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Emotions in Education Generated by Migration

Abstract

This paper presents the subject of school-age immigrants that have become part of the public agenda in México. This can be noted in the international undocumented immigration which creates a reorganization of the family bonds between parents and children; specifically, a physical and emotional vulnerability can appear with the absences, the problems and the conflicts that affect the family dynamic.

The object of this qualitative study is to explain the emotional vulnerability of the immigrants from Sauz, Hidalgo, Mexico. A questionnaire was used to determine the population's socio economic situation; as well as a semi structured interview. Some of the couple's results are: sadness, rage, and fear as recurring emotions associated with the uncertainty of their marriage relationship, besides this reality being visible, the impact of the downsizing of family income is also shown.

Keywords: migration, emotion, consignment

Introduction

The present paper displays in a short way some of the results of the qualitative investigation into emotional distress in couples and children of international immigrants in a community of the region of Valle del Mezquital, Hidalgo, México which shows a high percentage of migration and exclusion. Since migration is a multidimensional social phenomenon because of the variety of economic, political, cultural, historical implications and of subjects involved, it cannot bypass the social and emotional state caused in couples and children that stay in their place of origin and experience a variety of misfortunes when the husband or father is the migrant.

The categories of analysis of this study are the migrant condition of the family members and the emotional discomfort. The fieldwork was fulfilled through the use of an auxiliary questionnaire which had the purpose to gather information about the life conditions of the people from Sauz. The results were extremely useful to distinguish the population and to explain the growing migration. In this sense, the investigation was less concerned for the data accumulation and more concerned about the production of knowledge, emotions and explanations starting from the analysis categories; migration and emotional discomfort which were constructed during the course of the investigation.

During the last few years, the migration of Mexicans and Central Americans has been an emergent subject in social sciences because of the variety of the social, economic, political and demographic implications. Recent researches (Aresti, 2010) analyze the migrants' experience when crossing the Mexican borders, the detentions and the violation of their human rights, migrant authority abuse and organized crime. Other researches (López & Loaiza, 2009) address deeper the subject including the work exploitation and the work risks with the immigrants experience at the American border.

In health matters, the risk situations of the undocumented working immigrants have been investigated, and they are the ones who are forced to work and are excluded from the social services that a common citizen can enjoy. Other factors that affect education for immigrants are the differences in language and culture that reflect the norms and rules set by the destined place for living, also, in rural populations where the family income is not enough even though money is being sent, immigrant's wives have to do different chores in and outside of the household; like taking care of the school requirements for the children, managing and administering the low income and doing daily household chores.

As a social phenomenon, migration has a multidimensional character which requires an interdisciplinary research expectation that integrates different disciplinary points of view to understand it in greater depth. Whoever decides to migrate: father, mother, wife, son, daughter, sister or brother, uncle or grandson, will cause an emotional distress inside the family group, which will vary between the members of the group because of the meaning of the affective bonds that each person holds with the person who decided to leave. In some cases when the feeling of abandonment is strong and the emotion cannot be expressed it can lead to disorders. An important constant or variable in a large group of families in Mexico is their poor conditions of living, along with different problems and conflicts that deteriorate the bonds between family members and the family integration. For this reason, they look at the migration of a family member as a survival strategy.

Discussion and analysis

The living conditions of migrant families are helped by money remittances; however, it has been found in some cases that the amounts are insufficient and only satisfy the most immediate necessities like proper alimentation. In other family's stories, the migrant does not send the family money which leads us to another analysis sphere in which one person in the relationship holds all of the power and money plays an outstanding role.

In the family sphere this sending of money supplies for immediate needs and aspirations, there is an availability of resources, and it apparently prevents the frustrations and the emotional distress. In the management of the money different conflicts are found referring to how the income is administered and distributed between the family members. These kind of situations are seen the least, and maybe this is the reason why they are not inside the academic and public policy analysis, but they turn out to be an important subject when it comes to understanding how the power is held.

In this way we can observe that not all of the migrants' families are lucky enough to be helped out by the money being sent, in some cases this economic support simply stopped coming or the quantity was reduced. Therefore, the economic situation makes the family's emotional discomfort even worse and a variety of problems emerge, even the family's disintegration.

In a migration the family, the migrants modify their lives, there is a process that involves getting used to a new reality that withholds meaningful emotional costs which create implications in the intersubjective relationships between the family members.

In the raising of children the role of the economic provider is not enough, in migrant and non-immigrant parents the complete absence or semi-presence modifies the socialization and identity processes within infants. On the other hand, the physical absence of the husband or father could mean there is not a greater amount of freedom to decide things in the family. Some roles marked by tradition are kept; despite the distance the immigrant still makes the decisions concerning family projects, the management of the income and the children's education given by the mother among others. This creates daily tensions and the mother becomes the figure with greater responsibilities and chores in and out of the household, when traditionally all of this was assumed by the family man.

Besides, the children's emotional effects because of the parents' migration have been poorly studied. Some authors (López & Loaiza, 2009) consider there is very little documentation concerning absent parenthood or distance parenthood; other authors (Medecigo, 2008) consider the migration of parents as a social phenomenon that infringes the children's capabilities and relationships because they grow up without the physical and daily presence of the father; the affective bonds and the meaning of an authority are vital elements for the social harmony and emotional stability inside the family environment. However, it also allows the children that stay in the place of origin, if their living conditions are good enough, to develop, at an early age, greater responsibility, self-sufficiency and a bigger level of comprehension as of why his/her parent is absent.

Each family has a cultural heritage regarding the parental authority permeated by the dominant cultural values, in every single one of them the ways of a relationship and of cohabitation are important. There are even cases in which the mother has assumed this role for a very long time being head of the house and in charge of the children so that when the migrant father returns, his authority is not recognized.

The family's economic situation is unquestionable because it determines the type of ties and the degree of dependency that the rest of the family holds with the immigrant; the money remittances play an important role in this interweaving of affective relationships and the acceptance or non-acceptance of the family's care and concerns. Here it is worth mentioning the effort of the immigrant parents with the sending of remittances so that their children can have education opportunities in a high school and at college level. Few young people in the Sauz community have been able to use it for their professional careers; only two cases have led to the creation of self-supporting projects for their community.

References

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