

Tabasco And Its Indigenous Women:Travelers And Workers

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Citation: Dr. Crystiam del Carmen Estrada Sánchez. et al. (2024). TABASCO AND ITS INDIGENOUS WOMEN:TRAVELERS AND WORKERS *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(1) 8587 -8591
Doi: 10.69980/kuey.v30i1.11657

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	<p>When we speak of Tabasco, we speak of its land, its water, its gastronomy, its people; people who, through the ebb and flow of time, become familiar with the social changes that take place there, one of which is migration. But not the kind that occurs when people go to other countries in pursuit of their dreams, but rather the migration of Indigenous women from Tecoluta 1^a in Nacajuca, Tabasco. This is the subject of this research, which is presented in this document. Its aim is simply to bring to light Tabasco, Tecoluta 1^a, and its migrant women; their migration process, the reasons for their migration, and the outcome of that migration. Generally, it is men who migrate, but in this case, in this phenomenon occurring within a community of the Yoko t'aan people, it is the women who become travelers, migrants, and human beings who, despite adversity and social stigma, break with the paradigm that men are the sole providers for their families. These indigenous women carry with them on their journey dreams, aspirations, motivations, beliefs, their culture, countless fears, but also the hope of achieving something in their lives; what happens? We will tell you about that here, as well as their migration process, but above all, their opinions and beliefs.</p> <p>Keywords: Women, indigenous people, migration, workers.</p>

Introduction.

For years and decades, families have led us to believe that men are the only ones who can provide and the only ones capable of bringing bread home, since, being men, only they can do that work in the streets, in the world; but this is not the case. In other countries and places around the world, women are breaking this taboo or paradigm, but they are not the women of urban areas, they are the women of rural areas, as is the case of some women from the Yoko t'ann community of Tecoluta 1^a in Nacajuca, Tabasco, Mexico.

These women are not displaced from their homes, they are not abused women, they are not women who, for some reason or poor decision, decide to leave their homes, their community, and go in search of employment in the urban area. They are women from families rooted in this place, they are young women with dreams, hope, and above all, a great desire to work; not only to bring money home, but to demonstrate that they too can, and that despite what is dictated in the town or by patriarchal culture or established socially, they too can achieve it, bringing food, sustenance, and bread to their tables and to their families, to their parents, their brothers and sisters. Times have changed considerably. In families, both men and women must work to provide for their families, especially when there are children. In the case of the migrant women from Tecoluta 1^a in Nacajuca, Tabasco, their reasons for migrating are diverse and will be explored in this research, along with their journey from their community to the state capital, Villahermosa, Tabasco.

Through their life narratives, captured in interviews, two women share their feelings, motivations, and migration process. But first, we will explore Tabasco, Nacajuca, and Tecoluta 1^a, as well as concepts like migration and indigenous identity. We will also present the methodological framework, the backbone of this research, which aims to show the world that indigenous women are breaking with traditional family structures, becoming providers in their homes, and forging new paths in their lives. Above all, they are breaking free from the stereotype of women staying home in the kitchen with their children; they are shattering their chains of submission to others' life plans and constructing a new story based on their own decisions and personal experiences.

Development.

Tabasco.

Tabasco is one of the federal entities of Mexico, located in the southeastern region of the country. Its coast borders the Gulf of Mexico to the north. It has 17 municipalities, which are grouped together with similar geographic and productive characteristics (SEDESPA 1994).



1 Balancán | 2 Cárdenas | 3 Centla | 4 Centro | 5 Comalcalco | 6 Cunduacán | 7 Emiliano Zapata | 8 Huimanguillo | 9 Jalapa | 10 Jalpa de Méndez | 11 Jonuta | 12 Macuspana | 13 Nacajuca | 14 Paraíso | 15 Tacotalpa | 16 Teapa | 17 Tenosique.

Image 1. Map of Tabasco, with municipal divisions. Source: <http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabasco>.

Tabasco, whose capital is Villahermosa, is considered by intellectuals, poetry scholars, musicians, and historians to be a wondrous place, a land full of bounty and majestic landscapes, where beauty is expressed through its verdant vegetation and waterways. It is the Mexican state that serves as a bridge to reach the south-southeast of Mexico, but it is also a region where pre-Hispanic culture has flourished, as exemplified by the Olmec civilization.

Manuel Gil y Sáenz speaks of the second time the Spanish arrived in Tabasco: they were met with violence by the natives, who felt deceived. Some Spaniard familiar with the Mayan language would have called this land *tazcoob*, which means "we were judged or deceived." (Gil 1979)

Don José Narciso Roviroso adopted Don Alberto Correa's version: Tabasco would come from *Tlapalco*: place where the land is damp. Where the etymology is possible: *tlalli*, land; *paltic*, meaning wet or damp thing. Which would be understood as "in the damp land" (Narciso 1980).

Water is abundant in Tabasco, so that's probably where its name comes from. In fact, a third of all of Mexico's water comes from Tabasco. For example, the Usumacinta River, considered the most voluminous in the country, originates in Tabasco; the Grijalva River, one of the longest in Mexico, also flows through Tabasco.

Nacajuca.

In Tabasco lies the municipality of Nacajuca. Its name comes from the Nahuatl word *Naca-shushu-can*, which means "faces," *shushu* means "colorless or pale," and *can* is a toponymic ending. This translates as "Place of the pale or colorless faces (Izquierdo 1994)." Many writers from Tabasco believe that the saying "pale faces" may have originated from the prevalence of malaria in the region, a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that caused people to appear pale and colorless.

Yoko and Tecoluta 1st Village.

Also known as the Chontal people of Tabasco, the men are called *yoko yinikob* (true men) and *yoko women ixikob* (true women) and the language they speak is called *yoko t'aa'n* (true language). They call themselves *yokot'anob* or *yokot'an*, which means "the people who speak yoko or choco" (L. J. Flores 2006).

Tecoluta, in the Chontal Mayan language, means "place of owls." It is an ethnic village in the municipality of Nacajuca, located approximately 27 kilometers away by road. Its economic activities were once livestock farming and agriculture, but these gradually disappeared. Now, the population of this community is dedicated solely to the cultivation and production of guano palm, and even then, only in the few remaining plantations, as these too have been slowly disappearing.

In his research entitled, historical compilation and analysis on the Olmec Culture and the Yoko t'aa'n, Federico Navarrete Linares points out that the Olmec culture had a great influence on the development of the Maya who were located in the area of what is now Tabasco and from which the Chontales of Tabasco originate, who to this

day have an important presence in the region, their language received the influence of the Chol language, of the Cholano or Chontalano group, of the Mayan language family (Navarrete 2008).

The Yokot'anob, inhabitants of the humid tropical rainforest, settled in the Tabasco region shortly before the Christian era, in areas where many important archaeological sites are located. They primarily occupied high river valleys in the plains and coastal areas. The people were dedicated to agriculture. The Yokot'anob lords were renowned for their skill in trade. Fishing was practiced both in the sea and in the vast network of waterways in the plains (Navarrete 2008).

This Yoko t'aan village is where Tecoluta 1^a is located, a community with roots, traditions and customs that still prevail and above all its language.

According to demographic data from 2010, Tecoluta 1st Section has a total of 1132 inhabitants, of which 553 are men and 579 are women, this community presents a high degree of marginalization (SEDESOL 2013).

Tecoluta 1^a. is located 70 kilometers from the city of Villahermosa and 27 kilometers from Nacajuca, which is the municipal seat; Tecoluta 1^a. is the most distant town of all those that make up Nacajuca and the only one that borders Jalpa de Méndez and Comalcalco, other municipalities of Tabasco.

To learn more about Tecoluta 1^a, we sought out the local delegate, Mrs. Nelia de los Santos de la Rosa. In an interview, she told us that the population is entirely Catholic and mostly 15 years old and older. She added that while there are children, they are very few; generally, the population consists of teenagers, young adults, adults, and senior citizens.

The delegate of Tecoluta 1st. pointed out that the family economy of this place is based on the planting and harvesting of guano, with which they make mats, brooms or bags, the sale of snacks, a grocery store, the sale of tamales, pointing out that, some men leave the community to the municipal seat or to surrounding towns, to do masonry work, sell handicrafts or some other trade such as plumber or electrician, but that there are also young, single women who leave their homes all week to work in Villahermosa, doing various activities such as cleaning or cashiers in shopping centers.

From the above, the migration process experienced in the indigenous areas of Tabasco occurs in approximate percentages between men and women, but the increase in the percentage of interstate female migrants, which has been occurring between the years 1995 and 2000, is noteworthy, according to the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples.(CDI 2000)

We have talked about indigenous peoples and their people, but what does indigenous mean? Below are some definitions.

Indigenous.

Countless studies exist on pre-Hispanic cultures and peoples, all related to indigenous peoples and their populations. This study is another one of them, and that is why we are interested in explaining the term "indigenous." According to UTEL, this term is frequently used to refer to everything that is related to or characteristic of a population native to the territory it inhabits. In other words, the word "indigenous" is used to refer to those ethnic groups that preserve the traditional cultures of each country.(UTEL 2007)

The word "indigenous" was also used by the Romans; it was used to refer to someone born or originating from a certain territory, a person or group of people from the place where they live or lived. In this Latin-Spanish dictionary, the word "indigna" is translated as "native of the country" (Fraile 1966).

Migration.

In these so-called indigenous communities, such as Tecoluta 1^a, the subject of our research, migratory processes are occurring, not only among men but also among women. But what does migration mean, and how is this process identified? Below are some clarifications on this matter.

Gilberto Giménez tells us that distance from one's place of origin does not automatically mean cultural loss or "deterritorialization" of culture. On the contrary, it would be more accurate to speak of a symbolic "reterritorialization" of the culture of origin and an effort to recover and reconstruct *in situ* the "geosymbols" of the homeland (G. Giménez 1996).

In our research we consider that, due to this migratory process, our migrant women and object of study, could be affected in their culture, that is, in their loss of the mother tongue Yoko t'aan and also of their gastronomy, traditions and customs, but Giménez tells us that one cannot speak of cultural loss, but of a reconstruction of it, let us see later what happens with our migrant women in this respect.

Methodology.

This research focuses on indigenous women from Tecoluta 1^a, Nacajuca, those who decide to migrate from their community to the state capital, Villahermosa, so we are going to point out some basic characteristics of these women.

They are young women, bilingual because they speak Spanish and their mother tongue Yoko t'aan, they were born in Tecoluta 1^a. and have always lived there with their families, but their economic need has forced them to migrate from their community, from their home to the capital of Tabasco, Villahermosa, they live there only from Monday to Friday, because on Friday they return to their homes in Tecoluta 1^a where they are with their

families that same Friday night, Saturday and Sunday, to then leave again for Villahermosa on Monday morning or sometimes on Sunday afternoon.

Our research is qualitative in nature due to the narratives of our migrant women subjects of study, but it is quantitative in terms of the number of women interviewed. It is exploratory, and the research instrument consisted of three interviews with three informants. The questions ranged from personal data and basic questions to those related to their migration process. The table of variables and their responses follows. However, we want to make it clear that the results are explained from the perspective of each woman's life narrative.

Table 1; Variables and informants subject to study.

Name.	Age	Studies	Place they migrate to.	Salary.	Parents	Siblings.	Children.	Reason for migration.
Ceferina Torres de la Cruz.	26	High school student, with a desire to study computer science.	Villahermosa.	\$800.00 weekly, with two days off. She babysits and cleans.	Father and Mother.	5 sisters.	No	Job search, better salary, desire to study, and mother's health.
Edylia López de la Cruz.	22	High school graduate, currently wishes to pursue a technical degree in nursing.	Villahermosa.	\$800.00 weekly, with two days off. Babysitting and cleaning.	Stepfather and Mother.	5 siblings, two women and three men.	No	Job search, better salary, siblings' studies, mother's health, and desire to study.
Maribel Ramírez Sánchez.	26	High school graduate, with a desire to study for a law degree.	Villahermosa.	\$1200.00 weekly with one day off. Responsible for the warehouse of a shoe store.	Father and Mother.	5 siblings.	No	Job search and better salary.

Results.

Undoubtedly, the main reason these women migrate is economic necessity; two of them for their mother's health and all three to obtain a better salary. It is worth noting that two of them wish to study, which could mean that they do not want to start a family at the moment, but rather build a professional life project, perhaps because of what all three agree on: a better salary or better economic compensation.

Undoubtedly, these three women do not recognize in Nacajuca, nor in their community of Tecoluta 1^a, spaces conducive to study, work, or much less to personal and professional growth, since none of them have children, only their parents, sisters, and brothers.

Another quality shared by the three women is that they all completed high school and all aspire to pursue a professional career, particularly in Law, Nursing, and Computer Science, careers that are well-paid and successful in the country today.

They all rest on Saturdays and Sundays; we believe that these are the agreements they make to accept the job and also to be allowed to return to their homes.

Two of them, Edylia and Ceferina, work as babysitters and cleaners, tasks that simply require them to follow their employers' instructions, but which they may have also learned at home and which now allow them to work

and earn a living. This could also mean that both are capitalizing on their potential and skills to earn money honestly.

None of the three migrant women are teenagers; they are all young women between the ages of 22 and 26, which allows them to make decisions and, most importantly, to work outside the home.

Conclusions.

Tabasco women, travelers and workers, these are our three migrant women, indigenous, young and with the character to face life far from their families, far from their home, but who are undoubtedly the great providers in their families, in their homes.

They are transforming and changing roles in the family; now they are providers just like men, and most importantly, at least in their families, it is not bad or frowned upon, since it is their parents who have allowed them to migrate, but it is also their parents who give them the confidence to leave home.

They aspire not only to earn money but also to grow personally and professionally, as they wish to continue their studies and obtain a bachelor's degree. Marriage and children are not in their plans, at least not at the time of our research, and in fact, they never mentioned it, leading us to believe it's not part of their life plans.

The three migrant women have a strong attachment to their mothers, which means they are their driving force for change and self-improvement.

We can see, then, that Indigenous women aspire to improve themselves and excel in the workplace and professionally. They consider themselves, and indeed are, competent, identifying with work, a living wage, and being providers for their families. Undoubtedly, their roles are changing, as is their perspective on life. And although migration means being far from their loved ones, their homes, their land, and their families, the salary and the knowledge that they will return on weekends motivate them to continue. These are not just migrants; they are women who are valued in their homes and revalued in their communities, women who are making history and changing it for the good of themselves and their families.

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