for designing and implementing standardized assessments for both entry into and continuity within the teaching service (INEE, 2015a). These regulatory changes had a direct impact on DEFs, who were required to demonstrate competencies through evaluation processes in order to obtain a position within the Ministry of Public Education.

Teacher training is an ongoing process that begins in early childhood education and officially culminates with the attainment of a degree in higher education; however, it continues to develop in the professional sphere throughout the teaching career. The Ley General del Servicio Profesional Docente [General

Law of the Professional Teaching Service] (LGSPD) established a legal framework that articulated both formative stages, with the aim of ensuring preparedness for the challenges of contemporary education. The articulation between these two stages guarantees teacher suitability, improves the quality of education, and ultimately contributes to the full development of students (Ley General del Servicio Profesional Docente, 2018, and Article 3 of *Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, 2019).

Subsequently, during the administration of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a new body was created to oversee teacher admission and promotion processes: the Unidad del Sistema para la Carrera de las Maestras y los Maestros [Unit of the System for the Career of Teachers] (USICAMM). The USICAMM evaluation model centers on the teacher profile and the reflective practice model. However, according to Piñón López (2021), in this process "a sufficient score is obtained or not, and it is not entirely clear why. A single number leaves teachers with more questions than answers" (p. 5). Piñón López (2015) highlights the need to rethink evaluation practices in the educational sphere, calling for the development of assessment instruments that provide detailed and constructive feedback, enabling teachers to identify their strengths and areas for improvement.

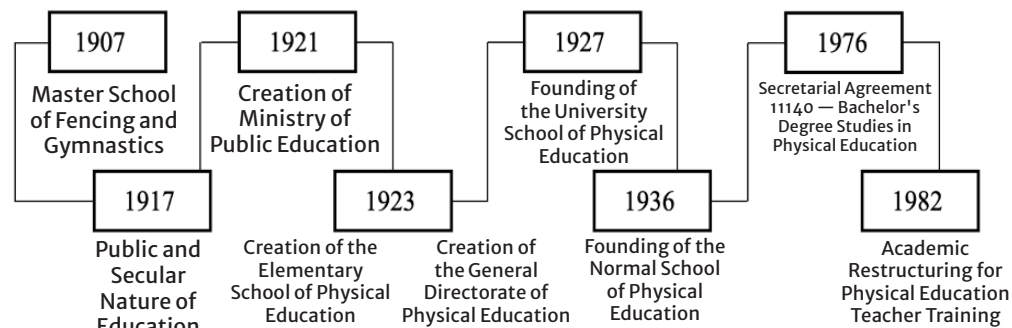
Regarding the initial training of Physical Education Teachers (DEFs), according to international evaluations (UNICEF, ONU, UNESCO, 2015), this is a fundamental task for ensuring quality physical education and promoting the comprehensive development of students. The emphasis placed by these organizations on the need to equip future teachers with the competencies required to design and implement educational programs that promote physical activity, health, well-being, and the development of motor skills reflects a comprehensive vision of the human being. This perspective is part of the research efforts undertaken by UNICEF, the UN, and UNESCO, and constitutes a call for review by policymakers.

In terms of the scientific grounding of the field, Locke (1984) emphasized the importance of empirical research as a foundation for the development of PE. However, he cautioned that research alone is not sufficient to address its deeper challenges. Along the same lines, Albarrán and Jiménez (2017) highlight that teacher training in Mexico corresponds to a national project. Although international agreements and public policies are presented as neutral instruments, they are in fact the result of complex negotiations involving diverse political, social, and economic actors (Popkewitz, 2020). Under these premises, it is underscored that political decisions, grounded in economic considerations, ultimately determine the future of the discipline. The perspectives of Locke (1984) and Albarrán and Jiménez (2017) anticipate the complexity of the factors converging in PE and underscore the need for a comprehensive vision that encompasses pedagogical, social, and political dimensions.

In this regard, educational policies can be described as dynamic and in constant evolution. Over time, educational decisions in Mexico have been shaped by social

demands and changes in both the national and international context, as noted above, revealing challenges and achievements throughout the history of initial teacher training. In 2015, the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (INEE, 2015b) pointed out that, due to "curricular modifications to basic education study plans and programs, the educational system has had to rely on normal schools (teacher training institutions), private institutions, the UPN, and other HEIs for teacher training" (p. 86). This observation referred to the fact that, based on projected trends over the following ten years — that is, by 2025 — the number of potential retirees would be close to the number of graduates from normal schools.

In terms of the historical background of physical education teacher training in Mexico, the normal school tradition is the pioneer in this field through the establishment of various normal schools throughout the country, a premise that dates back to the early years of independent Mexico in 1821 (Gálvan Lafarga, 1997). In the case of PE teacher training specifically, its origins are linked to the creation of the Autonomous Department of Physical Education in 1936 (Chávez, 2012), alongside the Normal School of Physical Education. Chávez (2012) notes that under the administration of President Lázaro Cárdenas, efforts were made to "train Physical Education professionals graduating from the Normal School and, at the same time, to create a greater number of positions each year to meet the needs arising particularly in rural and urban-worker settings" (p. 108). In subsequent years, under Secretarial Agreement 11140, undergraduate studies for PE teacher training were established and the curriculum and programs of study in both in-school and extracurricular modalities were authorized (D.O.F., 1976). However, it was not until March 23, 1984, that normal education in any of its specializations was officially designated as a bachelor's degree-level program (D.O.F., 1984) (see Figure 1).



Note: *Under this agreement, teacher training was elevated to a Bachelor's degree level in both in-school and extracurricular modalities, and ** the 1982 restructuring outlined the curricular model and set a precedent by proposing ten training fields for the first time.

Figure 1. Basic Historical Sequence of Physical Education Teacher Training in Mexico. Source: Own elaboration based on SEP (2002) and Chávez (2012)

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted under a qualitative methodology of a hermeneutic nature. According to Palmer (1969), the primary purpose of hermeneutics is the study, comprehension, and interpretation of texts. In this sense, this approach made it possible to go beyond the literal normative content in order to uncover the meanings, tensions, and intentions underlying the educational policies that frame the training of Physical Education teachers. The application of this methodological approach enabled an in-depth analysis of the relevant documentation, including reforms, laws, and curricula, as well as the interpretation of qualitative data obtained from admission records and graduate profiles of teacher training institutions.

The following section presents in detail the application of the data collection instruments.

RESULTS

Mexico has 9 public normal schools offering PE training, according to data reported on the Government of Mexico's website, consulted on October 14, 2024 (Gobierno de México, n.d.) (see Table 1).

Table 1

Public Normal Schools for the Training of Future Physical Education Teachers

No.	Name	State
1	Normal School of the Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education "Pedro Reynol Ozuna Henning."	Chiapas
2	Higher School of Physical Education	CDMX
3	Normal School of Physical Education	Coahuila
4	Higher School of Physical Education	Edo. de México
5	Higher School of Physical Education	Jalisco
6	Higher School of Physical Education	Michoacán
7	Federalized Upper Normal School of the State of Puebla	Puebla
8	Normal School of Physical Education "Professor Emilio Miramontes Nájera"	Sonora
9	Normal School of Physical Education "Pablo García Avalos."	Tabasco

Note: *The numbering is for formatting purposes only; the schools are organized in alphabetical order by the state in which they are located.

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the public normal school's directory of the Government of Mexico, consulted on October 14, 2024

The General Directorate of Higher Education for Education Professionals (DGESPE) ¹ establishes a general curricular framework for training in normal schools for basic education. All institutions follow the same curriculum, which presents courses per semester along with their corresponding credits and weekly hours. Within the specific framework of PE, they include a space for elective or pre-specialization courses and complementary training. The training period comprises 319 credits and a total of 5,112 hours for the complete program, divided into 6 semesters, based on data from the current 2022 curriculum (DGESuM, 2022); see Table 2.

Table 2

Curriculum of the Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education (2022)

Semester	Courses
1	Historical, philosophical, legal, and organizational foundations of the Mexican educational system
	Periods and stages of life cycle development: differentiated perspectives
	Structural foundations of bodily movement
	Approach to educational and community practices
	Physical education in compulsory education
	Foundations of motor skills
	Play in physical education
	Digital technologies for learning and teaching
2	History of physical education: approaches and methods
	Neuroscience in PE
	Functional bases of body movement
	Analysis of school practices and contexts
	Body and corporeity from the study of the social sciences
	Dimensions of motor skills
	Sports initiation
	English: Introduction to basic communication

1 The Directorate-General of Higher Education for Teachers (DEGESuM, by its Spanish acronym) was formerly known as the Directorate General of Higher Education for Education Professionals (DEGESPE). In September 2020, as part of a structural reorganization within the Ministry of Public Education (SEP), the institution was officially renamed DEGESuM.

	Current trends in physical education
	Theories and models of learning in physical education
	Didactic-pedagogical intervention and teaching practice
3	Planning and evaluation in physical education
	Perceptual-motor development
	Educational sports and individual physical activities
	Virtual learning environments for hybrid education: pedagogy and didactics
	Comprehension of texts in a foreign language: English
	Curricular flexibility
	Methodologies of educational research
	Critical interculturality and inclusion in physical education
4	Teaching strategies and pedagogical knowledge
	Healthy lifestyles in the family, school and community
	Bodily and artistic expression
	Educational sports and team physical activities
	Curricular flexibility
5	Research and Innovation in teaching practice
	Curricular flexibility*
6	Teaching practice and school and community improvement projects
	Curricular flexibility**
7	Curricular flexibility***
8	Curricular flexibility****

Note: * For the fifth semester, n=5 courses are presented with curricular flexibility. ** In the sixth semester, n=7 courses are presented with curricular flexibility. *** In the seventh semester, n=2 courses are presented with curricular flexibility. In the eighth semester, n=2 courses are presented with curricular flexibility.

Source: Own elaboration based on information from DGEsUM (2022a)

Following the 2022 curricular reform, the training of future DEFs adopts a more humanistic perspective. This is evident in Annex 9 of the curriculum, which specifies that:

Physical Education as we know it today must be revitalized to respond to emerging challenges within the historical-cultural context in which it unfolds, considering that the new information and knowledge societies must be addressed in accordance with the particularities of the diverse intervention settings (DGEsUM, 2022b, p. 1).

The curricular reform of the study plan demonstrates a commitment to continuous updating and underscores the humanistic perspective that underlies it. Furthermore, by including courses such as Digital Technologies for Learning and Teaching, Virtual Learning Environments for Hybrid Education: Pedagogy and Didactics, Neuroscience in Physical Education, Healthy Lifestyles in the Family, and Analysis of Practices and Context, among others, the aim is to train DEFs capable of addressing the various dimensions of human development beyond physical

development alone. This update thus responds to the need to adapt the discipline to the demands of contemporary society and to regional contexts.

Table 3 presents a comparison between the two most recent curricula and programs for the Bachelor's Degree in PE.

Table 3

Curricular Comparison of the 2018 and 2022 Plans and Programs

Semester	Plan 2018	Plan 2022
1	Child and adolescent development	Historical, philosophical, legal, and organizational foundations of the Mexican educational system
	Socioeconomic and political issues in Mexico	Periods and stages of life cycle development: differentiated perspectives
	Periods and stages of the life cycle	Structural foundations of bodily movement
	History of physical education	Approach to educational and community practices
	Physical education in compulsory education	Physical education in compulsory education
	School and community	Foundations of motor skills
	English I	Play in physical education
		Digital technologies for learning and teaching
2	Socioemotional development	History of physical education: approaches and methods
	Theories and models of learning	Neuroscience in PE
	Ludomotricity	Functional bases of body movement
	Structural foundations of bodily movement	Analysis of school practices and contexts
	Current trends in physical education	Body and corporeity from the study of the social sciences
	School and school context	Dimensions of motor skills
	English II	Sports initiation
		English: Introduction to basic communication
3	Learning planning in physical education	Current trends in physical education
	Motor skills in aquatic settings	Theories and models of learning in physical education
	Functional foundations of bodily movement	Didactic-pedagogical intervention and teaching practice
	Foundations of motor skills	Planning and evaluation in physical education
	Teaching practice	Perceptual-motor development
	English III	Educational sports and individual physical activities
		Virtual learning environments for hybrid education: pedagogy and didactics
		Comprehension of texts in a foreign language: English

4	Neuroscience from childhood to youth	Curricular flexibility*
	Educational center management	Methodologies of educational research
	Planning and evaluation in physical education	Critical interculturalism and inclusion in physical education
	Domains of motor skills	Teaching strategies and pedagogical knowledge
	Teaching strategies	Healthy lifestyles in the family, school and community
	English IV	Bodily and artistic expression
5	Inclusive education in physical education	Research and Innovation in teaching practice
	Research methodology	Curricular flexibility**
	Educational sports and individual physical activities	
	Body and corporeality in the social sciences	
	Perceptual-motor development	
	Innovation for teaching through physical education	
	English V	
6	Foundations of education	Teaching practice and school and community improvement projects
	Pedagogical thought	Curricular flexibility***
	Educational sports and team physical activities	
	Pedagogy of leisure time	
	Bodily expression and creativity	
	Physical education intervention in basic education	
	English VI	
7	Current challenges in education in Mexico	Curricular flexibility****
	Physical activity and fitness for health	
	Teaching intervention through Educational Sports	
	Health promotion	
	Socio-educational intervention projects	
	Professional practice and school life	
8	Service learning	Curricular flexibility*****

Nota: *En primer semestre se presenta n=1;* para el quinto semestre se presentan n=5 asignaturas con flexibilidad curricular. ***En el sexto semestre se presentan n=7 asignaturas con flexibilidad curricular. En el séptimo semestre se presentan n= 2 asignaturas con flexibilidad curricular. *****En el octavo semestre se presentan n=2 asignaturas con flexibilidad curricular.

Source: Own elaboration based on information from DGESuM (2018; 2022a)

The comparative analysis of the 2018 and 2022 PE curricula reveals a significant evolution in both the conception and design of DEF training. While these programs share a focus on the comprehensive training of teachers and retain core content such as the history of physical education, the 2022 plan reflects a shift toward a more updated and contextualized perspective. Furthermore, it emphasizes the acquisition of innovative pedagogical competencies and a focus on diversity and inclusion. The integration of courses such as "Methodologies of Educational Research" and "Critical Interculturality and Inclusion" demonstrates a commitment to training professionals capable of generating knowledge and responding to a constantly changing society. In this regard,

This approach places research and the dialogue of knowledge at the center of practice, as pedagogical tools that acknowledge the heterogeneity of the group with its multiple expressions of sociocultural diversity, and that enhance the different cognitive levels and profiles (DGESuM, 2022b, p. 7).

This approach promotes the active participation of DEFs in training, with elements centered on research and the dialogue of knowledge. Also noteworthy is the incorporation of courses such as "Methodologies of Educational Research," given that research is an essential element for the economic development of a country (Acuña & Pons, 2019). As early as the 2013–2018 Development Plan, the aim was to "base our future on the intensive use of our intellectual capacity" (Gobierno de la República, 2013, p. 59). The importance of research in the DEF's work is emphasized throughout Annex 9 of the DGESuM (2022b), which states that the DEF:

Produces pedagogical, didactic, and disciplinary knowledge and understanding; recognizes and values educational research and the production of knowledge from experience; is able to problematize, reflect on, and learn from practice in order to transform it; and has developed methodological competencies for pedagogical narration, systematization, and research (DGESuM, p. 13).

The above presents an enriching vision of the teaching role, as it highlights the teacher's work through their capacity to produce their own pedagogical, didactic, and disciplinary knowledge. The conception of the teacher as a researcher of their own practice, endowed with professional autonomy, demands committed professionals oriented toward continuous improvement, and articulates a close relationship between theory and practice, contributing to a critical and reflective training not only in the initial professionalization of the DEF, but also in their ongoing education from a regional perspective.

THE TRAINING OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN THE STATE OF CHIAPAS

In Chiapas, the history of education remains under construction; however, Lisbona Guillén (2020) notes that, in the particular case of PE historiography, it is almost entirely absent. Nevertheless, it is situated within the broader national context, shaped by the political dynamics of a nation-state. The first indications of PE in Chiapas emerge from a military framework; in 1910, sixteen Normal Schools existed across the country, including one in Chiapas, with the aim of unifying national education (López, 2003). That same year, Governor Ramón Rabasa made reference to the Military Industrial School in Tuxtla Gutiérrez (Torres, 2015).

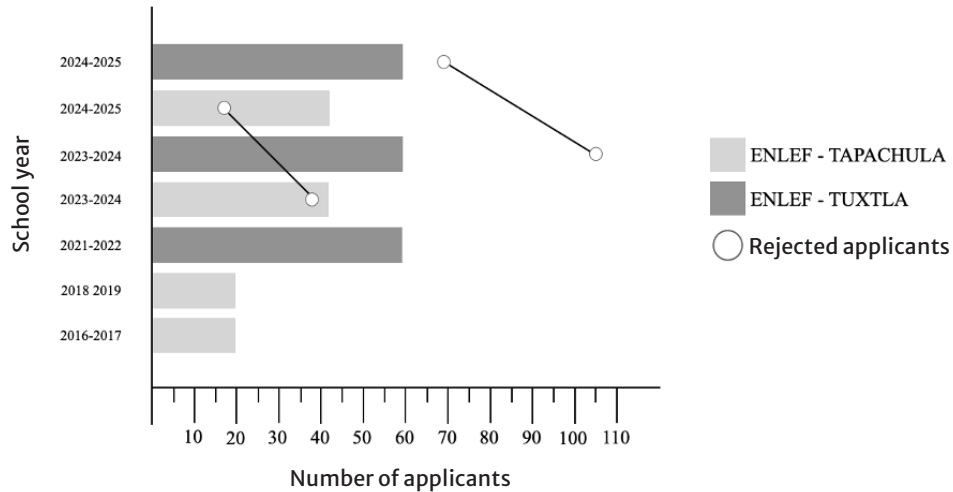
At the state government level, various measures and initiatives regarding literacy in the state were introduced; one of the most documented is that of Flavio Guillén, whose political agenda centered on two priority areas: infrastructure and education, and who enacted the Organic Law of Public Instruction of the State of Chiapas. Subsequently, the Pedagogical Congress was held in the state in 1914 under then-Governor Agustín Castro. Following this, physical exercises appeared as mandatory subjects in Chiapas primary schools (Lisbona Guillén, 2020).

The landscape of public physical education teaching was gradually emerging as one of the tools for achieving modernizing transformations through the body, aligning the country with the world's leading powers through the construction of a homogenized citizenry under the dawn of the nation (Lisbona Guillén, 2020, p. 255).

From this perspective, physical education emerged within the modernizing contexts of a nation-state that was still under construction. It was conceived as a strategic instrument for shaping citizens and consolidating national identity; at the same time, the notion of a homogenized citizenry points to the erasure of the cultural diversities of the period.

While the importance of the country's educational policies and the presence of political figures as a defining characteristic of educational development have been discussed throughout this text, it is important to examine the current reality of DEF's training and its regional configuration within the state.

Currently in Chiapas, there are two teacher training institutions within the normal school system: first, the Normal School of Physical Education "Pedro Reynol Ozuna Henning," located in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, and second, the Normal School of Physical Education located in Tapachula de Córdova y Ordóñez. Both are public institutions, and their admission data are presented in Graph 1.



Note: The presented data correspond to information retrieved online through the Chiapas Government website and the social media pages of both institutions (ENLEF-Tapachula and ENLEF-Tuxtla).

Figure 1. Admission Record at Normal Schools of Physical Education in Chiapas. Source: Own elaboration

Based on the data presented on the essential indicators of the training process, such as the number of applicants admitted and rejected, a partial analysis of the situation can be carried out, which will allow for an assessment of access to this area of training. In the case of the Normal School of the Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education – Tuxtla (ENLEF-Tux), it can be observed that for the 2023–2024 cycle, the admission rate was 36.36%, while the rejection rate reached 63.64%. For the following cycle, 2024–2025, the admission rate increased slightly to 43.17%, with a corresponding rejection rate of 56.83%. However, it is important to note that this increase in the admission rate occurred in a context of declining total applicants, which showed a reduction of 15.75%.

The Normal School of the Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education – Tapachula (ENLEF-Tap) recorded an admission rate of 51.28% and a rejection rate of 48.72% for the 2023–2024 school year. In the following cycle, 2024–2025, an increase in the admission rate was observed, reaching 68.80%, while the rejection rate decreased to 32.20%. As with ENLEF-Tuxtla, an improvement in the admission rate is evident; however, this positive trend coincides with a 24.36% reduction in the total number of applicants for the 2024–2025 cycle.

In Mexico, normal schools have traditionally been the cornerstone of teacher training; however, educational reforms and new social demands have made it necessary to complement the discipline's coverage with other training options. The INEE, in its 2015b study, highlighted the importance of diverse pathways for the training of future teachers. In the country, two main routes for training DEFs coexist: the normal school system and the university system. Graduates of normal schools tend to have a profile more oriented toward teaching practice at the basic

education level, aligned with educational policies and the needs of the Mexican educational system. Meanwhile, graduates of universities (Higher Education Institutions – HEI) present more diverse profiles or specializations in particular areas, responding to more specific and ever-changing labor demands (Torres Aguilar, Buendia Lozada, & Vázquez Pascacio, 2020).

As has been presented thus far, the training landscape is diverse. To better illustrate this diversity, the following table details the number of PE teacher training institutions at the state level, broken down by institution type, system, and geographic location (see Table 4).

Table 4

Institutions Offering Bachelor's Degrees in Physical Education in the State of Chiapas

Training	Institution type	System	Location
Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education, Normal School "Pedro Reynol Ozuna Henning."	Normal	Public	Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas
Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education, Normal School.	Normal	Public	Tapachula Córdoba y Ordóñez
Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education and Sports, Universidad Pablo Guardado Chávez.	Universitaria	Private	Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas
Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education and Sports, IESCH, Universidad Salazar.	Universitaria	Private	Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas
			Tapachula Cordova y Ordóñez
Higher School of Physical Education.	Universitaria	Private	San Cristóbal de las Casas
Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education and Sports.	Universitario	Private	Villaflores

Note. Data collected through the institutions' websites.

Source: Own elaboration

Based on Table 4, the largest number of PE teacher training schools are located in the state capital, with three institutions from both public and private systems. In second place is Tapachula de Córdoba y Ordóñez ($n=2$), and in third place, San Cristóbal de Las Casas ($n=1$) and Villaflores ($n=1$). According to the data presented in the table, normal schools represent the backbone of this training as public institutions. However, HEIs have experienced significant growth in recent years, offering an alternative for students seeking interdisciplinary training or programs aligned with individual interests. The choice between one institution or another will depend on each student's professional interests and objectives, as well as the specific characteristics of each educational program. In this regard, DEF training must go beyond the transmission of theoretical knowledge or practical skills, focusing instead on the development of both practical and theoretical competencies

that equip future teachers with reflective tools and abilities (Carreiro da Costa et al., 2016 & Dodds, 1989).

In light of the above, it is important to explore the graduate profiles of the PE degree programs offered in Chiapas. The Graduate Profile (GP) is understood as a normative document that defines the competencies, knowledge, and skills that a graduate must acquire upon completing a given degree program. Its origins can be traced back to the Bologna Agreement, which established the need to harmonize European educational systems (González, 2017). Today, the GP represents an institutional commitment to training professionals capable of responding to the demands of the labor market, society at large, and the region in which they are situated. Torres Aguilar, Buendia Lozada, and Vázquez Pascacio (2020) indicate that "graduate profiles correspond to the historical stages of the country's educational context" (p. 73); furthermore, they can be expressed "in the form of traits, competencies, knowledge, skills, and values" (Ceballos, 2016, p. 127).

Ceballos, Alfonso, Medina, Muela, Enríquez, and Ceballos (2013), in their study "Historical Approach to Physical Education in Mexico," argue that DEF training must be addressed from three essential dimensions: bio-psycho-social, guiding toward comprehensive and contextualized knowledge; they also consider that the GP should place significant importance on bodily work and teaching, encompassing both the promotion of an active lifestyle and the development of healthy and hygienic habits. From this perspective, they position the DEF as a central actor in the field.

Table 5
Graduate Profiles of Physical Education Bachelor's Degree Training Programs

Institution	Exist profile traits*
Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education, Normal School "Pedro Reynol Ozuna Henning."	Approaches their educational role with an ethical, social, and professional commitment to contributing to the formation of students who face barriers to learning and participation, whether with or without disabilities and/or outstanding aptitudes, from a gender and human rights perspective that respects and promotes diversity, and that fosters and works toward interculturality and interdisciplinarity, taking into account the philosophical, legal, and ethical frameworks of the National Educational System.
Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education, Normal School.	Is a humanistic professional who respects the use and care of the body, critical, analytical, and solution-oriented, committed to their environment for the benefit and development of motor competence, with a sense of global citizenship and an ability to address the needs of their society involving corporeality, motor skills, and the promotion of healthy habits. A professional with scientific and technological knowledge in the disciplinary, pedagogical, and didactic domains of physical education, capable of managing excellent and innovative education to understand and interpret motor learning and its teaching processes, grounded in empowerment and participation technologies. A comprehensive professional — cognitive, physical, emotional, inclusive, civic, moral, health-conscious, ethical, humanistic, collaborative, and disciplinary — who becomes an empowered social change agent capable of facing today's world through Physical Education, sports, and recreation, with the defense of corporeality and the development of motor competence as the guiding principles of the person. A professional who analyzes the objectives and content of the three basic educational levels, recognizing the goals of physical education across different educational levels for the development of children and adolescents. Has a formation grounded in a gender and human rights perspective that respects and promotes diversity, fosters collaborative work, and recognizes the significance of interculturality and interdisciplinarity, taking into account the philosophical, legal, and ethical frameworks of the National Educational System (DGESuM, 2022, p. 15).
Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education and Sports, Universidad Pablo Guardado Chávez.	The graduate in Physical Education and Sports will be a professional possessing the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that will prepare them to offer quality services in teaching across the areas of physical education at the basic, upper-secondary, and higher education levels, as well as in the planning of sports training programs and research projects oriented toward sports sciences, human movement, and physical activity (Universidad Pablo Guardado Chávez, 2024).
Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education and Sports, IESCH, Universidad Salazar.	Research, plan, administer, and implement Physical Education and sports training programs. Apply psychological, pedagogical, technical, and didactic theories in the teaching of Physical Education and Sports. Lead, design, evaluate, plan, and conduct research in the field of Physical Education. Plan, lead, assess, understand, and identify opportunities across different fields of practice, such as rehabilitation, marketing, leisure, and free time (IESCH-Universidad Salazar, 2024).
Higher School of Physical Education.	-
Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education and Sports.	-

Note: * These are presented as traits, given that graduate profiles are extensive documents and in some HEIs the full data were not publicly available. — Corresponds to institutions that do not present graduate profile information on their official websites.

Source: Own elaboration based on DGESuM (2022), Universidad Pablo Guardado Chávez (2024), and IESCH-Universidad Salazar (2024)

The GP acts as a compass that guides the training process, an institutional declaration that establishes the competencies, skills, and knowledge graduates must acquire in order to meet the demands of the labor market and society (Hawes, 2010). In this regard, Table 5 allows us to envision the future DEF, from the normal school perspective, as an agent of social change who promotes the comprehensive development of students and contributes to a more just and equitable society. In the case of Universidad Pablo Guardado Chávez, the emphasis is placed on research and the design of sports programs as the foundation of training, while also highlighting teaching across all educational levels. For its part, IESCH-Universidad Salazar offers a broader vision, encompassing areas such as administration, research, and the application of knowledge across different fields.

Both Silva-Montes (2016) and Huerta and Lugo (2009) agree that the GP must be a dynamic document that responds to the changing needs of the labor market and society. That is, the GP should be designed to train competent professionals capable of adapting to an increasingly complex and demanding work environment. In the specific case of PE, there is a call to consider new scientific and educational paradigms that extend beyond the human body to encompass the development of personal skills as well. Equally important is the need for ongoing supervision, analysis, and updating of GPs to ensure a successful professional future for DEFs (Fernández, 2003; Largadera, 2007; Flores Ferro, Escobar Ruiz, Jara Rojas, Maureira Cid, Gutiérrez Duarte, Cárdenas Begazo, Muñoz Lara, & Díaz Magallanes, 2021).

CONCLUSIONS

The arguments put forward at the outset of this text consider the political account as part of the curricular configuration of education in Mexico. This premise guides an understanding of the curriculum as dynamic and ever-changing, intimately connected to the historical and political developments of each era. As such, education, culture, and politics coexist within these regional frameworks.

Educational policies such as the Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education and the Nueva Escuela Mexicana have exerted a profound influence on the transformation of the physical education teacher's role. These reforms redefine the objectives of physical education, broadening its scope beyond physical development toward a comprehensive perspective that encompasses the cognitive, social, emotional, and regional dimensions. The evolution of the DEF has been remarkable, moving from a traditional and militarized approach to one that is more integral and humanistic, aligned with the demands of contemporary society and the country's current historical moment. Educational reforms from the RIEB and the NEM have driven this change while simultaneously demanding more capable, committed, and student-centered teachers. However, challenges persist in relation to teacher evaluation, where the need for feedback and professional

accompaniment has been consistently expressed. Teacher training extends well beyond the undergraduate degree, representing instead a constant process of adaptation, capacity-building, evaluation, and intervention in accordance with the educational and social policy demands of each historical moment in the country. This requires an articulation that begins in the training of future physical education teachers and extends into their professional practice. In this sense, the task of educational policies is extensive, yet necessary for the growth, evolution, and consolidation of the field.

The humanistic and contextualized approach reflected in the 2022 curriculum enriches physical education training; although the inequality that pervades Mexican territory has historically been the greatest barrier to educational development, these contextualized perspectives and approaches can open up more spaces for intervention tailored to the educational needs of the field. From this standpoint, research emerges as a fundamental pillar of teacher training, positioned as a tool that equips teachers with the skills to improve pedagogical practices and generate new knowledge. Positioning physical education professionals as reflective, analytical, and committed to their sociocultural context of practice, which enriches their training and experience.

In the case of Chiapas, as in other states, there is an institutional diversity that generates a wide range of pedagogical approaches and graduate profiles, established under formative frameworks from both the public and private sectors. While this diversity enriches the educational landscape, it also poses challenges in terms of quality assurance and program relevance. Although the articulation between teacher training and integration with the educational system is fundamental, a potential challenge lies in the discrepancy between graduate profiles and the educational needs established for basic education by the Ministry of Public Education. Despite this, such discrepancy opens up employment opportunities in other areas such as recreation, sports, adapted sports, and sports administration. In this regard, graduate profiles, particularly those from private institutions, respond to the country's labor and economic demands.

In light of the above, it would be worth considering quality evaluation processes for physical education training programs, as well as promoting research in the field within the Chiapas context, encouraging continuous professional development for both pre-service and in-service teachers — processes that could be fostered through inter-institutional collaboration as a key component of improving educational quality in the area. In order to broaden the analyses related to the field and better understand the various factors that shape physical education in Chiapas, it would be important to conduct further comparative research at the national or Latin American level, with the aim of enabling in-depth analysis and regionalized descriptions of educational practice in the field.

By way of conclusion, the initial training of physical education teachers is both a dynamic and complex field of study that requires rigorous and systematic

research processes, which are nonetheless essential for strengthening the state of knowledge in the area at both the national and state levels. The findings of studies such as this one, along with others, can contribute to the design of increasingly effective educational policies grounded in situated knowledge and reflecting the particular political, social, and cultural characteristics of the contexts in which they are developed. It is likewise important to acknowledge the historical trajectory of physical education, which has been traced here from 1907 and continues to be written today. However, the importance of reconstructing the historical memory of the state must be noted; while valuable efforts such as that of Lisbona Guillén (2020) exist, this work remains in its early stages, particularly when considering everything that has been built through the normal teacher training schools in Chiapas. It is therefore necessary to carry out further analysis on this topic from the field of regional studies, in order to provide a more in-depth account of the specific challenges that arise in local settings.

This text is presented as an initial approach to the historical and social understanding of the training of future physical education teachers in Chiapas from a regional perspective; it also illustrates how, through cultural and historical changes, the country's education system and its evolution are shaped. Equally important is the recognition of the work and commitment of teacher training institutions toward education and social development, viewing them not merely as transmitters of knowledge but as transformers of societies and imaginaries. Finally, consider the need to increase educational research output in light of the results of the Diagnóstico de la investigación educativa en Chiapas [Assessment of Educational Research in Chiapas] (Castillo Castillo, López Gutiérrez, Grajales García, Flecha Macías, López Gutiérrez, & Estrada Soto, 2024).

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Analysis of the role of girls in child labor from a gender perspective

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— Abstract—

Child labor remains a persistent social problem that violates children's fundamental rights, with differentiated impacts according to gender. Despite regulatory advances and public policies aimed at its eradication, a significant proportion of children and adolescents continue to enter the workforce at an early age, negatively impacting their health, education, and overall development. In this context, female child labor has historically remained invisible, as it is primarily concentrated in paid and unpaid domestic and care work, which is usually carried out in the private sphere and escapes statistical and social recognition.

The objective of this article is to analyze the role of girls in child labor from a gender perspective, in order to highlight the specific forms of labor market integration, the structural and cultural factors that condition them, as well as the main consequences of this problem. The study employs a qualitative, reflective methodology based on the analysis of documentary information, official statistics, and institutional reports on child labor and gender.

The results of the analysis show that female child labor is characterized by its low visibility, the normalization of domestic and caregiving tasks, and greater exposure to precarious conditions. These dynamics generate educational disadvantages, limiting future opportunities and contributing to the intergenerational reproduction of gender inequalities. While the study is based on secondary sources, it offers a critical perspective that emphasizes the need to mainstream a gender perspective in the analysis and design of public policies aimed at eradicating child labor.

Keywords:

Child labor, gender, fundamental rights, inequality.

Child labor worldwide is conceived as a latent problem in society that continues to affect a large part of children and adolescents in different regions, according to global estimates by the International Labor Organization [ILO] and UNICEF:

Nearly 138 million children —59 million girls and 78 million boys— are in child labor, accounting for about 8 percent of all children globally. Among them, 54 million —that is, approximately 4 out of 10 children in child labor— are engaged in hazardous work that may harm their health, safety or morals (International Labor Organization & United Nations Children's Fund, 2025).

It is common to observe the participation of children and adolescents in productive activities, such as trade, construction, agriculture and even in activities that put their physical integrity at risk and threaten health. A visible example of this is minors working on the streets and at traffic lights, exposed to constant dangers, many perhaps being exploited and forced to work. The Encuesta Nacional de Trabajo Infantil [National Child Labor Survey] (ENTI) 2022 shows that:

Of the 28.4 million children between the ages of 5 and 17, 3.7 million engaged in child labor. This translates into 13.1 percent of the population aged 5 to 17. Child labor is divided into: 1.8 million (6.4 percent) children and adolescents only in non-permitted occupation; 318,000 who combined non-permitted occupation and household chores in unsuitable conditions (1.1 percent), and 1.6 million (5.6 percent) performed only household chores in unsuitable conditions.

By federal entity, the highest rates of child labor were in Guerrero with 24.5 percent, Chiapas with 20.8 percent and Nayarit with 19.1 percent (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía [National Institute of Statistics and Geography, INEGI] & ILO, 2024).

From these data we can recognize the magnitude of child labor, both globally and nationally, also emphasizing that Chiapas is placed in the second position of child occupation, which is an alert indicator that underlines the need to evaluate public policies in this area and strengthen them to reduce child labor.

Although statistics show a greater predisposition of boys to child labor, "of the 3.7 million people aged 5 to 17 who carried out child labor, 2.2 million were boys (60.2 percent) and 1.5 million girls (39.8 percent)" (INEGI & ILO, 2024). An analysis disaggregated by sex, *see Figure 1*, makes it possible to identify substantive differences in the forms that this phenomenon takes, since, while children are usually incorporated into productive activities in public and more visible spaces, girls are mostly concentrated in the category of household chores in unsuitable conditions, activities that tend to remain invisible, unpaid and socially devalued.

This situation highlights the persistence of deep-rooted stereotypes and gender roles that historically assign these tasks to women from an early age.

Forms of work	Absolute numbers in millions			Child labor participation rate and percentage distribution		
	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
Population aged 5 to 17	28.4	14.5	13.9			
Child labor	3.7	2.2	1.5	13.1	15.5	10.7
Prohibited occupation exclusively	1.8	1.3	0.5	48.6	58.8	33.2
Household chores under inappropriate conditions exclusively	1.6	0.7	0.9	42.9	31.7	59.7
Prohibited occupation and household chores under inappropriate conditions	0.3	0.2	0.1	8.5	9.5	7.1

Note: National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) & International Labor Organization (OIT). (2024). National Survey of Child Labor (ENTI) 2022. Results report. Mexico. Obtained from <https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/Encuesta%20de%20trabajo%20infantil%20ENTI%20WEB%20%281%29.pdf>

Figure 1. Population aged 5 to 17 years old by form of work, by sex

Studies on child labor have often tended to generalize the experience of working children, without taking into account that the conditions and consequences of this phenomenon are not the same for girls and boys. This approach reduces the complexity of the problem by omitting the inequalities that influence the allocation of work activities from childhood onward. In particular, the absence of a gender perspective has contributed to the downplaying of domestic work, which is performed primarily by girls; despite being carried out under inadequate conditions, this work is often taken for granted as part of their traditional roles.

Against this backdrop, this paper is conceived as an academic reflection based on the analysis of secondary data, such as official statistics, institutional reports, and specialized literature. It is based on the assumption that child labor does not affect girls and boys equally, but is shaped by gender inequalities that determine both the ways in which children enter the workforce and the consequences of that entry. In this regard, the following questions arise: How does child labor in Mexico differ between girls and boys? How do gender stereotypes and roles influence the forms of child labor?

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CHILD LABOR

Child labor is a persistent and complex social problem worldwide, as it involves the violation of the fundamental rights of children and adolescents. According to the International Labor Organization (2024), “the term child labor is generally defined

as any work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and psychological development”; for its part, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) states that:

Child labor refers to dangerous situations and conditions for which children are far too young, depriving them of their childhood and exposing them to extremely difficult conditions. Essentially, it involves children performing work under conditions inappropriate for their age, which harm their health, well-being, and safety, and which also prevent them from enjoying their right to education, play, and a healthy and dignified life (UNICEF, n.d.).

Both definitions agree that child labor involves performing dangerous or inappropriate tasks or work that hinders children’s healthy development; however, they also recognize that not every activity performed by children can be classified as child labor. In this regard, the ILO clarifies that the participation of adolescents above the legal minimum age in activities that do not interfere with their health and personal development or with their schooling is considered positive (International Labor Organization, 2024).

Beyond these institutional definitions, child labor must be analyzed as a structural social phenomenon closely linked to poverty, inequality, and the perpetuation of gender stereotypes. In this sense, it cannot be understood solely as a violation of the law, but rather as a social practice rooted in contexts of exclusion and precariousness. Various studies have pointed out that, in economies characterized by high levels of informality and job insecurity—as is the case in large parts of Mexico—families resort to involving children at an early age in productive activities and domestic work as a strategy to secure income and compensate for the lack of basic services. In this regard, William E. Myers argues that child labor cannot be explained solely by individual decisions, but rather by economic structures that normalize children’s participation in the workforce in contexts of poverty. Similarly, Manfred Liebel emphasizes that child labor is embedded in unequal social relations that limit the real options available to girls and boys, placing them at a disadvantage and subjecting them to rights violations. From this perspective, child labor is understood as the result of a web of social exclusions that pushes children—in ways that differ by gender—toward precarious and socially devalued work.

Child labor affects thousands of children and adolescents around the world, and Mexico is no exception. Despite efforts to combat child labor, the 2022 National Child Labor Survey (ENTI) reveals not only the scale of the phenomenon but also its distribution by gender. According to the findings, a significant proportion of children aged 5 to 17 are engaged in child labor, but with different patterns of involvement: while boys have higher rates of prohibited employment, girls are overrepresented in domestic chores performed under inadequate conditions. In particular, the ENTI shows that, among those who perform only inappropriate

household chores, girls account for 59.7% (0.9 million), compared to 31.7% of boys (0.7 million); and when combining prohibited employment with inappropriate household chores, the proportion of boys (9.5%; 0.2 million) exceeds that of girls (7.1%; 0.1 million) (INEGI & ILO, 2024). These data are relevant to the analysis, as they reveal distinct patterns of labor market entry beginning in childhood.

These patterns can be interpreted in the light of qualitative research documenting the invisibility of child domestic work and its link to structural inequalities. Within this context, research such as that of Miranda Juárez in Chiapas shows that domestic child labor is configured as “a social phenomenon inserted into complex logics that hierarchize subjects based on gender, ethnicity, migratory status and age” (Miranda, 2022). This evidence allows us to understand that the overrepresentation of girls in suitable domestic chores does not respond only to economic factors, but to the persistence of power relations and the sexual division of labor.

From gender perspective, child labor cannot be analyzed as a neutral phenomenon, since the experiences of girls and boys are crossed by historically constructed power relations. The gender perspective constitutes an epistemological approach that allows us to understand how the sex-gender system socially organizes the assignment of roles, responsibilities and opportunities, producing structural inequalities between women and men. As Joan Scott puts it, gender is a useful category of analysis to understand how such power relations are constituted and legitimized in specific social contexts.

In this framework, the sexual division of labor is central to explaining the differentiated insertion of girls and boys into child labor. According to the contributions of Silvia Federici, domestic and care work has historically been naturalized as a female responsibility, making its social and economic value invisible. This logic is reproduced from an early age, when girls are socialized to assume reproductive tasks within the home, which favors the feminization of child domestic work.

These dynamics are rooted in a patriarchal social organization that assigns the private and care-giving spheres to women, and the productive and public spheres to men, as Marcela Lagarde points out. Consequently, child labor carried out by girls tends to remain hidden and socially legitimated, while male child labor acquires greater visibility. From this perspective, female child labor not only responds to economic factors, but constitutes an early expression of gender inequalities that limit girls' access to education, leisure and the full exercise of their rights.

STRUCTURAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS DRIVING CHILD LABOR AMONG GIRLS

Child labor cannot be understood as an isolated decision made by families, but rather as the result of structural and cultural conditions that limit children's opportunities for well-being and development. Among the most determining factors are poverty, socioeconomic inequality, the inadequacy of public social

protection policies and the reproduction of gender stereotypes that assign girls a subordinate role in the home and in society. These conditions act together, generating contexts where child labor is perceived as an inevitable need and even as a natural responsibility of girls.

In the particular case of girls, structural factors are intertwined with cultural elements that reinforce their early incorporation into domestic and care work. While poverty and educational exclusion force many children to participate in work activities, it is social norms and the sexual division of labor that determine that it is girls who assume invisible tasks, such as cleaning, cooking, caring for younger siblings or paid domestic service. In this way, a cycle of inequality is reproduced that perpetuates both the feminization of child labor and the normalization of exploitation in the private sector.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (2014) points out that, according to UNICEF, school dropout is one of the most relevant factors that favor the incorporation of children and adolescents into child labor, since when they leave the educational system, they usually assume work or domestic responsibilities that replace the activities of their stage of development.

Although child labor is more common in lower-income households, poverty alone does not explain its persistence. The International Labor Organization notes that this phenomenon is driven by multiple structural factors, so while increasing family income is necessary, it is insufficient to eradicate it.

In the Mexican context, the factors that drive employment can be classified into two groups: those related to household income and those stemming from family solidarity. In the first case, girls and boys engage in activities to contribute financially; in the second, they participate in household chores to free up time for other adults to engage in paid work (Sandoval, 2007, as cited in Zepeda and Montes de Oca, n.d.). From a gender perspective, this “solidarity” is distributed unequally: it often falls on girls through caregiving, cleaning, and food preparation, without recognition or compensation.

International organizations such as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) have also identified factors that increase the likelihood of child labor, such as poverty and vulnerability, a lack of decent employment for adults, food insecurity, human trafficking, and crises (health, climate, or violence) that exacerbate household fragility (UNICEF, n.d.). In Latin America and the Caribbean—particularly in Mexico—the rise in violence, forced displacement, and the presence of armed groups has increased the vulnerability of children and adolescents, making them more susceptible to various forms of child exploitation. These factors do not operate in isolation: they tend to accumulate and produce gender-differentiated impacts, especially when the work available to girls is concentrated in the private sphere and in caregiving activities.

Likewise, the ILO notes that social norms and attitudes influence who works and who attends school within the household, and that variables such as family

composition and birth order can affect these decisions (Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, 2014). In societies where traditional norms persist, the expectation that girls “help” at home can become a daily obligation that, although perceived as natural, constitutes a form of child labor when performed under inappropriate conditions.

In short, while poverty is often a decisive trigger, it is not sufficient on its own to explain child labor among girls. The combination of economic precariousness and gender norms that assign caregiving to women contributes to normalizing girls’ participation in domestic work, rendering it invisible in statistics, and perpetuating inequalities in education, health, and opportunities throughout the life cycle.

WORK INTEGRATION FOR GIRLS: TYPES OF WORK

The involvement of girls in child labor takes specific forms that differ from those of boys, both in terms of the types of activities performed and the settings in which they take place. Generally speaking, while boys tend to engage in visible productive activities, girls more frequently participate in domestic and caregiving tasks and in low-paying or unpaid jobs, often under precarious conditions.

UNICEF mentions that “child labor and different forms of exploitation are all equally harmful and detrimental to the development and well-being of children”. Among the most common are:

- Domestic work. Many children are victims of human trafficking and are confined to private homes to perform domestic tasks. In countries such as Thailand, extreme cases of abuse and violence have been reported, particularly among girls employed as domestic workers (UNICEF, n.d.).
- Sexual exploitation. This form of child labor is particularly heartbreaking. The victims, mostly girls, are recruited by traffickers and forced into prostitution in clandestine brothels. The exploiters or traffickers, most of whom are known to the victims, use various strategies to deceive and subject children to exploitative situations (UNICEF, n.d.).

For its part, the International Labor Organization (2024) notes that “the worst forms of child labor involve enslaving children, separating them from their families, exposing them to serious dangers and diseases, and/or abandoning them to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities, often at a very young age.”

Article 3 of the International Labor Organization’s Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (No. 182) provides that:

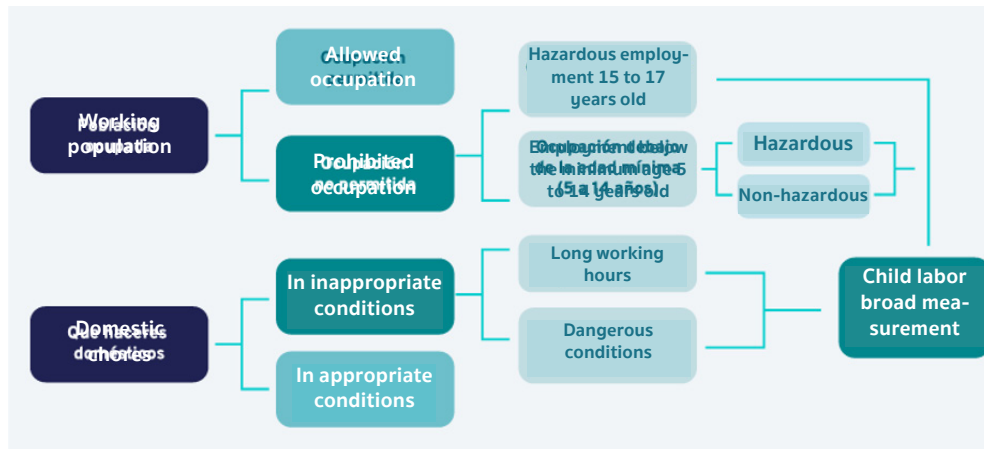
- For the purposes of this Convention, the term “the worst forms of child labor” includes:
- (a) All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labor, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;

- (b) The use, recruitment, or offering of children for prostitution, the production of pornography, or pornographic performances;
- (c) the use, recruitment, or offering of children for the purpose of engaging in illicit activities, in particular the production and trafficking of narcotic drugs, as defined in the relevant international treaties, and
- (d) Work that, by its nature or the conditions under which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children (1999).

In Mexico, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) distinguish that:

Child labor occurs in the production of goods and services for the market, which includes agricultural production for subsistence and the production of unpaid goods and services within households for their own consumption. When work is performed in prohibited and hazardous occupations and economic activities, or under conditions that are harmful to the physical and psychological development of the child, it is considered child labor. (2024).

It thus classifies child labor according to its form and components, as shown in Figure 2.



Note: Taken from National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) & International Labor Organization (ILO). (2024). National Survey of Child Labor (ENTI) 2022. Results Report. Mexico. Obtained from <https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/Encuesta%20de%20trabajo%20infantil%20ENTI%20WEB%20%281%29.pdf>

Figure 2. Form of work and components of child labor

Child labor consists primarily of prohibited work and domestic chores performed under unsuitable conditions that endanger the child's well-being. With regard to domestic chores performed under unsuitable conditions, girls account for 59.7%, a higher percentage than boys; see Figure 1.

According to ENTI 2022, the main dangerous characteristics in unsuitable household chores are: “heavy load, tiredness or exhaustion, back or muscle pain” (INEGI & ILO, 2024)

Gender gaps in child labor tend to decrease when domestic chores are incorporated into the measurement of the phenomenon. These activities include tasks carried out within and for the home itself – such as the care of sisters and brothers or of sick, elderly or disabled people – in addition to cleaning, food preparation, washing and ironing of clothes, company of family members. These activities are considered as child labor in cases where 21 hours or more per week are carried out among girls and boys aged 5 to 14 years; the global prevalence increases significantly, from 8% to 11%. Likewise, by including this type of work, the participation of girls is slightly higher than that of boys, which shows that they assume a disproportionate domestic burden (International Labor Organization and United Nations Children’s Fund, 2025).

Taken together, the different forms of labor insertion of girls show that female child labor is not defined solely by the activity carried out, but by the conditions, spaces and workload they assume from an early age. The high participation of girls in domestic chores in unsuitable conditions, as well as their presence in invisible or high-risk forms of work, reflects the persistence of the sexual division of labor and the social naturalization of care as a female responsibility. Analyzing these forms of work from a gender perspective helps us understand that girls’ work experiences are embedded in power relations that limit their access to education, rest, and opportunities for development, thereby contributing to the reproduction of structural inequalities.

THE IMPACT OF CHILD LABOR ON GIRLS' LIVES

Child labor among girls leads to a range of consequences that go beyond the immediate and create a situation of structural violation of their human rights. These repercussions are not only related to the loss of educational and developmental opportunities, but also deepen gender inequalities, thereby reinforcing the intergenerational cycle of poverty and social exclusion.

First, the educational consequences are particularly severe. The burden of household chores or participation in paid work forces many girls to interrupt their studies, attend school irregularly, or fall behind academically. This situation limits their access to higher levels of education and restricts their employment opportunities in adulthood, perpetuating their economic and social dependence on others.

Second, child labor among girls has consequences for their physical and emotional health. Long workdays, exposure to unhealthy environments, and a lack of adequate rest lead to physical exhaustion, malnutrition, muscle problems, and chronic fatigue. In addition, isolation and the pressure to take on adult responsibilities cause stress, anxiety, and low self-esteem, affecting the girls’ emotional well-being.

Another key aspect is the social and gender-related consequences. Assigning girls to caregiving and domestic work reinforces traditional roles that place them in a position of subordination to boys. This not only perpetuates gender stereotypes but also limits their participation in public, political, and community spaces, contributing to the exclusion of women in later stages of life.

In addition, it is important to highlight the long-term consequences, which include the intergenerational transmission of poverty and vulnerability to violence, exploitation, and trafficking. Many girls who begin working as child laborers continue to face precarious working conditions into adulthood, perpetuating patterns of inequality that are passed down from generation to generation.

The consequences of child labor for girls cannot be reduced solely to immediate economic or educational effects; rather, they must be understood as a comprehensive phenomenon that limits their present and decisively shapes their future. This situation highlights the urgency of designing public policies that include tailored preventive and protective measures, with a gender and human rights-based approach that ensures the full development of girls.

CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing child labor from a gender perspective allows us to recognize that girls' experiences in this context have specific characteristics that have long been overlooked. While poverty, social inequality, and a lack of employment in households are key factors driving children into the workforce, in the case of girls, these factors are intertwined with cultural norms and gender stereotypes that relegate them primarily to the domestic sphere. Thus, child labor among girls is driven not only by their families' economic needs but also by a social structure that normalizes the subordination of women from an early age.

In this regard, girls' entry into paid and unpaid domestic work, as well as their participation in agricultural activities and the informal sector, highlight the feminization of child labor and the persistence of structural gender inequalities.

Although there are statistics showing the involvement of girls in child labor, it is essential to incorporate a gender perspective across the board in the study, design, and implementation of public policies aimed at eradicating child labor. This involves recognizing the specific ways in which girls are involved; it is necessary to highlight the consequences they face and develop effective prevention strategies.

In conclusion, it is important to note that the eradication of child labor cannot be achieved without addressing the gender dimension that permeates it. Taking into account the circumstances of girls will not only allow for a better understanding of the complexity of this phenomenon, but will also help advance the creation of a more just society, where children can grow up free from child labor and exploitation.

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D O C U M E N T
A C A D E M I C

UNACH's PhD in Regional Studies: Its Importance 18 Years Later

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1 DOCTORATE IN REGIONAL STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE CHIAPAS.

To quote this article:

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In any research, there is a strong emphasis on establishing a thorough theoretical framework—or a robust debate regarding its construction—from which to anchor and launch the discussion that will serve as the foundation for the research proposal itself; this framework is understood as the set of subjects, concepts, and techniques used to approach an analytical project (Ragin, 1999; Magaña, 2012) and which the researcher constructs and employs to study the problem at hand.

In essence, a researcher knows only what their own theoretical framework allows them to know, that is, the researcher does not see or perceive the world as it really is, but rather views it through the lens of the categories—which are otherwise necessary — contained within that framework. Therefore, simply reading a vast number of books or articles considered relevant for this purpose is not enough, fundamental as it may be; it is necessary to reflect and analyze in depth the ideas under those categories previously argued and thus be able to understand what the author or authors are stating on the matter. It is within this interaction with ideas is the essence of the theoretical framework lies —and, therefore, of any social research. From the perspective of Regional Studies, this has been a strong concern for all the professors and researchers who are part of the Doctorate in Regional Studies (DER) at the now Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas (UNACH).

In this regard, research has identified conceptual misunderstandings and different approaches to regional analysis, as well as the coordination of all aspects, aspects, forces, and actions necessary to ensure that a region possesses a structure that allows it to sustain itself and develop through its own means; economic and political dependence on a developed country or one in an advanced stage of industrialization; the need for and factors related to strengthening a sense of belonging to one's own environment or economy, whether focused on the production, distribution, and consumption of income, or on development oriented more toward human fulfillment; these have constituted a large part of the practical application of their *expertise, theoretical framework, and reflections in their research*.

All of this leads us, at this time, to thank the journal *Espacio I+D: Innovación más Desarrollo* for turning its attention to the work being carried out at our university and for dedicating a special issue to publicizing some of the research being conducted by faculty and doctoral students; especially now that, as of the publication date, we can mark the 18th anniversary of the program's existence, with results that are considered positive, as shown in the following figures:



UNIVERSIDAD

DE CHIAPAS

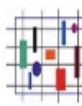
AUTÓNOMA

UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE CHIAPAS

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE INVESTIGACIÓN Y POSGRADO

FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES, CAMPUS VI

DOCTORADO EN ESTUDIOS REGIONALES



Doctorado en

Estudios

Regionales

LIST OF GRADUATES BY COHORT					
COHORT	STUDENTS			% DEGREE HOLDERS	% PENDING DEGREE
	GRADUATES	DEGREE HOLDERS	PENDING DEGREE		
First 2009 - 2011	16	16		100.00	
Second 2010 - 2012	18	18		100.00	
Third 2011 - 2013	18	18		100.00	
Fourth 2012 - 2014	17	16	1	94.12	5.88
Fifth 2013 - 2015	14	14		100.00	
Sixth 2014 - 2016	21	21		100.00	
Seventh 2015 - 2017	19	18	1	94.74	5.26
Eighth 2016 - 2018	19	19		100.00	
Ninth 2017 - 2019	16	16		100.00	
Tenth 2018 - 2020	12	10	2	83.33	16.67
Eleventh 2019 - 2021	20	19	1	95.00	5.00
Twelfth 2020 - 2022	14	11	3	78.57	21.43
Thirteenth 2021 - 2023	18	12	6	66.67	33.33
TOTAL	222	208	14	93.69	6.31

Fourteenth 2022 - 2024	15	0	15	0.00	100.00
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THE FOURTEENTH COHORT IS LISTED AS PENDING DEGREE COMPLETION (100%) BECAUSE THEY GRADUATED IN 2024 AND DUE TO ALL THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES THAT MUST BE COMPLETED, THEY HAVE UNTIL OCTOBER 31, 2025, TO FINISH THIS PROCESS

Figure 1

15 YEARS DOCTORATE IN REGIONAL STUDIES

years

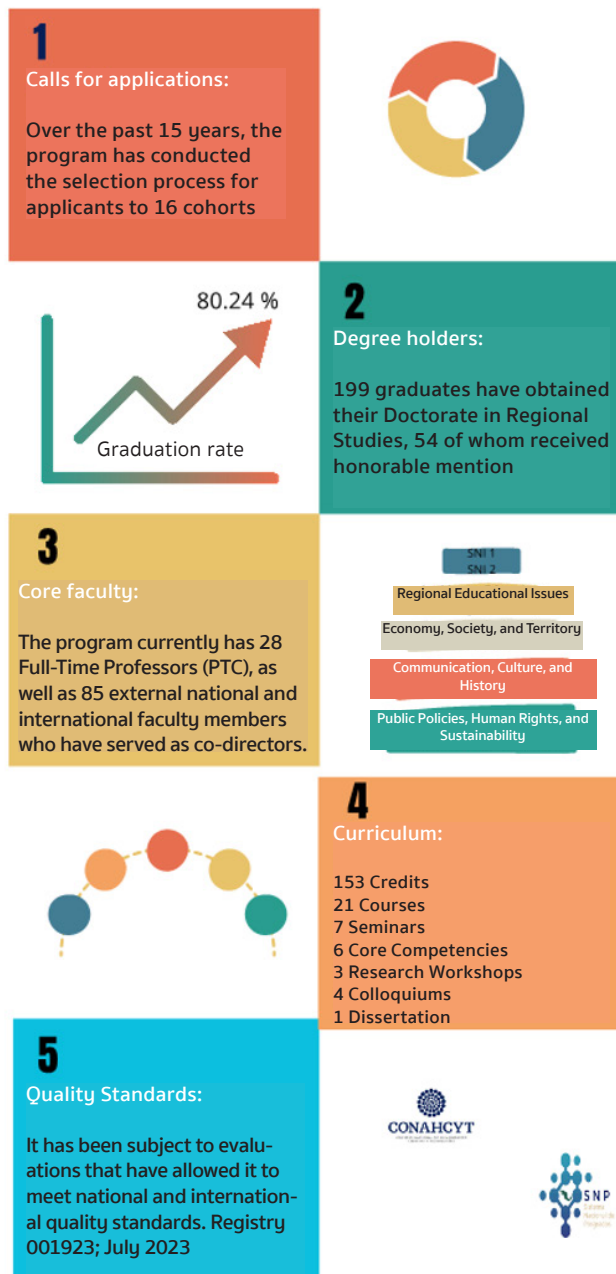


Figure 2

Nonetheless, I would like to pause briefly here and quote the enthusiasm which Dr. Ángel Rene Estrada Arévalo (2023), former rector of UNACH, refers to the recognition of the creation of the DER¹, since we are, I reiterate, celebrating:

Within the framework of the core functions of public universities, the social relevance of research is an indispensable characteristic. The problems related to social development in Chiapas, within the national context, are numerous and complex; addressing these issues and proposing solutions must be integral to the scientific, technological, and humanities research conducted at UNACH, and the results of such research must necessarily contribute to development; therefore, one of the tasks of the General Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies (DGIP) is to develop the mechanisms and tools that enable ongoing evaluation and assessment of its impact. (...) It is necessary to have programs recognized by the Padrón Nacional de Posgrado (PNP), with the necessary quality parameters to be classified as "high level" and "internationally competent".

(...) Our admission to CUMEX (Consortio de Universidades Mexicanas) took place near the end of my administration; the fact that we had graduate programs recognized by the PNPC and CONACYT for the first time contributed to our admission to CUMEX. With a titanic effort by many people, led by the General Directorate of Research and Postgraduate Studies, we managed to enroll five educational programs included in the PNPC, for the first time in history. We didn't enroll just one, we enrolled five! The Doctorate in Regional Studies, a master's degree and three specializations². (pp. 278, 288)

Regional Studies, as noted above, is a discipline that, in general terms, focuses on examining how human relationships develop at different geographical scales and operate with varying intensity at each of these scales. It does not view society solely in terms of spatial location, but also in terms of political, social, and economic dimensions. It strives to understand why regions exist, how they function, what influence they have on society, and how they relate to other regions. Interestingly, the most controversial concept in regional studies is that of the region, yet it is also the most widely used. A region is a geographic area that comprises units (towns, cities, etcetera) that have specific relationships with adjacent units and, as a result, are relatively homogeneous in size, characteristics, and structure. The region can

1 The Doctorate in Regional Studies was the first postgraduate program between academic units of the UNACH (2009). The members of the Sistema Nacional de Investigadores del Campo de las Ciencias Sociales y las Humanidades [National System of Researchers in the Field of Social Sciences and Humanities] and the body of scattered doctors were brought together and articulated in the Consortium of Social Sciences and Humanities. For the first time, institutionally, teachers were able to move with the University's academic units due to their participation in a program that quickly, and not without difficulties joined the SNP as a newly created program. <https://www.der.doctorados.unach.mx/>

2 Bold emphasis added.

be defined in relation to any dimension; among the regions frequently defined in political and economic terms are continental, national and micro-regional regions; specific areas that define free trade, the European Union or Mesomerica. Another example would be to understand the environmental organization of the territory, that is, to highlight the arid regions of Latin America or protected areas, watersheds, or the connections between communities that sustain, among other factors, cultural roots and linguistic ties. But these studies also contribute to the development of research in an integrated, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary way, geared towards specific social problems.

- Perceive the analysis of intermediate-sized spatial aggregates as an essential tool for the study of the real world and its problems.
- It is aimed at studying the fundamentals of the discipline, the methodology for its analysis, the particularized analysis of specific regions, as well as the drivers, consequences and problems associated with economic and financial globalization.
- It is designed to train researchers capable of adequately explaining and analyzing the realities and problems of specific regions and counteracting certain contemporary ills stemming from interdependence.

In that sense, the Doctorate in Regional Studies, through

The various lines of research (LGAC) in this program and which are those that are cultivated by the CAs affiliated with the academic units that make up the DES Social Sciences and Humanities of UNACH, which correspond to the areas of training of the DER and allow each student to position themselves within one of these areas based on their research topic:

- A. Communication, Culture, and History: This section covers the following topics: Communication and Information; Social History of Literature, Art, and Culture; History of Regions, Societies, and Cultures.
- B. Economy, Society, and Territory: This section covers the following topics: Globalization and Economic Restructuring; Marginalization, Poverty, and Migration; Local Development.
- C. Regional educational problems: This section covers the following topics: Curriculum, didactics and evaluation; Education, training and development; Subjectivity and educational processes.
- D. Public Policy, Human Rights, and Sustainability: This section covers the following topics: Social and Economic Rights; Strengthening the rule of law; Politics and Democracy (UNACH, 2026). (<https://www.der.doctorados.unach.mx/>)

It seeks to equip students in Regional Studies with basic tools that specific analysis modalities require; combine them to solve concrete regional problems; and foster regional research through student-guided research proposals and with the creation of an interest group dedicated to the discipline. In fulfillment of these objectives, the curriculum offers subjects in the theoretical basis of Regional Studies, in the quantitative and qualitative perspectives of its research, in the particularized analysis of specific regions and in the examination of the phenomenon of globalization, with the possibility of expanding training through studies in regions and other academic entities.

Finally, we could say that the Doctorate in Regional Studies of the now Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas, has a unique objective, which is to train researchers capable of carrying out groundbreaking work for different areas of regional development and provide excellent advice in the field. In essence, regional studies serve as the foundation for any research conducted, whether in planning, public policy, economics, administration, history, geography or any other discipline; therefore, the constant social demand for rigorous analysis to support decision-making entails a growing demand for experts in this area, specializing in territorial peculiarities and possess a strong sense of ethics.

That is why it is and must be a permanent effort of all of us who participate in the DER, to have an institution capable of training human resources for the incessant development of the discipline, such as our University.



Figure 3



Figure 4

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