



Poverty and Agricultural Labor in the Culiacán Valley 2010-2020

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The Culiacán Valley, at the center of the state of Sinaloa, is one of Mexico's key agricultural Enclaves.

and eggplant. The development of agriculture has been characterized by different stages of economic policy, investment in technology, means of transportation, development of infrastructure, and

1 In 2019, the state of Sinaloa was the third-largest agricultural producer in Mexico, with a participation of 9.03%. According to the Agriculture and Fishery Information Service, the state's agricultural sector finished the year with production valued at 58.9 billion pesos (real value calculated based on the National Consumer Price Index, base year 2018).

2 Lara Flores, Sara María. 2012. "Los territorios migratorios como espacio de articulación de migraciones nacionales e internacionales. Caso de Michoacán mexicano," *Estudios Migratorios*, 49, 1: 89-102.

3 Maya Ambía, Carlos J. 2011. "Sinaloa: ¿cluster agroindustrial o territorio desincrustado?" *Estudios Migratorios*, 14, 41: 127-160.

4 Sandoval Cabrera, Seyka Verónica. 2012. "Condiciones histórico-estructurales de los productores de hortalizas sinaloenses en la cadena de valor, 1900-2010." *Estudios Migratorios*, 24, 54: 231-261.

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Agricultural workers found that 21% of those who migrated from their home state worked primarily in crops located in the north and west of the country, mainly in tomatoes, chiles, apples, and melons. These crops employed 51.7% of migrant workers (Sedesol 2011; ENOE 2009).

* Project "Farmworkers in Mexico's Export Agriculture".





the region, but also for workers from other states. The need for labor is

are a source of employment and part of the survival strategies of the agricultural workers who travel

to the northwest.¹⁰ According to data from INEGI's 2020 Census, 6.82% of the population of Culiacán (which includes a large city) is employed in the primary sector,¹¹ as is 35.39% of the population of

importance of agricultural labor in both municipalities.


Valley, where industrial agriculture

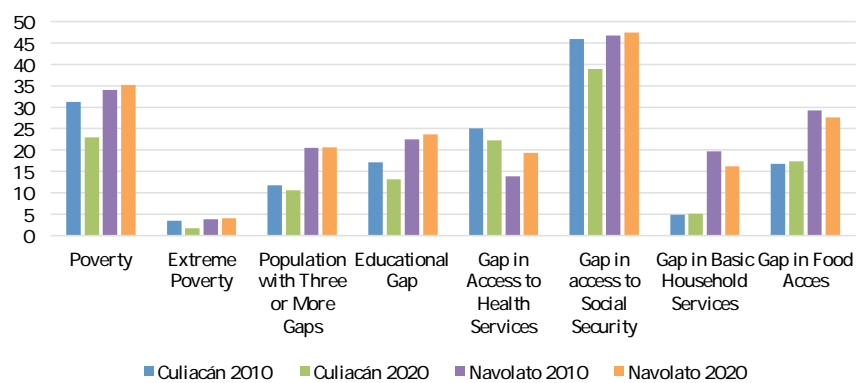
The importance in the region of these developments and the increase in the value of production in recent years call our attention to the lives and working conditions of agricultural laborers. In recent years, the idea of social responsibility has taken on great importance in export agriculture. This concept includes a set of practices that seek to provide decent working conditions and respect for the human rights of workers: formal hiring, enrollment in social security, elimination of child labor, higher wages, and decent housing. These practices translate into greater well-being for workers and their families. The implementation of these practices in communities like the Culiacán

10 Secretaría de Desarrollo Social. 2006.

de los jornaleros agrícolas, México, Sedesol / Programa de Atención a Grupos Vulnerables.

11 Culiacán is one of the main producers in the state, but it has a greater occupational diversity because it includes the state capital. For this reason the proportion of the population employed in the primary sector is much less than in the municipality of Navolato.





registered exporters. The other includes informal, casual workers who are hired for one or a few days. The difference between the two is

for men and 5593 pesos for women. The average monthly wage for casual workers in the Culiacán Valley is 6004 pesos for men and 5179 pesos for women, but the contrast is even greater in employment

registered with the IMSS and 84% had received an end-of-year bonus,

workers were 13% and 14%. Casual workers also live in settlements they themselves construct. One of these is the *sindicatura* Villa Benito Juárez, located in the municipality of Navolato, which

workers referred to as *cuarterías* or tenements: structures of brick or cinderblock, with rooms measuring approximately six by six meters that house entire families. These families cook and sleep in the same room; there are also bathrooms and laundry rooms shared by all the residents. The *cuarterías* have private owners; the municipal government administers only one. The cost of the rooms ranges from 100 to 250 pesos a week. This housing is clearly overcrowded, and in some cases there are problems of hygiene and access to basic services. In one of the *cuarterías* we visited, for example, there were piles of scrap wood and junk in the common patio, and food wrappers on the ground (Photo 1).

Companies also have *cuarterías* or *galeras*

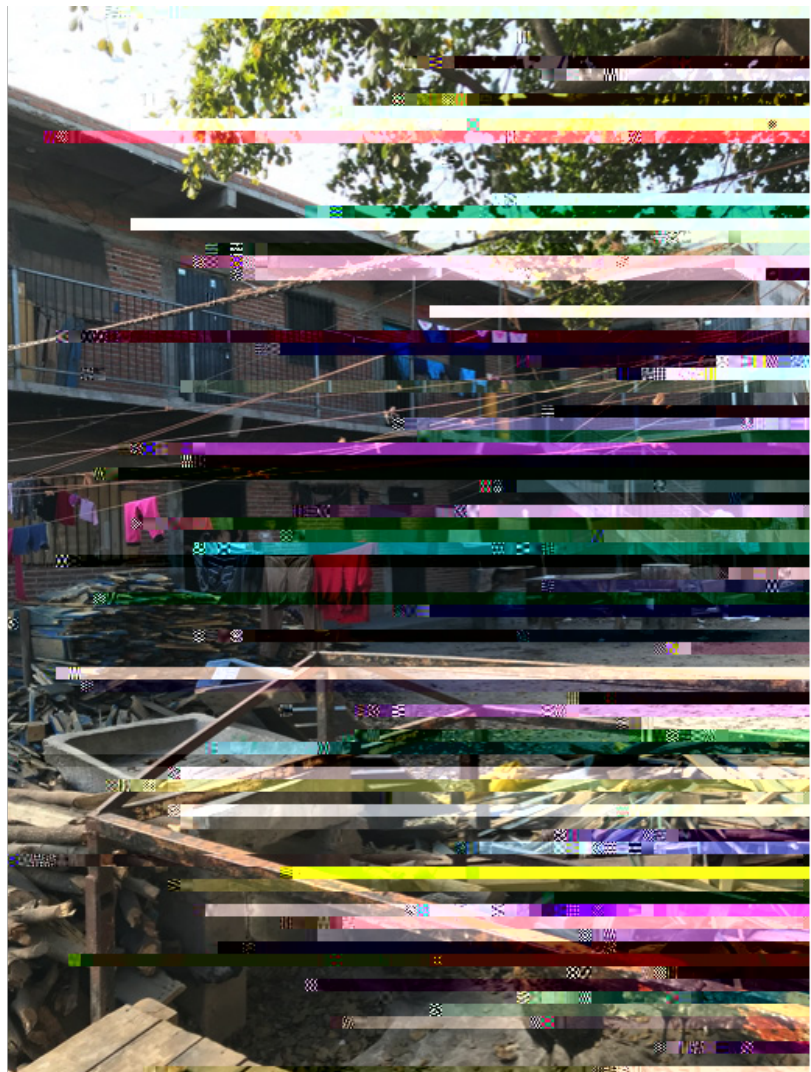
large single-level structures with entire families live. Originally these buildings were constructed mainly with sheet metal, but the companies' human resources personnel say that now they are more often built out of cinderblock. As in the *cuarterías*, all the residents share bathrooms and

laundry rooms. The lack of space and privacy in these tenements means workers living in them will be deprived of some aspects


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Another problem is the persistence of informal hiring. In the *cuarterías* we visited in Villa Juárez, some of the people said they worked under

Photo 1.



Cuartería in the *Sindicatura* Villa Benito Juárez, in the Municipality of Navolato
Photo: Elisa Martínez Rubio



the “pay and go” system, meaning that they had no formal contract, but were recruited and paid by different companies every day. Every day at 5 a.m., yellow buses waited at the entrance to the community, where contractors and drivers recruited workers for the day. These practices explain the decrease in

in this situation also report lower wages than those who work with a contract: some of those interviewed said they earned between 400 and 1400 pesos a week. These low wages, in comparison with other agricultural export regions, explains the decrease in access to food. Some of the workers interviewed in

time off to eat during their workday, which begins at 7 a.m. and ends at 4 p.m. A clear example of the precarious working conditions was observed in the municipally-administered *cuartería*, where a 27-year-old woman was interviewed who worked with her husband in the

Veracruz, but had lived in Sinaloa for nine years. She, her husband, and their four children ranging in age from one to ten years live in a single room for a weekly rent of 150 pesos. The couple is not employed by a company; they work under the “pay and go” system, without any formal

The previous week she had earned 800 pesos, working from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. without a lunch break. During the interview the family prepared a

in the rooms, and every family must buy its own gas stove and tank of gas. They did not have one, so

of their room to cook black beans.

precarity, poverty, and vulnerability in which many of the agricultural workers in the Culiacán Valley still

The Culiacán Valley is a region of major importance for export agriculture, and it has experienced a marked increase in the value of its production. Although there has been some progress, its workers remain in conditions of poverty and precarity. The municipality of Culiacán shows improvements in most indicators of multidimensional poverty. The opposite is the case for Navolato. Although there is an emphasis on social responsibility

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More information: jornamex.com

Appendix 1. Indicators of Multidimensional Poverty in Culiacán, Sinaloa: 2010-2020						
Indicator	Percent		Persons, N		Average Social Resource Gaps	
	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020
Multidimensional Poverty						
Population in Situation of Multidimensional Poverty	31.2	23	272,524	244,846	2	1.9
Population in Situation of Moderate Multidimensional Poverty	27.8	21.3	242,296	226,818	1.8	1.8
Population in Situation of Extreme Multidimensional Poverty	3.5	1.7	30,228	18,028	3.5	3.4
Population With Social Vulnerability	29.9	33.6	260,784	357,233	1.7	1.7
Population With Income Vulnerability	9.1	7.8	79,049	82,707	-	-
Population Not Poor or Vulnerable	29.8	35.7	259,870	379,543	-	-
Social Deprivation						
Population With at Least One Gap in Social Resources	61.1	56.6	533,309	602,078	1.9	1.8
Population With at Least Three Gaps in Social Resources	11.7	10.6	101,798	112,287	3.4	3.3
Indicators of Gaps in Social Resources						
Educational Gap	17.1	13.1	149,348	139,792	2.2	2.1
Access to Health Services	25	22.3	218,184	237,574	2.4	2.4
Access to Social Security	45.9	38.9	399,975	414,240	2.1	2.1
Housing Space and Quality	5.1	5.1	44,508			

Appendix 2. Indicators of Multidimensional Poverty in Navolato, Sinaloa: 2010-2020

Indicator	Percent		Persons, N		Average Social Resource Gaps	
	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020
Multidimensional Poverty						
Population in Situation of Multidimensional Poverty	34	35.2	47,697	53,496	2.1	2.2
Population in Situation of Moderate Multidimensional Poverty	30.2	31.1	42,307	47,315	1.9	2
Population in Situation of Extreme Multidimensional Poverty	3.8	4.1	5,390	6,181	3.6	3.6
Population With Social Vulnerability	38.2	36.9	53,645	56,071	1.8	1.8
Population With Income Vulnerability	7.2	7.8	10,146	11,776	-	-
Population Not Poor or Vulnerable	20.5	20.1	28,778	30,563	-	-
Social Deprivation						
Population with at least one gap in social resources	72.3	72.1	101,342	109,567	2	2
Population with at least three gaps in social resources	20.5	20.6	28,753	31,352	3.5	3.5
Indicators of Gaps in Social Resources						
Educational gap	22.5	23.7	31,537	35,986	2.4	2.6
Access to health services	13.8	19.3	19,331	29,383	3.1	3
Access to social security	46.7	47.4	65,486	72,008	2.2	2.4
Housing space and quality	11.3	11.1	15,780	16,888	3.3	3.3
Access to basic household services	19.7	16.2	27,648	24,545	2.8	2.9
Access to food	29.2	27.6	40,976	41,958	2.7	2.4
Well-Being						
Population with income below the poverty line	41.2	43	57,843	65,272	1.8	1.8
Population with income below the extreme						